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Women's Political Participation in Indonesia: Decentralisation, Money Politics and Collective Memory in Bali

Elizabeth Rhoads

Abstract: This article contends that cultural, political and historical factors create a local political environment where de facto discrimination against women is the norm. Without thoroughly addressing and altering the underlying issues causing discrimination against women in politics, a weak quota system will not immediately lead to increased women's participation in Bali. This paper argues that the leading factors contributing to low levels of Balinese women's participation include widespread money politics, the revitalisation of customary institutions and local identities through decentralisation, and the collective memory of the violent dissolution of the Indonesian Women's Movement (Gerwani) in 1965–66.

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Elizabeth Rhoads, M.A., is the Indonesia Program Director for a small US-based non-profit and lives in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. She has a master's degree in Human Rights Law from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London. Her research focuses on local responses to human rights violations in Bali and Aceh.

E-mail: <erhoads@brynmawr.edu>

Introduction

In 2008 Indonesia passed legislation regulating women's political participation with a 30 per cent quota for women legislative candidates and a 30 per cent quota for women in party leadership (Law No. 10/2008). Following this legislation, the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR – Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat) inaugurated its most gender-balanced parliament in 2009, with 18 per cent of its representatives being women (*The Jakarta Post* 2010). Despite these efforts and successes at the national level, Indonesian women's political participation in legislative bodies in the provinces and districts (*kabupaten*) has generally remained low.

Locally, women's participation is often much lower than their representation in the national parliament suggests. While women's participation in several Indonesian provinces is at 30 per cent, in many provinces less than 10 per cent of legislators are women (UNDP 2010). Bali, Indonesia's famed resort destination, is one of the latter type of provinces, with one of the lowest rates of women's participation nationwide. Although almost every political party in Bali ran women candidates in the 2009 general election, no Balinese women were elected to the national legislature (Sulistiyowati 2009). Only 4 of 55 seats (7.27 per cent) in Bali's 2009–14 provincial legislature are filled by women, while the national average percentage of women in provincial legislatures is 13.53 (UNDP 2010). Throughout Indonesia, women are least represented at the district level, comprising 12 per cent of all regional legislators in the 491 autonomous districts across Indonesia (Center for Political Studies 2010b); in Bali, women make up only 7 per cent of district-level legislators (Suriyani 2009).

This article contends that cultural, political and historical factors create a local political environment where de facto discrimination against women is the norm. Without thoroughly examining and altering the underlying issues causing discrimination against women in politics, a weak quota system will not immediately lead to increased women's participation in Bali. This paper argues that the leading factors contributing to low levels of Balinese women's participation include: widespread money politics, revitalisation of customary institutions and local identities through decentralisation, and the collective memory of the violent dissolution of the Indonesian Women's Movement (Gerwani) in 1965–66.

Methodology

The Balinese-Hindu-majority island of Bali is often studied by anthropologists, art historians and ethno-musicologists for its “exotic” culture, famed

arts, and ritual life, but political or legal analysis is less common. Some recent work by Bali scholars has addressed the effects of decentralisation on Balinese society (Ramstedt 2009; Nordholt 2007; MacDougall 2003) and Balinese election politics (Arsana 2009; Macrae and Putra 2008, 2009). However, most studies on contemporary Balinese politics directly address neither the roles (or lack of roles) of Balinese women in political institutions nor the effects of political and institutional change on the lives of Balinese women.

While most studies on contemporary Bali do not directly address the gendered effects of Indonesia's recent political changes, there are some notable studies on Islam and women's political participation in Indonesia (Blackburn 2008) and the gendered effects of local ordinances based on *sharia* (Noerdin 2007; Human Rights Watch 2010). However, there are very few studies on women's political participation in non-majority-Muslim areas of Indonesia. Although gendered access to decentralised decision-making bodies is noted in the literature on decentralisation (Bryld 2001; Radcliffe, Laurie, and Andolina 2002), most research on women and decentralisation in Indonesia has also overlooked the particular case of Bali.

This essay begins with an explanation of Indonesian law and relevant conventions ratified by Indonesia. After analysing Indonesia's legal framework with reference to women and political participation, the social, cultural, historical and political factors that contribute to the low levels of Balinese women's political participation will be examined.

