

**School of Management**

**Exploring Women's Transition into and Participation in Formal  
Paid Employment:  
Case Studies in Regional Indonesia**

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**This Thesis is presented for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
of  
Curtin University**

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## **Declaration**

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgements have been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)—updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research approval from the Curtin University Research Ethic Committee (ECOO262), Approval Number HRE 2019-0761.

Signature: Endah Prihatiningtyastuti

Date: / /2022

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This thesis reflects years of both my work and study journeys to fulfil my curiosity and understanding as a bureaucrat and researcher. Starting my Master research experience also led me to be curious about women's empowerment discourse. When I conducted my first master's degree research on pregnant women's experiences in drought-stricken, poorly-resourced and remote areas in the rural Gunungkidul District of Indonesia two decades ago, I met many needy regional women. Though they experienced many problems, they accepted this situation without complaint. They could not say anything; they just tried hard to survive. They did not have any power over themselves. At that time, I did not realise that they live under many layers of power that oppress them. Moreover, it is also part of my long journey to recognise the complexities of rural Indonesia in past and present times.

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## **Dedication**

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## **Abstract**

Women contribute economically and socially to the national and regional development of a country, in the form of labour and citizenship. While current studies in this field have mainly focused on expanding women's labour participation, women's participation in the labour market does not automatically empower women, if the socio-economic and cultural barriers to participation continue to be ignored. By using structuration theory and a feminist policy analysis framework in exploring women's participation and transition into formal paid employment, this thesis provides an analysis of women's participation in the labour market and access to decent work through the role/contribution of women's agency during economic structural change in regional Indonesian contexts.

The experiences of rural women in transitioning into the labour market has been under-represented in the development scenario of Indonesia. Government have paid limited attention to the contribution of transitioning women who change their work from the informal agriculture sector to formal non-agricultural industries. The persistence of women who shift their informal work from the agricultural sector to formal work such as in care services, have contributed to the socio-economic dynamic development of local communities and shifted the features of domestic culture in regional areas of Indonesia. Due to a lack of critical literature and data on transitioning women who have changed their work from agriculture to formal labour sectors, this study investigates existing conditions regarding the issue. This current study, therefore, examines the role of women as both individuals and community agents in regional Indonesia.

This study employed case study analysis, secondary documentary analysis and primary data obtained from semi structured interviews with 30 women working in agricultural and care sectors as either formal or informal workers. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to 10 representatives of both government and non-government organisations.

Two case studies in the regional districts of Gunungkidul and Sleman were selected for investigation based on the geographic similarities and differences

between these locations and city of the central provincial government, the environmental characteristics, and the level of community well-beings.

The findings include the evidence of women being assigned as merely passive recipients of socio-economic development that occurs in their area. Regional governments place women as an underutilised workforce in the local development context, which contributes to a loss in potential personal, family and community income and well-being. The findings have implications for gender-responsive regional policies and development processes (design, translation, integration, implementation and evaluation) that need to be inclusive of women as the heteronormative ideal. This thesis recommends changes that focus on local initiatives with local applicability.



## Glossary: Abbreviations, Terms, and Nomenclature

### A

Adat	Custom
AIPEG	Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance
AKSARA	The name of local NGO in Yogyakarta for Gender Equality and Equity
Alus	Calm/refined
Anugerah Parahita Ekapraya	Gender Mainstreaming Award
Arisan	A form of rotating savings in Indonesian culture
ASPEMAKO	Assosiasi Pengusaha Makanan dan Minuman Olahan - The Association of Processed-Food Entrepreneurs

### B

Balai Aisyiah	NGO focusing on women's empowerment
Bapak	Father
Bina Keluarga Balita	Family development program for under five-year olds
BPD	Badan Permusyawaratan Desa - The Village Consultative Body
BPJS	Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Sosial Kesehatan - Government Health Insurance
Bappenas	Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional - National Board of Development Planning
Batur	Servant
Bumdes	Badan Usaha Milik Desa - A Village-Owned Enterprise

## **C**

CEDAW The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

## **D**

Daraba Hit

Dharma Wanita The Organisation of Wives of Civil Servants

DPD Dewan Perwakilan Daerah - Regional Representative Council

DPR Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat - House Representative Council

Dukuh Hamlet

## **E**

Emansipasi wanita Women's emancipation

Ewuh Pakewuh Remarks will offend other people

## **F**

FGD Focus Group Discussion

FPLPR Female Labour Force Participation Rates

## **G**

G20 The Group of 20 is an intergovernmental forum consisting of 19 countries and the European Union

GAP Gender Analysis Pathway

GBHN Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara or The Broad Guidelines of State Policies

GBS Gender Budget Statement

GDI Gender Development Index

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GEM	Gender Empowerment Measurement
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GP	Gender Perspective
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budget
<b>H</b>	
HDI	Human Development Index
Hijab	Veil
HIMPAUDI	Himpunan Pendidik dan Tenaga Kependidikan Anak Usia Dini - The Association of Early Educators Indonesia
Hormat	Respect
<b>I</b>	
Ibu	Mother, the way people address older women
Ibu Dukuh	Wife of the head of the hamlet
IDEA	Institute for Development and Economic Analysis
Ikhlas	Sincerity of the whole soul
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IWAPI	Ikatan Wanita Pengusaha Indonesia - The Association of Indonesian Women Entrepreneur
<b>J</b>	
JALA PRT	Jaringan Nasional Advokasi Pekerja Rumah Tangga - National Network for Domestic Worker Advocacy
<b>K</b>	
Kanca wingking	Followers
Kapal Perempuan	Institute for Women's Alternative Education

Kelompok Sadar Wisata/Pokdarwis	Tourism Awareness Group
Ketua RT	Ketua Rukun Tetangga - Head of the Neighbourhood Association
KUA	Kantor Urusan Agama - The Office of Religious Affairs
Koalisi Perempuan	The Indonesian Women Coalition
<b>L</b>	
LFS	Labour Force Survey
<b>M</b>	
Macak	Dress up
Mahram	A male relative whom a woman cannot marry at any time in her life
Manak	Delivering babies
Masak	Cooking
MDG's	Millenium Development Goals
Mitra Seajar	Equal Partner
Mudimat NU	Branch of Nahdatul Ulama
Muhamadiyah	Modernist Muslim organisation
Mupus	Think nothing bothers you
MOWE	Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection
<b>N</b>	
Nagari	West Sumatra traditional local form of the village political council
Nahdatul Ulama	Traditionalist Muslim organisation
Nawacita	Nine National Vision of Indonesian Development

Ngéngér	Javanese Ethnic Culture that upholds the obligation of domestic workers to serve the employer as a manifestation of gratitude
Nerima	Acceptance without complaint
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
<b>O</b>	
Ora Ilok	No Good/Not Nice
<b>P</b>	
Pancasila	Five fundamental principles of the Republic of Indonesia
Patriarchal	Characteristic of a system of society controlled by men
PAUD	Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini - Early Age Education
Pemimpin	Leader
PDRB	Produk Domestik Regional - Regional Gross Domestic Product
Peran Ganda	Dual roles
PEKKA	Serikat Perempuan Kepala Keluarga - Female Headed Households Organisation
PKK	Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga - Family Welfare Movement
PNPM	Program Nasional Pengendalian Kemiskinan Mandiri - The National Program for Community Empowerment
Pokdarwis	Kelompok Sadar Wisata - The Tourism Awareness Group
Prihatin	Focused solicitude
PRT	Pembantu Rumah Tangga - Domestic Worker
Pukulah	Hit

## **Q**

Quwamun                      Leader

## **R**

Rewang                      Domestic Worker

RPJMN                      Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional -  
National Midterm Development Plan

Rukun                      Harmony and the absence of overt conflict

## **S**

Sabar                      Patience

SAKERNAS                      Survei Angkatan Kerja Nasional - National Labour Force  
Survey

Sekolah Perempuan                      Women's School

Shalat                      Muslim daily obligatory prayer

SME                      Small and medium enterprises

SPG                      Sales Promotion Girl

## **T**

Tepo seliro                      Live with concern for others

## **U**

UIN Sunan Kalijaga                      State Islamic University

UP2K                      Usaha Peningkatan Pendapatan Keluarga - A Business to  
Increase Income for Prosperous Families

UPD                      Unit Perangkat Daerah - Regional Apparatus Unit

UPT P2TP2A                      Pusat Pelayanan Terpadu Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan  
Perlindungan Anak - The Integrated Services Unit for the  
Center for Child and Women's Empowerment

UU PTPPO	Undang-Undang Pelaku Tindak Pidana Perdagangan Orang - Criminal Law Against Human Trade
UUK	Undang-Undang Kewarganegaraan - Citizenship Law
<b>W</b>	
Wadon	Servant of men
Wani ditata	Willing to be ordered by men
Wanita	Woman
WEAI	Women's Empowerment Agriculture Index

## Related Thesis Publications

### Refereed Book Chapters:

Prihatiningtyastuti, E., Dayaram, K., & Burgess, J. (2020). Skills development and challenges for regional women. In K. Dayaram, L. Lambey, T. Afrianti & J. Burgess (Eds.) *Developing the workforce in an emerging Economy: The case of Indonesia* (pp. 53–67). Oxford: Routledge.