Legal Framework

Indonesia ratified the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 13 September 1984, reserving only Article 29, Paragraph 1.¹ After the fall of Suharto's "New Order" authoritarian regime, Indonesia signed the Optional Protocol to CEDAW in 2000.

1 "The Government of the Republic of Indonesia does not consider itself bound by the provisions of Article 29, Paragraph 1 of this Convention and takes the position that any dispute relating to the interpretation or application of the Convention may only be submitted to arbitration or to the International Court of Justice with the agreement of all the parties to the dispute" (CEDAW 2000–2009). Article 29, Paragraph 1 of CEDAW states: "Any dispute between two or more States Parties concerning the interpretation or application of the present Convention which is not settled by negotiation shall, at the request of one of them, be submitted to arbitration. If within six months from the date of the request for arbitration the parties are unable to agree on the organization of the arbitration, any one of those parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice by request in conformity with the Statute of the Court." This is a frequently reserved section of the convention.

Indonesia acceded to both the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 2006, but has ratified neither optional protocol. Indonesia also participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women, which produced the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995. These international instruments all include sections on gender equality and the right to political participation.

Indonesia has a pluralistic legal system inherited from Dutch colonial practices of dividing “Europeans” and “natives”. “Europeans” (later expanded to include “foreign Orientals”) were governed by European law (Roman/Dutch civil law), and “natives” had separate court systems where local *adat* (customary law) was applied (Henley and Davidson 2008: 824–825). Contemporary Indonesia uses a civil law system for national legislation, but also recognizes both religious law and *adat*. In Indonesia, *adat* varies by location, historical tradition and ethnicity, and refers to customs, customary law and the specific communities governed by those (Henley and Davidson 2008: 824–825; Katjasungkana 2008).

Post-Suharto, the highly centralised Indonesian state devolved power to the districts (Law No. 22/1999; Law No. 25/1999) in order to combat issues resulting from decades of centralised authoritarian rule, including but not limited to: secessionism, communal violence, and perceptions of a kleptocratic centralised state (Buehler 2010). Regional autonomy is also seen as a democratizing force, allowing local governments and local leaders to better “identify and address local needs” (Buehler 2010). Each district has a legislature that acts independently of the provincial legislatures and national parliament. Thus, every constituency elects representatives to three distinct legislative bodies: regional (district), provincial, and national.

An unforeseen effect of regional autonomy is the revitalisation and empowerment of customary norms and institutions (*adat*) and renewed emphasis on regional identities (Creese 2004; Henley and Davidson 2008). As Henley and Davidson have noted, the “choice of ‘custom’ and ‘customary law’ as vehicles of empowerment also brings with it inherent restrictions and dangers” (2008: 818) such as exclusion based on ethnicity or religion, or, as Katjasungkana maintains, gender (Katjasungkana 2008: 486). In Bali, this has led to the empowerment of traditional power structures, leaders and decision-making bodies which have historically excluded women.

National Legislation: Temporary Special Measures for Women

Indonesia's parliament attempted to counter the "old boys' club" image of party politics through legislation designed to make political parties and legislative bodies more inclusive of women. Article 8(1)d of Law No. 10/2008 states that a political party can contest the general elections after fulfilling certain requirements, including "at least 30 per cent representation of women in the party leadership at the national level".

However, with the exception of four national political parties (only one of which is a major political player) led by women, women in party leadership often fill non-strategic roles, or "implementation" positions distinct from "decision-making" positions (Noerdin et al. 2005: 29). When women are in leadership positions in party committees they are often stereotyped and assigned positions deemed "suitable" for women. In Indonesia it is common for leadership teams to have a "consumption" position for those in charge of the committee responsible for food and drink for events and meetings. Consumption director and women's director are leadership roles most often filled by women (Dhae 2010; Kemitraan 2011: 17).

Indonesia's electoral system is a hybrid between a direct-election system and a party-list system. Each party submits a list of candidates ranked in order of preference. Voters can cast votes for the party or directly for their candidate of choice. Article 214 of Law No. 10/2008 stipulated that candidates must receive at least 30 per cent of the vote to be directly elected. In the event that there are more candidates with 30 per cent of the vote than seats in the legislature, not a sufficient number of candidates with 30 per cent of the vote, or if no one from the party gets 30 per cent of the vote, then seats will be filled according to rank in the party's list (Law No. 10/2008).

Prior to the most recent general elections in 2009, the constitutionality of Law No. 10/2008 was challenged and the above sections were annulled by the Constitutional Court in favour of a majority-rules voting system (Decision No. 22-24/PUU-VI/2008). This meant that the candidate with the highest number of votes would win without regard to their placement on the party list, and without first acquiring 30 per cent of the vote.

Article 53 of Law No. 10/2008 calls for political parties to include 30 per cent women legislative candidates in their party lists at the regional, provincial and national levels and was not challenged. However, the 30 per cent quota for women candidates – a temporary special measure designed for the party-list system – is incompatible with a majority-rules system. Article 55 of Law No. 10/2008, which was also challenged prior to the 2009

elections, but remains intact, states: “In the list of candidates referred to in paragraph (1), for every three (3) candidates there must be at least one (1) female candidate.” This temporary special measure for women with regard to placement order on the candidate list ensures women list positions that would increase their chances of election, all other factors (party membership, party attaining parliamentary threshold) being equal. With a majority rules system, list positions are unimportant, making this temporary special measure worthless.²

Even with the closed-list electoral system, the 2009 elections may have yielded similar results. According to a University of Indonesia study, three of the nine parties that attained the parliamentary threshold of 2.5 per cent of the vote did not meet the 30 per cent quota for women candidates in their party lists (Center for Political Studies 2010a). Additionally, 69 per cent of candidates placed in the first position on the candidate lists were men, while the majority of women candidates were placed in the third position (Center for Political Studies 2010a). Although the Constitutional Court’s decision was untimely and unfavourable to women, there were several Indonesian provinces that elected new legislatures comprised of 20–30 per cent women legislators (Center for Political Studies 2010a). Yet, Bali is one of only three provinces³ with no women serving in the national parliament, and very low women’s participation locally (UNDP 2010: 5).

Adat Revitalisation

Post-Suharto, local governance often has more to do with *adat* and traditional power structures than national law or politics. Empowerment of traditional institutions can sometimes have negative effects for women. As former female parliamentarian (1999–2009) Nursyahbani Katjasungkana notes, “[i]n areas dominated by *adat* norms, women are often routinely barred from the *adat* councils and thus have very limited access to the local decision-making process” (2008: 486). Noerdin and Muchtar have found tendencies on the part of local governments to “impose gender politics that aim to send women back to home and family” using “variations of customary laws that

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- 2 It is of note that the sole dissenting opinion on the case was written by Indonesia’s first (and only) female Constitutional Court judge, Maria Farida Indrati. Indrati’s dissenting opinion showcases how women in the judiciary can often interpret a law or ruling quite differently than men because they can see how laws that are seemingly unrelated to women – (in this case, the sections of Law No. 10/2008 ruled unconstitutional did not mention women or women’s representation at all) – would in fact impact women disproportionately.
 - 3 Aceh and South Kalimantan also have no women parliamentarians.

benefit male leadership” (Noerdin and Muchtar 2007: 143). Bali, particularly, has witnessed an empowerment of *adat* institutions and a resurgence of patriarchal values through renewed emphasis on local identity (Nordholt 2007; Rhoads 2007).

While Balinese Hindus are an ethnic and religious minority within Indonesia, within Bali there are further caste and clan divisions and regional differences in religious and cultural practice. Any study of gender in Bali must, as Sylvia Tamale (1999: 3) has argued in her study of gender and parliamentary politics in Uganda, explore the “dialectical relationship” between overlapping identities and structures that affect women’s lives. A study of women’s political participation in Bali necessitates an intersectional analysis that varies according to what Tamale has called a woman’s “specific social location” (1999: 3).⁴ To understand Balinese women’s participation in party and electoral politics, one must explore the “integrated matrix”, which produces the “specific social location”. In the case of women in Bali, this would include gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, locality, clan and class. While there is not space in this paper to examine all these overlapping identities individually, the following few examples highlight the complexity of social experience for Balinese women.

Bali is a patrilineal society. Women rarely inherit land and traditionally have no rights over marital property or children in divorce (Dwyer 2010: 238; Parker 2003: 170).⁵ Women marry into their husband’s household, and endogamous marriages are preferred (Parker 2003: 167). When a Balinese woman marries, she joins her husband’s family, officially taking leave of her ancestors, as she and her children are now part of her husband’s family line.