Prihatiningtyastuti, E., Dayaram K & Burgess, J. (2022). Examining gender mainstreaming in Indonesia: A feminist policy analysis. In S. Dhakal, R. Cameron & J. Burgess (Eds.) *A field guide to diversity, equality and inclusion*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, Cheltenham (in press).

### Refereed Journal Article:

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### Refereed Conference Paper:

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### Refereed Conference Presentation:

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### Media Publications:

Prihatiningtyastuti, E. Dayaram, K., and Burgess, J. (2020). Gendered governance gap in the management of water in rural Java, *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/water-management-in-java-adds-to-burden-on-women-and-reduces-their-incomes-141773>



# Chapter One

## Introduction

“I do not wish them [women] to have power over men, but over themselves.”

### 1.1 Research Background

The above-mentioned comment by Wollstonecraft (1995) is quite intriguing, challenging the common view of the purpose of the struggle of any woman which is perceived as to fight in the economic arena, and to compete with men. Yet, it is about the efforts of women to speak up for themselves and on behalf of their fellow women. Women have fought for their own roles as agents and, at the same time, battled for the improved position and status of other women, directly or indirectly, within women's communities. This dissertation takes the setting of women in contemporary regional Indonesia, focusing on the phenomenon of transitioning work within the frameworks of human resources and feminist policy theories.

In recent years, women have contributed their labour to Indonesia's care sector. However, the participation rate of women in the labour force has stagnated at around 51 percent (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2018b). Increasing women's labour force participation rates has the potential to contribute to improving the country's productivity and prosperity (Suwarno, 2019). According to the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance (AIPEG), an increase in female labour force participation to the Group of 20 (G20) target of 58.5 percent by 2025 would contribute 0.67 percent to annual GDP growth, equal to an increase in GDP of US\$123 billion, or US\$432 per capita by 2025 (Cameron, Suarez & Rowel, 2018; Sitepu, 2017).

Another current phenomenon is that the composition of the female labour has transformed in Indonesia since the late 2000s (Matsumoto, 2016). The political system and economic structure of Indonesia have faced an essential shift since the Asian financial crisis in 1997–1998, marked by the reformations of the New Order regime. The economic structure and employment have changed from agriculture to manufacturing and services (Matsumoto, 2016). This shift has resulted in improved

social status, employment conditions and wages for both males and females by their gaining more visibility, and bargaining power both inside and outside the household (Booth, 2016; Matsumoto, 2016). Matsumoto (2016) argued that in general female employment responded more positively to structural change than did male employment. However statistics reveal that rural women have limited participation in the formal labour market (Manning & Van Diermen, 2000; Schaner & Das, 2016). This has been accompanied with increased vulnerability of informal employment (Matsumoto, 2016). These conditions have initiated this present study to observe the regional implications of the shift of female employment from agriculture to industrial care services.

Informal care work is predominantly a women-dominated sector that is minimally regulated and tends to be unprotected by labour laws at both national and regional levels (Nelson, 1999). Informal care work is also often blended with the sociocultural structure which may result in difficulties for regional informal care women workers to see themselves as such and to expand their agency to elevate their social status (Gallaway & Bernasek, 2002). Prior studies find that informal workers often work for long hours, have poor incentives and limited access to social protection (Budi & Ian, 2018; Jordhus-Lier, 2017). The employment relationship between informal sector employers and their workers is based on mutual trust and agreement only. As a result, informal workers are known for the characteristics of low productivity, poor working conditions, poor job protection and insufficient wages (Sari, 2016). The research uses the concept of informal employment as "all remunerative works (i.e., both self-employment and wage employment) that are not registered, regulated or protected by existing legal or regulatory frameworks, as well as non-remunerative work undertaken in an income-producing enterprise. Informal workers do not have secure employment contracts, workers' benefits, social protection, or workers' representation" (ILO, 2015, p. 4). In the context of Indonesia, informal employment is included in the category of labour as workers/labourers as contained in the Manpower Act Number 13, 2003. However, limited government political will to recognise informal sector workers, as workers, excludes them from labour protection law (Sofiani, 2018).

Although the 1945 Indonesian Constitution states that women are equal to and have the same rights, obligations and opportunities as men, in practice women

face some legal discrimination (Bennington & Habir, 2003). Some evidence at the grassroots level depicts those institutions with their policies and regulations are limited in promoting equity and protecting female workers in the informal care sector (Jordhus-Lier, 2017; Manning & Van Diermen, 2000). In other words, the Indonesian regional female labour force has limited access to formal employment with decent work conditions.

Transitioning from working in the agricultural sector to the service sector could potentially have a significant impact on women's economic participation, their earnings and working conditions. Equality of opportunity and treatment for both women and men are part of a global concern to pursue decent work. A limited number of studies so far have discussed female labour participation in Indonesia (Alisjahbana & Manning, 2006; Cameron et al., 2018; Comola & De Mello, 2009; Schaner & Das, 2016). However, the type and quality of work has received less scholarly attention (Floro & Meurs, 2009; Widarti, 2010).

Women's labour transition from informal to formal work in regions has received little attention or, even been neglected. In fact, women contribute to the socio-economy of the household and community, and to the achievement of national development, especially in terms of human resource development. Moreover, local/regional transitioning women are not passive recipients and participants of development, rather they actively engage themselves in and challenge the socio-economic dynamics and cultural conditions in their environment (Berninghausen & Kerstan, 1992). The term "transitioning women" in this study refers to women who have shifted their employment status from unpaid work in the primary sector of agriculture to paid work in non-agricultural industries.

Additionally, previous studies have mainly focused on expanding women's labour force participation (Alam, Amin & McCormick, 2018; Cameron et al., 2018; Elson, 1999; Schaner & Das, 2016). However, women's labour force participation does not automatically guarantee the empowerment of women (Elson, 1999), especially if the effort to increase women's labour participation does not consider the socio-economic aspects that subsequently result in the disempowerment of and discrimination against women (Choudhry, Mutalib & Ismail, 2019). There is no doubt that empowering women is very important for sustainable (economic)

development to bring prosperity for all (Sohail, 2014). Therefore, this present study intends to contribute to previous work on women's participation in the labour market and women's access to decent work through an examination of women's agency whilst transitioning during times of economic structural change, particularly in the regional Indonesian context. Women in Indonesia still face patriarchal hegemony at every level of their lives (Prihatiningtyastuti, 2018; Robinson, 2008).

Against this context, Chapter One lays out my broader argument that is elaborated in the following chapters. I will begin with a contextual explanation of the current features of women's employment in Indonesia in three parts. Firstly, I examine the importance of women's formal work in regional Indonesia and, secondly, examine the impact of women's economic empowerment on family income and well-being. Then I will elaborate on the inadequate existing mechanisms and policies that could enable women to access decent work. Finally, an overview of the rest of the chapters is provided.