4 For Tamale, “a gender paradigm relevant to a peasant Catholic Sabiny woman in eastern Uganda, for example, would have to roundly address (1) elements of her indigenous culture [...], (2) Catholicism [...], (3) capitalism [...], (4) imperialism [...], (5) neo-colonialism [...]. All five systems of oppression form an integrated matrix that produces a specific social location for the Sabiny woman” (Tamale 1999: 3). Similarly, elements of oppression in Balinese society create a “specific social location” that must serve as a starting point for an analysis of gender in Bali.

5 Although a recent ruling by Bali’s Grand Council of Customary Villages (MUDP) has allowed for limited inheritance, and more importantly, rights in divorce and rights to child custody, women generally remain barred from inheriting certain types of land, such as ancestral land, and will not receive as much as their male siblings (Hasan 2010). Balinese recognize a form of marriage known as *nyentana*, which occurs when there is no male heir. In *nyentana* marriages, a daughter of the patriline becomes the heir and her husband marries into his wife’s house, giving up his ancestors and joining her line. Any male children from the marriage will become heirs in the wife’s ancestral home, and if the couple has no male children, one of their daughters will also have a *nyentana* marriage to carry on the patriline (Miller and Branson 1989).

The husband is considered the head of the household, enshrined in national law in the Marriage Act (Law No. 1/1974).

The basic unit of Balinese community and local customary government is the *banjar*, a hamlet-level decision-making group. *Banjar* membership is hereditary, but it is also based on a territorial area. While rules vary depending on locality and tradition, usually *banjar* membership is reserved for the male head of the household, or, in some hamlets, all married men.⁶ The *banjar* was traditionally concerned with customary law and Hindu rituals, but has recently begun taking on functions beyond *adat*, such as safety and security within its territory. While Bali Local Regulation No. 1/2003 on the Customary Village⁷ gave the *banjar* authority over everyone residing in its territory, it was not democratised, leaving determination of membership and rights within the community to be decided by each *banjar* individually.

The increased role of the *banjar* has a particular effect on women. Women are governed by the *banjar* but are represented by their male relatives in the all-male *banjar* meetings (Warren 2007: 172). Women cannot attend or speak in *banjar* meetings, vote for the head (*klian*) of the *banjar*, or be chosen to serve as the *banjar* head themselves (Creese 2004: paragraph 9; Parker 2003: 170). The fact that women are barred from voting for and being elected as *klian* violates CEDAW Article 7, which obligates states that are party to the convention to ensure women the “right to vote [...] and to be eligible for election to all publically elected bodies”. It also violates ICCPR Article 25, which guarantees the right to “vote and be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot”.

6 In Tabanan Regency, after a dispute resulting in the expulsion of 27 families from a local *banjar*, the expelled families set up their own *banjar* – Sakenen Belodan – with new bylaws in 2009, allowing women to sit in meetings and vote (Wardana, 2011, pers. comm., 4 April).

7 As Carol Warren (2007) explains, “[s]ince the colonial period local governance in Bali has been characterized by a dualistic framework which divides authority between customary (*adat*) and official (*dinas*) structures, and compounds an already complex and locally diverse set of institutions governing ritual, social and economic life at the community level” (170). The customary village is typically divided into several wards or *banjar*. Together the *banjar* and customary village make up the local decision-making bodies of most Balinese villages. They are especially active in terms of religious and cultural ceremonies, land-use, and community membership. Warren goes on to explain that the Suharto period was characterized by disempowerment of local “ancestrally sanctioned *adat* institutions” in authority, decision-making, and control over land, resources, and development by the “official sphere dominated by external interests” (170–171). In the post-Suharto period much of the regional autonomy discourse has focused on re-empowering *adat* institutions such as the customary village, particularly disempowered under Suharto.

As it is through the *banjar* that the village assembly and customary village head (*prajuru*) are chosen, women are de facto barred from serving at the village level in most communities because they are not formal *banjar* members (Warren 1993, 2007: 172). This means that for women to gain political experience they must bypass the two most local levels of government/ community organisation (*banjar* and customary village), as they cannot participate in either. This exclusionary aspect of Balinese *adat* law makes campaigning for regional legislature difficult for women. With no platform at the village or hamlet level to advertise their name or gain decision-making and political experience, they are immediately at a disadvantage compared to male candidates who have experience in the *banjar* at the very least, and perhaps also at the village level.