### **1.1.1 The Importance of Women's Formal Work in Regional Indonesia**

Formal work is closely interlinked with power in decision making and the capacity to accumulate assets and resources such as land. Where there are limited opportunities for formal employment, women continue to be marginalised in the economic and political spheres. According to the Indonesian National Labour Force Survey (*Survei Angkatan Kerja Nasional/Sakernas*) in 2017 (Badan Pusat Statistik [BPS], 2018) the number of women in the informal sector (61.37%) was higher than their counterparts in the formal sector, which was only 54.34 percent (BPS, 2018). Only a few studies have paid attention to issues surrounding women's transition from informal to formal work. (Ranita & Siddin, 2011; Rothenberg et al., 2016) since it is considered irrelevant or less important to the country. However, the existence of the transition from informal to formal work must be accounted for as data for Indonesian female workers, in order to promote women workers' productivity at the micro level and to improve economic growth at the macro level (Sari, 2016).

This study focuses on the transition from informal work to formal work within regional Indonesia. The study is relevant and important since, firstly, involving women in economic activities has a positive impact on their empowerment

status (Kabeer, 2012; Khan, 2016; Sari, 2016). Secondly, women transitioning from informal to formal work helps support local and national economic growth at a macro level, as well as acting as an important apparatus to reduce poverty (Kabeer, 2012; Sari, 2016).

This study examines how women are able to exercise their agency under existing structural conditions, to reproduce the social practices of empowerment and the formation of women's economic capacities within the regional socio-economic and cultural structures. Structuration theory employed in this study will explain the complexity of interaction between women's participation in formal occupations and their discursive consciousness (women as agents), their practical consciousness (women's individual creative action in negotiating Javanese norms and the patriarchal system), and their unconsciousness (women's individual motivation as habitual life) within an environment that requires women's individual decision making at micro and macro levels.

Women's empowerment is defined as a "female's capacity to exercise choices and agency in key areas of their lives" (Kabeer, 2012). According to Kabeer (1999), the process of empowerment consists of three steps: resources, agency and achievement. Resources, such as money, education and human, are noted as preconditions for empowerment (Kabeer, 1999). Agency is "the capacity to negotiate with power in whatever form—as complicity, compromise, deviance or resistance—and with power in whatever motivation—whether it be intentional or unintentional, voluntary or involuntary, self-expression, self-interest, or group interest" (Parker & Dales, 2014, p. 165). Agency is the capacity to determine one's goals and to act to achieve these goals, for example, in critical thinking abilities and making independent resolutions (Kabeer, 1999). Moreover, achievement refers to outcomes such as educational achievements, enhanced labour force participation, and good health status (Kabeer, 1999). Samman and Santos (2009) argue that agency is a direct indicator of empowerment, whereas resources and achievement are indirect indicators of empowerment.

Prior studies have examined gender empowerment in the development sector (Boateng et al., 2014; O'Hara & Clement, 2018; Richardson, 2018; Schüler, 2006). In addition, many studies have examined empowerment using indirect indicators

such as education attainment, employment, property ownership and financial access (O'Hara & Clement, 2018; Samman & Santos, 2009). Yet there is a developing consensus that these indicators provide ambiguity and inadequate empowerment evidence (Kabeer, 1999; Richardson, 2018). While education access, employment and property ownership provide potential for women's capacity to make choices, agency is arguably the most important step within the empowerment process because it reflects women's actual capacity to make choices (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005; Kabeer, 1999).

To contribute to employment literature and to best capture women's ability and willingness to change their social identity and status, this study focuses specifically on agency and economic empowerment. Agency in previous research contexts refers only to the ability to make choices to transition or not to transition from unpaid to paid work and from informal to formal work (Kabeer, 1999; Sen, 1985). Then, feminist scholars Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) developed a framework of empowerment that comprises two elements that involve the increasing ability or power of the individual to create meaningful choices and opportunity structures, which implies the presence of material or social attributes as preconditions for employing agency. Located within the literature that investigates women's agency in a developing Muslim country context and taking into consideration that Muslims are a majority in Indonesia, this study attempts to examine the working opportunities for and obstacles to rural Muslim women exerting agency in a regional or grassroots context, especially in accessing formal work in care sectors.

### **1.1.2 The Impact of Women's Economic Empowerment on Family Income and Well-being**

The effect of women's employment on marriage and having children has changed over time (Spitze, 1988). Spitze finds scholars have shifted earlier assumptions from negative to positive effects when she reviews studies on the impact of women's employment on families. Three decades ago, most scholars found that women experienced adverse effects from their jobs, such as hazards to marital relations or children's development. In the past, some researchers have argued that women in high-status work prefer ultimately not to marry rather than risk being rejected (Havens, 1973).

A study by Lombardi and Coley (2013) found that low-income women's employment significantly contributes to the level of family income, financial stability, and mental and physical health. Lombardi and Coley conducted their research in the United States as a developed country. They examined the employment of 1,586 low-income African American, Latina and European American women, investigating the interconnection between women's employment quality (wages, and the receipt of health insurance), stability (consistency of work and job transition), and their financial and family well-being. The limitation of this study is that quantitative correlational research cannot be interpreted as causal. This correlational study focused only on measuring the characteristics of the mothers' employment, children, and family rather than other factors such as the quality and stability of child care (Lombardi & Coley, 2013). It might be that quality and stability of child care in the context of this country plays an important role in explaining positive links between low-income mothers' employment and child functioning (Lombardi & Coley, 2013). Those findings give space for this study to investigate the consequences of low-income regional women's employment and links with family income, family structure, and its relationship to their status at family and community levels.

### **1.1.3 Mechanisms and Policies to Enable Women's Access to Decent Work**

The right to decent work is one of the key issues being promoted globally by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2016). Literature across countries has reviewed and examined ways to promote gender equality and opportunities for job creation, rights at work, social protection, and social dialogue as part of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda (Auer, 2006; Burgess & Connell, 2015; Fudge, 2012; Terziev & Arabska, 2017). However, fewer studies focus on women's access to decent work in developing countries (Bivens & Gammage, 2005; Cohen & Moodley, 2012; Fapohunda, 2012; Khan et al., 2019; Lakshmi & Sundaramari, 2016; Mehta, 2016).

Female employment is segmented into specific types of employment; especially around service and caring roles that mimic the household division of labour. The gender wage gap remains significant in developing countries, where women earn an average of 20 percent less than men (Floro & Meurs, 2009). Women's participation in formal labour and access to decent work are specifically

influenced by the multiple burdens of combining reproductive (informal) work and productive (formal) work (Floro & Meurs, 2009; Schaner & Das, 2016).

Stereotyping of roles and jobs into “feminine” and “masculine” norms limits the aspirations, preferences, and capabilities of women’s and men’s job choices (ILO, 2016). While “feminine” occupations typically need interpersonal and emotional skills and are an extension of labour divisions within the family, “masculine” jobs require physical strength, rational risk-taking, and decision making (ILO, 2016). As a result, “feminine” jobs are linked to poor working conditions in lower paid and limited social protection environments (ILO, 2016). In addition, gaps in the division of labour between informal and formal labour still exist, with women spending less time in formal employment and doing most of the informal domestic work (Antonopoulos, 2009; Tokunaga & Hashimoto, 2017).

Reproductive responsibility and social institutions continue to influence women’s participation in the labour market. Child-care responsibilities have become a constraint for women’s involvement in this market (Schaner & Das, 2016). Fewer women with young children work in the labour market than women with older children and those without children. Particularly, women who want to re-enter the labour market when their children get older, prefer to do family work or to be self-employed since there are more opportunities compared to accessing waged work (Schaner & Das, 2016).

Another constraint on achieving equality for developing countries is the role played by social institutions including laws, norms and traditions that support gender segregation (Luci, Jütting & Morrisson, 2012). Various local cultures and patriarchal religious interpretations and practices continue to define the ideal woman as wife and mother, whose primary duty is to care for her husband and children, making the woman’s primary responsibility as a domestic worker rather than as the breadwinner who works in the formal employment sector (Aswathy & Kalpana, 2018; Sechiyama, 2013; Sullivan, 1994).

While the evidence suggests the segregation and exclusion of women from the formal labour market, there are few studies on processes and policies that address ways to improve access and employment conditions. Burgess and Connell (2015)



identified strategies for inclusion to address vulnerable work in developed countries such as the USA, Canada, Europe, Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand. However, there are limited studies on women and regional labour markets in the context of developing countries (Kabeer, 2012).