CEDAW Article 5(a) calls on states parties to “modify social and cultural patterns” that discriminate based on gender or make use of gender stereotypes. Balinese culture and *adat* are fluid and dynamic, as exemplified by the many adaptations to local institutions and cultural practices that have kept the *banjar* and customary village relevant and served to pacify potential conflicts. One such example is Carol Warren’s description of the post-independence “abolition of prohibitions on ‘mis-caste’ marriages and other customary practices which discriminated along status lines” (Warren 1989: 40). These modifications to culture and custom were based on notions of class and caste equality emanating from the independence struggle and socialist politics of the 1950s and 1960s (Warren 1989). Following changes in democratisation and after the ratification of various international human rights instruments, it seems that similar modifications of cultural practice could be made in the future on the basis of gender equality.

Women’s Ritual Labour

In addition to childcare and household management, Balinese women are also responsible for the majority of the family’s religious ritual obligations. This means making offerings to deities, demons and ancestors several times a day as well as undertaking communal ritual work whenever anyone in their *banjar* holds a significant ceremony (such as death or marriage rites). Women are also responsible for all life-cycle ceremonies within their descent group – for instance, ceremonies for infants, tooth-filing ceremonies, marriage, cremation, and deification ceremonies for ancestors. This is not an exhaustive list as it does not include major and minor Balinese Hindu holidays or major temple festivals (*odalan*), which often take weeks of preparation and occur several times annually (Miller and Branson 1989).

While Balinese women have historically been active in the work force and economic sphere in greater numbers than other Indonesian women (Parker 2003: 172), the heavy ritual workload can limit married women's educational and career opportunities, thus hindering their personal autonomy. This is often the case in middle-class families where there are no older women to assist in ritual work, but the family cannot afford to make ready-made offerings or to pay servants to fulfil their daily ritual obligations.⁸ If women are employed outside the home they must take days off for ceremonies, as well as provide for an alternative arrangement for their daily ritual obligations. This limits women's career choices, as companies are unlikely to hire someone prone to taking time off for rituals. Active political participation is likewise restricted to women who have resources such as wealth or unmarried relatives, ensuring that ritual and domestic responsibilities are fulfilled.

After the 2002 Bali bombing, there were increased efforts by local elites to strengthen cultural identity in Bali using a discourse of "socio-cultural self-defence" (Nordholt 2007: 3), known in Balinese as "*ajeg Bali*". While *ajeg Bali* is a discourse on strengthening and preserving Bali through revitalizing Balinese culture, it has very masculine connotations, as the word *ajeg* can also be translated as "erect" (Santikarma 2003). In the *ajeg Bali* discourse, women are repositioned as "keepers of tradition" and are encouraged to be involved in the community through ritual work as opposed to politics (Creese 2004: paragraph 32; Beazley 2008: paragraph 19).

An *ajeg Bali* discourse on Balinese gender roles extends beyond existing class barriers to women's political participation. Women's obligations to pass on ritual knowledge to their daughters are emphasized in *ajeg Bali*-influenced media and public discourse. Women are discouraged from buying ready-made offerings, which are seen as leading to a loss of cultural proficiency in young Balinese women (Creese 2004: paragraph 35). This "guardian of tradition" role makes no class or caste distinctions, creating a stereotype of an apolitical Balinese woman who delights in ritual work and in passing on ritual knowledge to her children (Creese 2004: paragraph 41).

8 This is not to say that poverty does not force women to work outside of the home (often in manual labour), but rather that in families with connections or some income, married women often have limited career and educational choices due in part to ritual work. There is also a difference between women that are forced into labour because they have "no land, no skills, no money and no contacts" (Parker 2003: 172) and women who choose to get an education or take on a career. Ritual work serves in part to limit women's choices and thus also their personal autonomy by keeping women defined by their role in their husband's family. This does not apply to unmarried women, as they have more autonomy in pursuing education and employment.

Thus, women must overcome both class and cultural norms in order to find time away from ritual work to participate in politics. CEDAW General Recommendation No. 23 on political and public life cites women's "double burden" of domestic work and economic dependence on men "coupled with the long and inflexible hours of public or political work" as major barriers to women's participation in politics. In Bali, ritual work creates a "triple burden" (Nakatami 1999; Parker 2003: 178), preventing women from becoming more politically active.

Gender stereotypes have re-emerged in the cultural conservatism of the post-Suharto era. The decentralisation process, lacking a gendered perspective, revitalised customary institutions across Indonesia without democratizing them to include women in decision-making. Definitions of women's roles are increasingly conservative, further marginalizing women in local politics (Creese 2004: paragraph 51; Noerdin and Muchtar 2007: 152). Indonesia's obligations under CEDAW Article 5(a) are to

modify the social and cultural patterns [...] with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.

Instead, the empowerment of customary institutions and local identities resulted in the re-emergence of undemocratic, gender-biased customary institutions and stereotyped, conservative gender roles in Bali.

Money Politics

Another barrier to women's political participation in Bali is the pervasive culture of money politics, which continues to reserve political space only for the wealthy or traditional elites.⁹ In practice, this includes practising nepotism within party politics, buying expensive candidate profiles or "articles" in Balinese newspapers, buying party endorsements or candidacies, engaging in organised crime and gang activity in support of parties or candidates, vote-buying, and even vote-rigging, as was alleged in the 2009 general elections (*Jakarta Post* 2009; Macrae and Putra 2009; Nordholt 2007).

The communal decision-making structure of the *banjar* has led to communities deciding which candidate to support, and inviting the candidate to

9 Nordholt (2007) has shown that post-Suharto, more commoners have entered politics and now outnumber caste politicians at the provincial and national levels. Although not as active as previously in politics, even without extensive wealth traditional elites continue to be able to use their family connections and patronage systems to further their political aspirations in ways that commoners cannot.

make both a visit and a donation to the temple or *banjar* (Nordholt 2007: 71; Macrae and Putra 2009). As decisions on which candidate or party to support are often made in the *banjar*, the community's men decide who to support in the election without formally consulting the women of the community. *Banjar* are used as polling stations, and, although there is a secret ballot, there is significant pressure to vote for the candidate or party chosen by the men of the *banjar*.

The practice of candidates offering money in exchange for votes was exacerbated following the December 2008 Constitutional Court decision in favour of a majority rules voting system (Decision No. 22-24/PUU-VI/2008). Following the decision, candidates in the same party had to compete against each other – which led to candidates spending their own money on campaigns. As election laws written before the decision stated that only members of political parties or the Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (DPD, Regional Representative Council, the non-partisan national senate), were considered candidates, individual candidates were not required to report their own campaign finances or expenditures (Indonesia Corruption Watch 2009). This left considerable leeway for candidates to pay voters or make “donations” to temples or *banjar* in exchange for votes.

Money politics has also created a climate where thugs back political parties and candidates, providing protection and crowds at rallies in return for financial support (Nordholt 2007: 41–53). There were reports of intimidation of female candidates in Bali by thugs hired by other candidates during the 2009 general elections. One female candidate responded by hiring 15 bodyguards of her own to attend the vote-counting to make sure that her votes were not given to other candidates (Suriyani 2009). Many women who stood in the 2009 general elections for the national, provincial and regional legislatures not only were unsatisfied with the election results but also claimed there had been misconduct in vote-counting, depriving women candidates of votes (Suriyani and Prathivi 2009). It was suspected that there was a lack of oversight in vote-counting at the village and district levels, and that political parties may have switched votes from one candidate to another in their party lists (Kristianti and Saraswati 2009).

Extensive personal finances are often a prerequisite to membership in party leadership committees. One woman in a national leadership committee for a major national party said that in her interview to join the committee the panel asked her to report on her personal finances, as committee members in her particular committee are mainly aspiring politicians who must pay for their own projects to promote the party, as well as their own transportation and accommodations when monitoring district-level party events (I. Y., 2012, pers. comm., 6 March). She was also asked to bring her husband

– who has no interest in politics – along to the interview, where he was asked if he was “ready to support his wife’s plunge into politics” (“*Kamu siap dukung istri terjun ke politik?*”) (I. Y., 2012, pers. comm., 6 March). This example illustrates that a married woman without extensive personal finances or explicit support from her husband may have little chance of even passing an interview to gain even an implementation position in party leadership.

Money politics decreases women’s ability to enter the political sphere, as they must raise increasingly large sums of money to fund their campaigns and party leadership roles. As Balinese women are usually barred from inheritance of most types of property, they cannot sell land to raise money or use it as collateral to borrow for their campaign. In most cases they rely on funding from their husband’s family connections and have a very good relationship with a political party, often through their male relatives.¹⁰ Money politics is one of the ways in which democracy in Bali has taken on masculine connotations and limited possibilities for women’s participation.