Tadjoeddin (2014) found that Indonesia is experiencing a shortfall in achieving the decent work agenda and quality employment. Even though the World Bank has elevated Indonesia to the status of a middle-income country, and it has reached the targeted 5-6 percent unemployment rate in 2014, as part of the developing countries, it has not implemented a decent work agenda (Tadjoeddin, 2014). Achieving decent work is not merely about reducing the unemployment rate, but it should also focus on the quality of employment (Tadjoeddin, 2014). Tadjoeddin's study was more focused on accessibility and quality of work in Indonesian employment rather than examining the gender gap in work quality and access to formal employment. Manning and Pratomo (2018) examined the changing labour market in Indonesia since 2009. They showed that there has been an improvement in employment and the minimum wage level, but less progress in labour productivity (Manning & Pratomo, 2018). Manning and Pratomo (2018) reported that the rapid growth rate of formal employment created opportunities for graduates that included educated women. However, they did not analyse the government's policy (e.g., regulations) regarding lower educated workers and lower income female labour in regional areas.

This present study reveals that experience at the grassroots level is not in parallel with the national and regional development goals. However, this study will explain the links between the concept of transitioning from informal to formal work and the concept of decent work by investigating how regional stakeholders have produced various policies and framed regulations that create development programs to promote the transition of informal workers into full-time employment in decent work. Moreover, this study investigates how the regional development policy has positioned transitioning women in accessing formal work in the care sector and how it has promoted women's agency in the society. The thesis focuses on Kabeer's (1999) direct empowerment which is agency, rather than indirect empowerment such as education and property ownership. While acknowledging the importance of all forms of empowerment, the indirect forms are outside the scope of this thesis.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

1. What opportunities and barriers do women experience in the process of transitioning from informal agricultural work to formal care work?
2. How have work transitions impacted women's economic empowerment in the domestic and community spheres?
3. How has regional development policy supported women's work transition?
4. How has regional development policy impacted women's agency as workforce citizens in the society?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

The study has three aims:

1. To explore the challenges and opportunities in women's agency as they transition from informal work in the primary sector of agriculture to formal work in non-agricultural industries; that is, care work in Indonesia.
2. To investigate the consequences of women's economic empowerment through labour participation contributing to their family income, family structure and relationships.
3. To examine how regional development policy has positioned transitioning women in accessing formal work in the care sector and promoting women's agency in society.

## **1.4 Thesis Argument**

The thesis argues that if women are supported to be subjective actors who can articulate their voices, then they can make effective choices that contribute to sustainable (economic) growth. In this context, a model for picturing women's transition in regional Indonesia in accessing formal work in non-agricultural sectors needs to incorporate three critical elements: firstly, social opportunity for and constraints against expanding women's agency; secondly, women's position and representation in their family and community; and thirdly, regional policy that enables women's access to decent work.

To formulate this model, there are three important subject themes or key concepts that need to be considered; namely, women's transition during times of economic structural change, women's agency, and gender-responsive regional policy. A good understanding of this conceptual model will assist regional and national governments when they formulate policies to promote women's agency and pursue a new level of women's employment in regional Indonesia.

## **1.5 Defining the Key Concepts used in this Research**

This research utilises three key concepts: 1. women's transition during economic structural change, 2. women's agency, and 3. gender-responsive regional policies. Therefore, it is important to define key concepts to direct and build a full picture of the study (Payne & Payne, 2004).

### **1.5.1 Women's Transitioning during Economic Structural Change**

Women's agency might have effects and consequences for women in regional areas who transition from the informal agricultural sector to the formal service sector. This concept of transitioning women forms a critical part of the study because structural and cultural factors act as barriers, particularly for less-educated and low-income women (Kelkar & Nathan, 2021). This study therefore explores if and how cultural practices and religious beliefs potentially act as barriers to women seeking to transition from informal to formal work.

To capture the complexities of the phenomenon, this study shows that regional women's transition does not only shift from informal to formal employment, but also shifts in terms of place transition or norm transition from traditional (rural) to modern (urban) norms. As mentioned by Mulyana (2014), urbanisation in Indonesia is also classified by the obscure distinction between rural and urban. This study sees that employment transition might join with place and norm transition. Changes in economic structure enable women to shift their employment. Productive activities enable regional women to move or commute to urban areas where they can participate in typically non-agricultural (care service) employment. Working or living in urban areas affects a shift from traditional to modern norms.

Transitioning women have been absent and under-represented in the development scenario of Indonesia. This present work, therefore, examines the role of women both as individuals and community agents in regional Indonesia.

### **1.5.2 Women's Agency**

Agency has been defined in many ways, such as being part of the empowerment process (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005; Kabeer, 1999; Malhotra, Schuler & Boender, 2002). Other studies define agency as the autonomy or capacity of individuals to determine their goals, to act in achieving these goals, and to transform their prior condition (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005; Kabeer, 1999). In the contemporary context, this study modifies the meaning of "agency" in women's transition during economic structural change, as the capacity of women to make effective choices to negotiate and adapt to a new economic structure.

This thesis illustrates the heterogeneity in women's situations, agencies and strategies used in adapting to the new economic structure. Diversities in women's situations exist, even though they may live in similar regional areas, for instance in the villages in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts, Indonesia. Identities of regional women range from surrendering person to self-selector person, from submissive family member to family decision maker, and from passive community member to active agent of change in their society.

The dynamic of women's agency is influenced by the latest global norms and structural and cultural factors. In the Indonesian context, this study provides an illustration of Javanese regional working women in the dynamic relationship between traditional, cultural, and modern political-economic aspects. The diverging interaction among these aspects has produced more available space for regional women to either expand or inhibit their agencies. As the cases of women workers in the agricultural and non-agricultural care sectors in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts show, these women continue to negotiate their own way between tradition and modernity.

### **1.5.3 Gender-Responsive Regional Policy**

“Regional” describes non-metropolitan and rural areas where women experience more constraints in labour force participation than those in metropolitan areas (Strachan, Sullivan & Burgess, 2002). Traditional patterns of gender segmentation are stronger, leading to women who live in regional areas facing greater gender-specific barriers than those from the cities, such as decision making in public spheres (Forsberg & Stenbacka, 2018). Regional governments need to apply gender-responsive regional policies that assign a subject position for women to make effective choices to evolve to sustainable development. A gender-responsive regional policy should aim to achieve gender equality with specific regulations to guide every stage in the development process.

Each stage of the development process (design, translation, integration, implementation and evaluation) should ensure that women, irrespective of class, age, religion and ethnicity have equitable power with men. In specific economic structural change terms, the government needs to pay more attention to the contribution of transitioning women who change their work from the informal agriculture sector to formal non-agricultural industries to pursue a new level of women’s employment in regional Indonesia. Women can actively engage themselves in challenging the socio-economic dynamics and cultural conditions in place in order to contribute to making a good society together.

Especially in the context of policy, the term “regional” refers to the local rather than national policy. This study utilises the notion of regional policy as policy that concerns the geographical realm of the development process (Friedmann & Alonso, 1975; Gore, 2013). This thesis attempts to explain how empirical facts at the ground level capture real local problems. These local problems are manifested in the interaction between geographic, economic, and sociocultural backgrounds and potential local resources.

Phenomena in regional practices reflect what women experience at the regional level. The loci of Gunungkidul and Sleman with a Javanese cultural background have specific problems, such as stronger traditional norms and less infrastructural support such as transportation, communication, and child-care

facilities compared with that available in urban areas. Therefore, in the recent period of decentralisation, the regional government apparatus has to design and implement local development planning policies based on their own local potential resources, socio-economic background and local problems (Nataatmadja, 2017).

## **1.6 Research Significance**

This study is important for several reasons. Firstly, it contributes to the knowledge of women's transition during changes in economic structure. Women's transitioning that parallels economic structural changes still faces many challenges due to structural and cultural barriers. Women transitioning during economic structural change in Indonesia have been struggling to expand their agency to increase their social and financial status. In other words, women struggle to adapt to situations and gain power or access to formal employment in a new phase of transition from the traditional agriculture sector to the non-agricultural sector to challenge their inferior position. Secondly, it contributes to the knowledge of women's agency around women's labour market transitions. Thirdly, this research contributes to gender-responsive regional policy. This study explains public policy complexities in human resource development, particularly for women's employment support, and the impact of the problematic implementation of gender-responsive regional policies. Regional development in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts has applied a gender perspective as a framework to formally value women's participation.

Fourth, this study explores the changing role of women in the labour market in regional contexts in the Gunungkidul and Sleman districts in Java, which are currently transitioning from agricultural to non-agricultural production. Several studies have examined the changing patterns of women's labour force participation in Indonesia, but those studies focus on more commonly known districts that are well established and popular tourist destinations such as Bali and Lombok (Bennett, 2008; Fagertun, 2017; Ramstedt, 2012).

Fifth, this study provides insights into women's economic role in regional areas in a developing country. To date feminists, including policy makers, academics and activists, usually select the Western approach or perspective in addressing women's employment and the labour force (Chowdhry, 2003; Schech & Mustafa,

2010). These approaches might not be relevant or suitable for application in the specific context of a developing country like Indonesia. Thus, the results of this study provide a more relevant and contextualised framework for thinking about women's work and employment challenges in a developing country.

Six, this study could also potentially critique the way gender experts and policy makers use stereotypical approaches and generalisations when developing solutions to address women's segregation and exclusion in the labour market. It could potentially challenge gender theories that feminists often use to solve women issues in rural Indonesia (Silvey & Elmhirst, 2003; Weijland, 1999).

## **1.7 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is organised under eight chapters including this introductory chapter. In the first chapter, I describe the background, identify the gaps in the body of knowledge, and provide research questions. I also present the objectives and the significances of the study.

Chapter Two firstly reviews previous studies on women's economic empowerment, including women's agency, relevant to this study. Secondly, the chapter reviews some empirical literature pertaining to the effects of women's economic empowerment on families' income and well-being. Thirdly, this chapter discusses how women's agency and economic empowerment are exercised in particular Muslim countries, in transitioning from informal to formal work contexts, and the transition from agricultural to non-agricultural work. Fourthly, Chapter Two provides a theoretical perspective that includes structuration theory and a feminist policy analysis framework. Finally, the last section identifies critical research questions that seek to answer the gaps relating to knowledge of women's participation in and transition to formal employment in developing contexts such as Indonesia.

Chapter Three draws upon existing literature on women's participation in Indonesia's economic development context. Chapter Three covers issues at national and local/regional levels. In the first part of this chapter, there is a discussion of Indonesia's economic development record, followed by a discussion of its implications for women's participation in the labour force. The second section

discusses the trends in women's labour force participation in Indonesia. The third section presents the relevant socio-economic legal and regulatory frameworks which deal with women, and their implementation at national and regional levels. The fourth section investigates how social norms such as state gender ideology, ethnic culture, and religion's interpretation constrain women's economic empowerment. The fifth section examines the gender labour division in unpaid care work. The sixth section explores women's access to education and skills training. It attempts to explain that women face multiple barriers in accessing education and skills training. The following section describes subjective autonomy and collective voice and representation. This section explains that women's economic empowerment increases women's agency significantly at the household level rather than in their collective autonomy. The final section explains how policy decentralisation has two faces as both an opportunity and a constraint for women's economic participation in Indonesia.

Chapter Four describes the methodology approach applied for this research. The chapter outlines the paradigm of research that consists of the ontology, epistemology approach, methodology, research strategy, techniques and procedure, perspective, and the position appropriate for this study. In addition, throughout this chapter, the researcher proposes a new technical approach to explain why the case study is utilised in this project, affecting the research procedure and the analysis.

Chapter Four discusses how, in the phenomenological case study approach, factual and interpretive material may be interwoven rather than just presented as "findings". The richness of women's narratives and experiences is more insightful than merely descriptive explanation. The data and evidence need to be directly interpreted, analysed and discussed rather than just being presented.

Chapter Five presents my research in the field to answer the first research question and explores the economic opportunities for and obstacles to women's agency in regional Indonesia in accessing formal work in the care sector. This section explains that regional women's economic participation in the structural economic transformation in Sleman and Gunungkidul districts has been challenged by cultural and structural factors. Cultural factors include multiple burdens, acceptance attitudes, man's domination, and misinterpretation of religious values.



Structural elements involve limited financial resources, limited education attainment, limited opportunities for skills transition, the rigidity of recruitment and selection processes, limited flexibility of job opportunities, and inadequate infrastructure facilities.

I utilise interpretative phenomenology to analyse style and writing that are directly interwoven between the women's narratives, research findings and interpretation, inference, or evaluation. This interpretative approach of analysis and report writing is chosen to get a better understanding of the situation facing regional women and how they respond to these issues rather than being presented as factual "findings" and delivered unemotionally (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007).

Chapter Six discusses the second research question. This chapter discusses the consequences of women's economic empowerment through labour participation that contributes to their family income, and family structure, and its relationship to their status at family and community levels. This section describes that the opportunity to earn more income affects women's empowerment, which can be articulated into various levels: the individual, family, and community levels. This study finds that regional Javanese paid women workers have various levels of agency when they examine their autonomy to transition into paid formal work to improve their personal well-being. Furthermore, this study suggests that workers who are paid higher amounts do not only contribute to family monetary outcomes but also challenge their status in the family and community.

Chapter Seven discusses the research findings that answer the third and fourth research questions. This chapter investigates how the regional development framework places transitioning women in the regional development policy agenda and how regional development policy has impacted women's agency as employees, human resources and citizens in the society. This research explores how regional development policy has positioned transitioning women in accessing formal employment in the care sector and how it has promoted people's agency in society.

Chapter Seven also explains that local policies in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts have considered the significance of a gendered perspective in regional development programs. However, the implementation has failed to encourage, either

directly or indirectly, women's economic empowerment to increase the subject position of the women and the community's well-being in general, particularly in the context of women's transition from informal work in the primary sector of agriculture to formal work in non-agricultural industries.

Chapter Eight reflects on the overall study and the abstractions of theoretical propositions resulting from the findings. This chapter revisits the entire findings of this research and its contribution to the scientific understanding of (regional) women workers in the transition from informal work in the primary sector of agriculture to formal employment in non-agricultural industries, particularly of women's agency and economic empowerment in accessing formal work in the care sector. This chapter summarises the details of the research findings and links them to prior relevant studies and research literature. A discussion about how the study's findings contribute to the body of knowledge of women's agency in transitioning to paid formal work and of gender-responsive regional policies will also be presented. Finally, Chapter Eight will discuss the limitations of this research and suggest areas for future study that could be undertaken in light of the issues presented.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents an in-depth review of the literature and scientific contributions on women's economic empowerment and women's agency to better understand the concept and measurement of agency and empowerment. An integrative review of specific works is used to synthesise the existing research and provide a conceptual framework and navigation for further study.

I follow Torraco's (2005) suggestion to undertake a four-step analysis procedure - conceptual structuring of the review, describing the review, analysing, and writing an integrative literature review. I also systematically searched literature using the four-step procedure (Jesson, Matheson & Lacey, 2011; Torraco, 2005). First, I defined key terms and keywords (women's transition, women's empowerment - through agency, women's empowerment measurement, gender-responsive regional policy) and use a search engine on all current studies, screen bibliographic databases, and continue to citations. Second, I examined the criteria the articles had to meet to be published in a peer-reviewed journal or book to ensure a standard of quality and credibility, as well as rigour (Mella, 2021). Third, the articles included at least one of the following terms in the titles and/or abstracts: "women's transition", "women's empowerment", "women's agency", or "gender-responsive regional policy" to add new dimensions or advances to the body of knowledge. I summarised my data, created classifications and generated final interpretation criteria.