Collective Memory of Gender-based Violence and Retribution for Political Activity

Perhaps the greatest and least-researched barrier to women’s participation in Bali is the collective memory of the 1965–66 anti-leftist massacres of an estimated 80,000–100,000 Balinese (Dwyer 2010: 230), and the military’s campaign of sexual slander that disbanded the Indonesian Women’s Movement (Gerwani).

Gerwani was a left-leaning mass women’s organisation closely allied with the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia – PKI). While just one of several women’s organisations in newly independent Indonesia, Gerwani was the only one that did not withdraw to domestic affairs following independence. Gerwani continued to insist on playing a role in national politics, and it soon became the world’s largest women’s organisation outside of the communist bloc, with over 1.5 million members (Katjasungkana and Wieringa 2003: 64–65).

On 30 September/1 October 1965, an attempted putsch conducted by leftist military officers was brought swiftly under control by then Maj Gen Suharto, but not before the deaths of six generals and one lieutenant (Roosa

10 In 2010 Bali inaugurated the province’s first female regent in Tabanan Regency, Ni Putu Eka Wiryastuti. While this is a great achievement for Bali, it is important to note that Wiryastuti is the daughter of the outgoing regent of Tabanan, and thus already has political contacts and close relations with her party through her father (*Republika* 2010).

2006). The fact that there were Gerwani members staying at a training camp near the site of the generals' murders was used to discredit and destroy the organisation. Following the murders, Gerwani was singled out among a number of organisations that were also at the same training camp, and was attacked through a campaign of sexual slander for alleged involvement in what was described as an attempted coup by the PKI (Wieringa 2002: 294–297). In the months following the putsch, the military-controlled media spread baseless and outlandish stories of Gerwani women dancing lewdly while castrating the generals and gouging out their eyes (Wieringa 2002: 294–297).¹¹ Katjasungkana and Wieringa (2003) argue that the “castration myth” was integral to the foundation of Suharto's New Order state, where “women's political agency became extremely suspect” (64). Many scholars have cited this campaign of sexual slander as a pretext to both the massacres that followed and women's subsequent withdrawal from politics (Wieringa 2002; Katjasungkana and Wieringa 2003; Dwyer 2004).

In Bali, attacks on Gerwani and ideas about women's political involvement played out in ways specific to the local context. Indonesia was implementing highly contested land reform led by the PKI in the 1960s. Balinese were very active in the campaign and Balinese women participated in rallies, meetings, direct actions, and local party branches in support of land reform, even serving as leaders of party branches (Parker 2003: 76–77). The Basic Agrarian Act (1960) did not discriminate on the basis of gender in land redistribution, thus women had much to gain from the land reform process. Families were split over the land reform issue as many women supported the PKI while some husbands focused on maintaining local patron–client relationships by supporting the party more closely aligned with local elites¹² (Parker 2003: 76–77). When the massacres began in Bali late 1965, the sexual slander campaign against Gerwani had been so effective that any sign of political participation by women resulted in them being accused of Gerwani membership. Many of these politically active women and their children were killed, usually in a particularly gruesome and gendered manner not used on leftist men (Parker 2003: 76–77; R. S., 2008, pers. comm., 20 April).

Dwyer (2004) notes how parallels were drawn between politically active Balinese women and black magic practitioners, equating women who participated in mass organisations and politics with women traditionally perceived

11 For the autopsy report, which has no reference to these allegations, see Indoleaks 2010.

12 In some areas, local elites were aligned with the Nationalist Party (PNI – Partai Nasional Indonesia) and in other areas high-caste but landless elites were aligned with the Communist Party (PKI). Party affiliation did not always fall along caste lines.

as “dangerous”. Following the coup, women were strip-searched (often accompanied by sexual assault) for a hammer and sickle tattoo that Gerwani women were said to have near their genitals (I. P., 2008, pers. comm., 5 April). This tattoo was purportedly in the same place that black magic practitioners would draw magical symbols to wield power over men. Dwyer argues that these experiences, the fear they produced and cultural meanings they conveyed go further

toward explaining the relative absence of Balinese women from contemporary politics and activism than does the more common reliance on an ahistorical ‘Balinese tradition’ to account for women’s apparent lack of public voice (Dwyer 2004: paragraph 13).