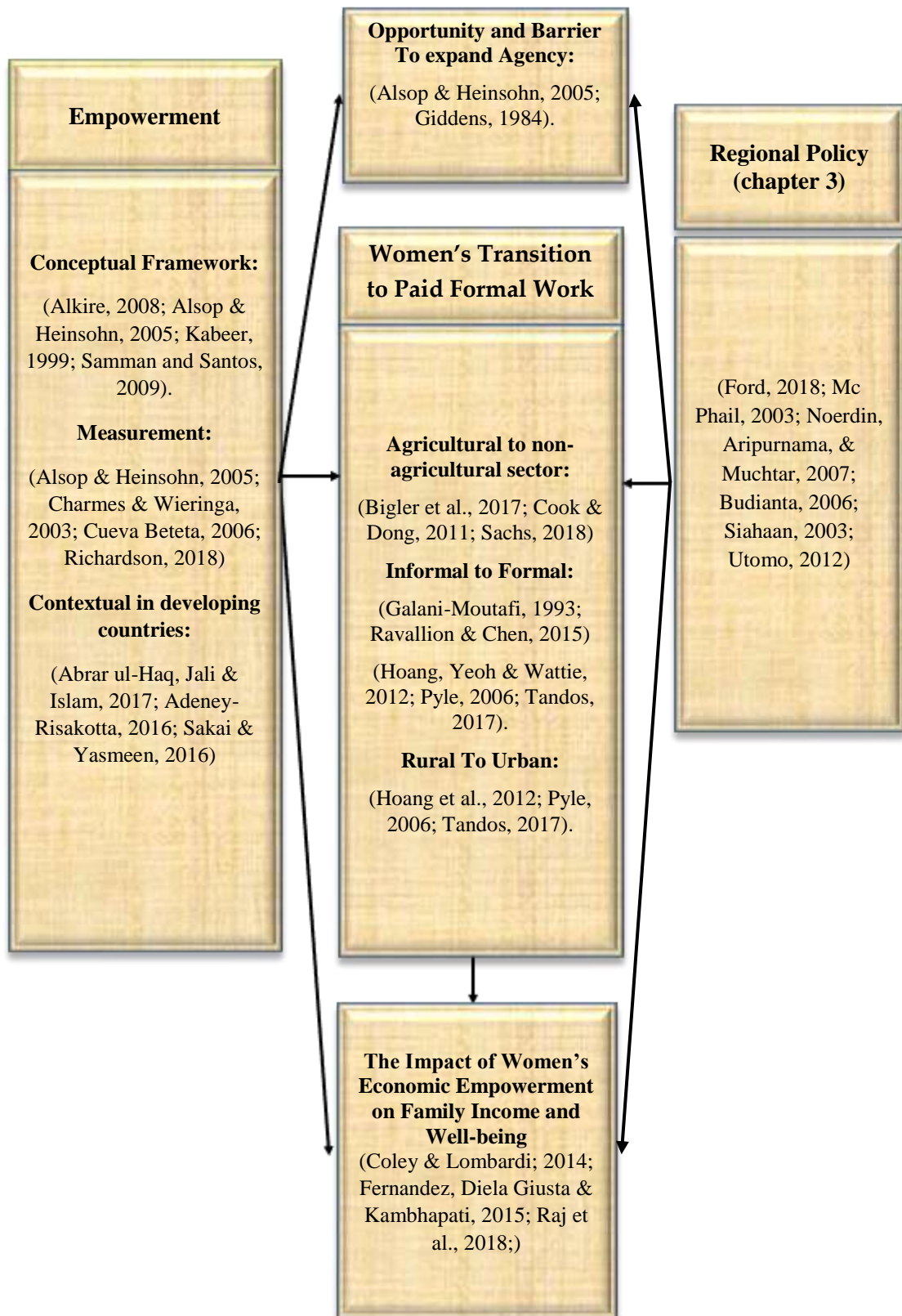
I chose an integrative review rather than the traditional review for three reasons. Firstly, to address existing topics of research such as: 1. women's labour transition, 2. women's direct empowerment - through agency, and 3. gender-responsive regional policy. Since human resources development links with issues and topics that differ along an age continuum from old to new, mostly integrative literature reviews do not strictly separate into "old" or "new" (Torraco, 2005, p. 357). Secondly, to benefit from a technical process that reviews, critiques and synthesises

the literature on the research topic (Torraco, 2005). Thirdly, the integrated review produces an important, value-added contribution to new thinking in the circumstances of the research area (Torraco, 2005).

The outline of this chapter is as follows. The first section reviews the advances in the concept and measurement of empowerment, direct and indirect. Then it discusses the practice of women's agency and the achievement of economic empowerment through their transition from formal to informal working contexts in developing Muslim countries. Next, it reviews empirical studies of the effect of women's economic empowerment on family income and well-being. It then identifies critical research questions that will fill the gap in knowledge of women's participation in and transition to formal employment. Lastly, it demonstrates the theoretical framework that acts as "a blueprint" for this current study.

There are several key studies that direct the investigation to find the gaps in literature and to develop research questions. The literature on women's transition to and participation in formal paid employment can be categorised into five main areas relevant to this thesis: direct empowerment through agency, opportunity for and barriers to expanding agency, women's transition to paid formal work, the impact of women's economic empowerment on family income and well-being, and regional policy (see Figure 2.1. below for the relationship between the concepts).

**Figure 2. 1 Exploring women's transition to and participation in formal paid employment: Literature review and theoretical framework.**



## **2.2 Empowerment Through Agency: Conceptual Frameworks**

Amartya Sen (1985) explained that agency is the freedom of individuals to achieve their desired outcomes. Agency is essential at the individual level to overcome barriers while asking, challenging or changing unfair situations, such as oppression and deprivation (Hanmer & Klugman, 2016; Kabeer, 2008). Improving agency is an essential instrument to reduce gender disparities and achieve well-being (Hanmer & Klugman, 2016; Kabeer, 2008). Kabeer (2005) conceptualises women's empowerment as the process of exercising strategic choices in the main areas of their lives and put them into effect. So, in this sense agency comes first as an entry point to achieve empowerment.

The following narration, in the spirit of Sen (1985), aims to discuss the conceptual framework of women's agency explained by feminist scholars who draw from Sen's definition of agency (Alkire, 2008; Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005; Kabeer, 1999; Samman & Santos, 2009). This study follows Sen and Kabeer's work because it provides some supplementary explanations despite their defining agency as being similar to personal freedom to achieve the desired outcome. Also, Kabeer's work is closer to the context of this study, which is conceptualising empowerment (and agency, which is subset of empowerment) in developing countries.

Inspired by Sen and Kabeer's work, the conceptual framework of agency and empowerment of this study seeks to understand four components of agency: women's capability, valued resources, opportunity structure or structural constraints and collective action. Furthermore, formulating the conceptual framework of women's agency as an individual who makes meaningful choices, Kabeer (2012; 2020) suggested four features of women's agency, hence the subheadings of this section. First, there is a growing concern about women's capabilities ("the power within") as the primary aspect of change. Second, there is significance in valued resources (e.g., material, human and social) to women's capability to practise greater control over critical factors of their lives and their involvement in the larger society. Third, it probes the importance of opportunity structure or social constraint as preconditions to create strategic life choices. And last, there is the importance of women's collective action to gain shared understanding of the institutionalised

injustices they have experienced, and to collaboratively address these gender injustices and challenges (Kabeer, 2012; 2020).

### **2.2.1 Women's Capabilities as the Primary Aspect of Change**

Individual's ability is the core of agency. Women's capabilities in this context refers to women's capacity to achieve their desired outcome (Code, 2020; Sen, 1999). Capabilities are a way for an individual to make effective choices from the range of alternatives provided. Reaffirming Kabeer's definition (1999), Sen (1985) describes agency as the freedom of an individual to act and achieve his/her goals or values which he or she considers as essential. Additionally, it takes bargaining, negotiation, resistance, and manipulation to increase agency (Kabeer, 1999). Both writers agree that agency is related to self-determination and a capacity to articulate, negotiate, and fight for one's interests and goals.

Agency requires a capability to address barriers, to question or face the situation of suppression and deprivation and, as individuals or as a collective, agency also means to have influence and to be listened to in society (Klugman et al., 2014; Donald, Koolwal, Annan, Falb, & Goldstein, 2020; Sen, 1985). Sen argues that agency reflects a process in which freedom and capabilities expand to support people's agency and hence, development (Sen, 1999).

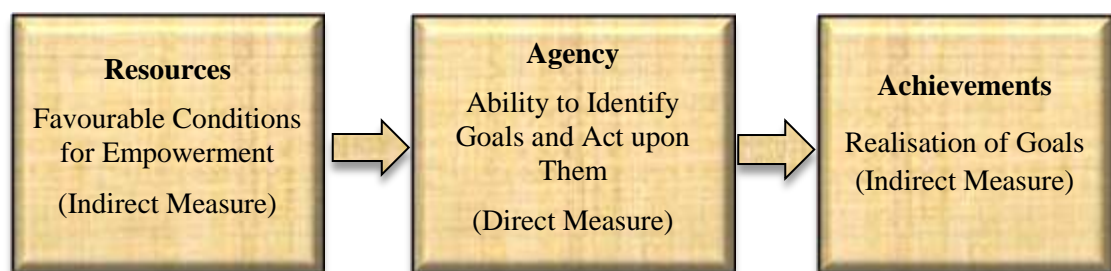
Feminist scholars continue to maintain the argument that capabilities are a way of discussing the ability to develop purposive agency (Avard, Mukuru, & Liesner, 2022; Buvinic, Knowles, & Witoelar, 2022; Kabeer, 2020). Agency is defined as "the ability to act on behalf of what you value and have reason to value" (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007, p. 386) and "the ability to make decisions about one's own life and act on them to achieve the desired outcome, free of violence, retribution, or fear" (Klugman et al., 2014, p. 13). Hanmer and Klugman (2016) maintain that agency is understood as cognitive changes, such as greater confidence, increased autonomy, greater respect and value, and where motivations are confirmed. Furthermore, after reviewing the concepts of agency, Donald et al. conclude three concepts of agency: (1) the capability to assign goals consistent with their values concerning a specific issue or decision, (2) self-conviction of being able to attain these goals, and (3) consideration of taking action to reach these goals (Donald et al.,

2017). This conceptual framework gives space for the present study to examine the micro-level form of agency faced by women who have limited alternatives, such as being in rural, having a low income, having low levels of education and skills, and being in informal work.

### 2.2.2 The Significance of Valued Resources (e.g., Material, Human and Social) to Women’s Agency

Agency is important as an entry point to access empowerment. The latter is typically associated with improvements in welfare across health, education, economic opportunities and public life, as well as security (Kabeer, 2020). In line with the second feature of women’s empowerment, Kabeer (1999) argues that the process of empowerment consists of three steps: resources, agency and achievement (Figure 2.2). Resources, such as money, education and human, are noted as preconditions for empowerment (Kabeer, 1999). Thus, agency is “the capacity to negotiate with power in whatever form—as complicity, compromise, deviance or resistance—and with power in whatever motivation—whether it be intentional or unintentional, voluntary or involuntary, self-expression, self-interest, or group interest” (Parker & Dales, 2014, p. 165).

**Figure 2.2 The basic conceptual model of the empowerment process from Kabeer (1999, p. 437).**



According to Kabeer (2008), women’s agency leads to empowerment when it questions, challenges or transforms regressive norms and institutions that preserve women’s subordination. Through her description of the basic model of the process of empowerment, she has explained three stages in the empowerment process that include resources as preconditions or opportunity structure (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005). Achievement refers to outcomes such as educational achievements, enhanced labour force participation, and improved functional health status (Kabeer, 1999). Samman and Santos (2009) argue that agency is a direct indicator of empowerment,



whereas resources and achievements are indirect indicators of empowerment. Based on this literature, agency encompasses the autonomy or capacity of individuals to determine their goals, to act to achieve these goals, and to transform their prior condition.

Agency has both positive and negative aspects (Kabeer, 2005). The former attributes it to the power made possible, referring to an individual's creative force or ability to exercise and act on his/her life choices (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003; Kabeer, 2005). The negative connotation of agency is the power harnessed by actor(s) to ignore another's agency through any form of violence and coercion. (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003; Kabeer, 2005). According to Kabeer (2005) agency is connected to empowerment; thus, it means not only actively making a choice but also acting in ways that challenge power relations.

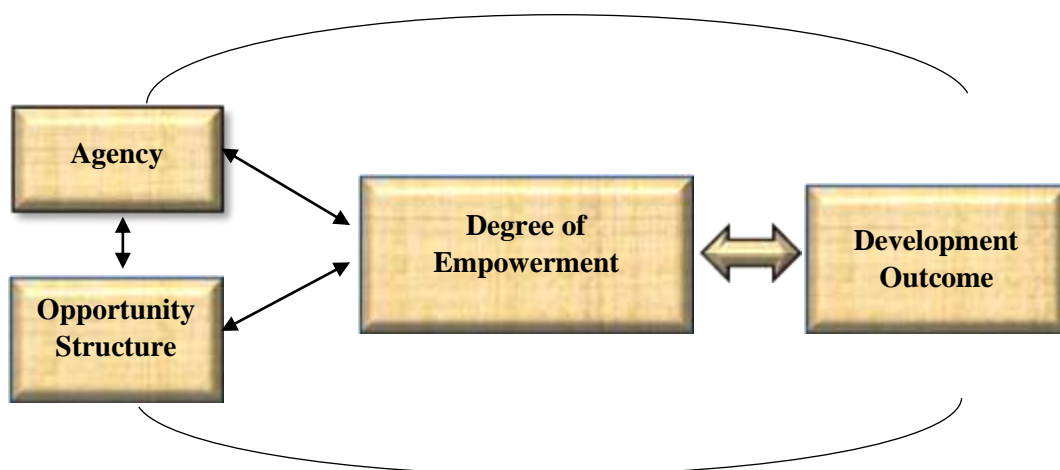
To explain the linkages between agency, power, and empowerment in more detail, Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) develop indicators to classify the types of empowerment based on power variants. In this framework, Rowlands (1997) defines and categorises power as a process in which an individual finds power over (ruling), power to make (new possibilities), power from within (raising pride and self-acceptance) and power with (in a group). Based on Rowlands's power typology, Ibrahim and Alkire propose four indicators of an expanded agency and empowerment process: choices, control, change, and communal belonging. First, choices refer to the extent of power over personal decisions on daily activities. Control is the power of individuals to make decisions in the internal affairs of their household. The third indicator is power from within aspects in an individual's life that assesses the individual's capacity to be an agent. Lastly, communal belonging is the power obtained with other community members that measures the capacity of individuals to change things collectively in their society.

The process of empowerment tends to start from the power within, as the sense of agency means that individuals often bring meaning, motivation, and purpose beside decision making ability and other forms of observable action (Kabeer, 2005). Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) define empowerment as an increasing ability of an individual or group to create effective choices and translate those choices into desired action and development outcomes. After reviewing prior feminist scholar's

works that include Sen (1985), Kabeer (1999) and Maholtra et al. (2002), Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) developed a framework of empowerment that comprises of two elements (Figure 2.3). The first element is expansion agency which means increasing an individual’s ability or power to make meaningful choices. The second element is opportunity structure, which implies the presence of material or social attributes as preconditions for employing agency, such as the law, regulations, norms, and customs that determine whether an individual can or cannot access the assets to attain their desired outcomes (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005; Galiè & Farnworth, 2019; Kalhori & Mohammadian, 2022; McCarthy, Wyka, Romero, Austrian, & Jones, 2022). It is important for researchers to particularly understand how vulnerable women exercise their agency which may produce various outcomes, from employment-related decisions to reproductive choices. For example, a study on development of adolescence agency in Zambia by McCarthy et. al (2022) found that early life resources provide opportunity for expanding agency, and that girls with higher agency and gender-conforming values were at a comparatively lower risk to early marriage and unwanted pregnancy compared to their counterparts. Therefore, the degree of empowerment can be determined by measuring: (1) if an individual has the opportunity to create effective choices, (2) if an individual actually utilises the opportunity to choose, and (3) once the choice is decided, if it leads to the desired outcome (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005).