It is not only the experience and collective memory of gender-based violence as a reprisal for political participation that serves to limit Balinese women’s political participation, but also the effects of living for 32 years under the New Order’s gender ideology. With the arrival of Suharto’s New Order regime in 1966, the PKI and Gerwani were banned and all women’s organisations were brought under the control of the state (National Commission on Violence against Women 2007: 60). As Katjasungkana and Wieringa noted, in the New Order “social stability came to depend on military control, which was in its turn based on women’s subordination and particularly their sexual subservience” (2003: 64).

Following the massacres and slandering of Gerwani, “many women chose to withdraw from public life to the ‘traditional’ domestic domain” (Katjasungkana 2008: 486). This seclusion from public life persisted throughout most of the New Order, aided by state-led domestication of Indonesian women, through a national gender ideology termed “state *ibu-ism*”, drawing on the Indonesian term for mother, *ibu* (Suryakusuma 1996). This gender ideology focused on “housewifisation” and feudal Javanese notions of “tradition” and women’s service to family, community and state, resulting in the (re-)domestication of Indonesia’s women (Suryakusuma 1996: 101–102). Suharto-era women’s organisations were organisations for the wives of civil service, police and military personnel, and these women were involved primarily in domestic affairs, their leadership based on the ranks of their husbands (Suryakusuma 2004). The New Order state, through their women’s organisations, defined women as “appendages and companions to their husbands, procreators of the nation, mothers and educators of children, housekeepers” and, lastly, “members of Indonesian society” (Suryakusuma 1996: 101).

Leftist families, including children of suspected communists, were subjected to the New Order’s “clean environment” (*bersih lingkungan*) policy, which barred millions from employment in civil service, education, law and

journalism positions. Even traditional performing arts like shadow puppetry were off-limits. This discriminatory policy has yet to be officially revoked (Birks 2006: 16–18). Coupled with the experience of violence and the intense social surveillance typical of Suharto's regime, after 1965 Balinese women continued to warn their children and grandchildren about involvement in anything that could be seen as political, fearing retribution for political activity (Dwyer 2004: paragraph 9).

The anti-communist massacres and gendered violence of 1965–66 were carried out locally in Bali. Most people have remained in the same communities where the violence occurred. In many communities, women continue to live in close proximity to their rapists or the men who killed their friends and relatives, knowing that it was often other relatives who informed on their political activity (Parker 2003: 49). Post-1965, Balinese women's activities and political participation were monitored by the Indonesian state and local customary norms and institutions, as well as their own families (R. S., 2012, pers. comm., 1 May). Today, while state control over political activity and civil society has decreased, as noted earlier, customary institutions have been empowered, and family control over women's role in the public sphere continues to be strong and heavily influenced by family status and history, including the events of 1965–66. As Dwyer writes, "far from being definitively past, the events of 1965–66 continue to channel and block possibilities for speech, social action, and political agency in Bali" (Dwyer 2009: 121).

Conclusion

Dwyer (2004) argued that the "state *ibnism*" of the New Order "located women's subordination in age-old 'tradition', ignoring women's previously active participation in politics and the terror that ensured their exit from public culture" (paragraph 15). Calling on culture and tradition does not explain women's lack of political participation in Bali. As Dwyer (2004) and Parker (2003) have shown, women were previously active in politics. Balinese culture and customary law are not immutable, but dynamic and responsive to changes in the political and social spheres, as Warren (1989) has shown. While the national government has taken steps to increase women's political participation through the introduction of the 30 per cent quota for women candidates, further steps to modify cultural and historical understandings of women and to eliminate gender-based discrimination and stereotyping are necessary for the policy to result in women serving in political parties and elected bodies at all levels.

Memories of the dissolution of Gerwani and of Indonesian women's forced exit from political life, contemporary money politics, and the re-

traditionalisation of women through local identity discourses such as *ajeg Bali* and the decentralised state's empowerment of customary institutions have created an environment that continues to limit avenues for Balinese women's political participation. In order to further understand the particular ways in which political participation is limited, there is a need for continued empirical and ethnographic research on the effects of both the collective memory of 1965–66 violence and the current empowerment of customary institutions on Balinese women's political participation. Increased research into these areas could result in expanding academic knowledge of the links between collective memory and political participation, as well as improved programmes and policies to increase women's participation and representation in politics.

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