### 2.2.3 Opportunity Structure or Social Constraints

**Figure 2.3 The conceptual framework of empowerment as developed by Alsop and Heinsohn (2005, p. 6).**



There are various conceptions of agency among scholars. Samman and Santos (2009) differ with Alsop and Heinsohn's idea of agency. Samman and Santos advocate a conception of Sen's approach which focuses on an individual's capacity to employ agency rather than considering personal and institutional preconditions. Samman and Santos (2009) argue that the individual as an internal factor exercising direct control offers the most appropriate indicator of agency and treat institutional preconditions or opportunity structure as an external factor. In this context, Samman and Santos (2009) agree with Kabeer (2005) in that agency and empowerment are important intrinsically and instrumentally. Inherently, agency matters are a significant end in themselves. Instrumentally, agency matters can serve other outcomes of development (Kabeer, 2005; Samman & Santos, 2009), such as Millennium Development Goals.

This differs from Samman and Santos's (2009) argument that focuses more on individual agency rather than both individual and institutional preconditions. The presence and operation of the formal and informal institutions as opportunity structures shape individual behaviours. The existence and operation of laws, policies and regulations determine if people and groups have access to assets and utilise these assets to gain desired outcomes (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005; Donald, Koolwal, Annan, Falb, & Goldstein, 2020; Manlosa, 2022). For example, limited employment opportunities for women have negatively affected women's status and empowerment in Saudi Arabia. Hence, an increasing amount of attention has been directed to understanding and practising empowerment of Saudi women who have gained greater access to employment. Another study supports the existence of different aspects of social structure surrounding women, which may include particular gender relation and patriarchal norms that regulates the development of women's agency (Al-Munaiey, 2020). According to Giddens (1984), the influence of social factors can be linked to the persistence of power, social relations, social structure, and women's agency.

It is therefore argued that women are limited in their agency because opportunity structures limit women's movement. In this context, this thesis understands agency versus structure. Opportunity structure or social constraints limit the space for women's movement and articulation of women's interests. Particularly in this study's context, women can act on their agency in negotiating an economic structural change to achieve their desired objectives. Simultaneously, women's

agency can influence opportunity structures, through their involvement across all aspects of policy making.

This study also confirms that agency is exercised by individuals or as part of the collective at different levels (Cornwall, 2016; Kabeer, 2012); for instance, at the micro-level as a household, meso at the community, and macro at the country or state level (Cornwall, 2016; Kabeer 2012). This study confirms that empowerment initiatives should focus on increasing women's access to resources to start, and end with women valuing themselves as women, as citizens and as human beings, with the capacity to transform their unjust and unequal condition into an environment which supports their right to decent work (Cornwall, 2016; Sholkamy, 2010).

#### **2.2.4 Women's Collective Action**

The third feature of women's empowerment emphasises women's need to collaborate to gain a similar understanding of the institutionalised (rather than personal) realm of the inequity they experience and to act together to solve these injustices. Kabeer (2012) has attempted to translate her women's empowerment insight into a policy-based analytical framework. Kabeer firstly defined women's empowerment as the process through which women as individuals obtain the capacity for practising the strategic form of agency in connection to their lives and to link to the broader structures of barriers that locate them as subordinate to men (1999; 2001). A decade later, Kabeer shifted the definition of women's empowerment from individual to a more collective shape of agency because history has proven that collective struggles of the oppressed are more effective in addressing the barriers reference. She mentioned:

... the conceptualisation of empowerment that informs this paper touches on many different aspects of change in women's lives, each important in themselves, but also in their interrelationships with other aspects. It touches on women's sense of self-worth and social identity; their willingness and ability to question their subordinate status and identity; their capacity to exercise strategic control over their own lives and to renegotiate their relationships with others who matter to them; and their ability to participate on equal terms with men in reshaping the societies in which they live in ways that contribute to a more just and democratic distribution of power and possibilities. (Kabeer, 2008, p. 27)

The later version of women's empowerment in terms of collective agency is Kabeer's contribution to translating feminist insights into mainstream development

policy to achieve women's empowerment and gender equality by capturing Molyneux's (1985) argument that differences and similarities between women's position based on their social positioning would determine women's practical and strategic gender interests.

To eliminate gender injustice based on women's diverse socio-economic backgrounds, we need to understand the distinction between practical gender needs and strategic gender needs (Kabeer, 2008; Molyneux, 1985). Practical gender interests consider roles as well as responsibilities connected with position within the socio-economic structure, and thus, vary considerably across contexts, classes, locations, ethnicities, and so on (Kabeer, 2012; Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989). In contrast, strategic gender interests begin to consider women's subordination to men and extract from this the need for an alternative, more equally and satisfying organisation of society than that which presents to date, in terms of both the structure and realm of interconnections between women and men (Cornwall, 2016; Molyneux, 1985; Moser, 1989).

Women's agency and empowerment have attracted attention among feminist and development scholars (Cornwall, 2016; Donald, Koolwal, Annan, Falb, & Goldstein, 2020; Kabeer, 2021; Meinzen-Dick, 2020; Richardson, 2018; Samman & Santos, 2009). However, there is a scarcity of studies that examine the several forms of women's collective action around gender issues that have led to change at the macro, meso, and micro levels (Kabeer, 2012; Ng, Wood, & Bastian, 2022). This study attempts to investigate to what extent local organisations solve both women's practical needs (women's needs as employees and citizens) and gender strategic needs (as development agents) to make regional occupational/working policies significant for women. Moreover, inspired by Kabeer's (1999) argument on collective women's empowerment, the researcher also wants to investigate the nature of local and national work policy in achieving gender equality and achieving women's agency and empowerment as to whether it is an intrinsic or simply an instrument on the ground.

This section presented an overview of the conceptual framework of agency and empowerment from a range of researchers. Women's agency and empowerment can be extended through the four elements described above. In some circumstances,

this extension is attributed to the valued resources, social constraints, and willingness to take collective action. The next section elaborates on the measurement of women's empowerment in the development report.

### **2.3 The Measurement of Women's Empowerment in the Human Development Reports**

This subsection focuses on the measurements of women's and men's power in the political and economic spheres (gender equality and women's empowerment) across contexts and times at international, national and regional levels, as reported in the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) published by the Human Development Reports, United Nations. Kabeer (2005), Charmes and Wieringa (2003), Cueva Beteta (2006) and Schüler (2006) provide insights into the current impacts, limitations and utilisation of the GEM and in investigating spaces to offer new additional gender-based assessment instruments. Furthermore, this subsection provides the previous researchers' insights into the current impacts, limitations, and utilisation of the GEM to offer new additional gender-based assessment instruments.

In 1995, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) to raise attention on the evaluation of gender equality progress around the world (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003; Cueva Beteta, 2006; Schüler, 2006). This publication has increased concern in international policy debates and the issue of its measurement (Cueva Beteta, 2006). As a result, the UNDP reviewed the current impacts, limitations and utilisation of the gender empowerment measure, and examined the development of additional instruments that measure gender-based empowerment (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003; Cueva Beteta, 2006). The following subsection will examine the conceptual, methodological and data matters linked to the GEM.

GEM is an instrument for measuring gender equity in the political and economic spheres, in decision making, and in having power over financial resources. GEM measures three elements: (i) women's share of parliamentary seats; (ii) the proportion of women in a managerial position in the administrative and professional

sectors; and (iii) women's share of income. Schüler (2006) stated that GEM is a suitable international instrument for measuring women's empowerment since the distinct interpretation of these dimensions is greatly informative.

However, GEM is not without criticisms. Charmes and Wieringa (2003), Schüler, D. (2006) and Cueva Beteta (2006) argue that GEM does not sufficiently reflect gender inequality dimensions neither in developed nor developing nations. The other vocal critics of GEM are Charmes and Wieringa (2003) who not only review GEM measurements but also introduce a new tool to better capture women's empowerment. Charmes and Wieringa's work begins with a review of gender and power concepts, discusses the difficulties linked to the measurement of the GEM, and offers a Women's Empowerment Matrix as a tool to help connect sociocultural, religious, political, legal and economic spheres. They find that while GEM is useful in the field of gender policy (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003), it fails to picture patriarchal power as a source of imbalance in gender power relations (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003). They introduce the new tool, the Women's Empowerment Matrix, to capture sociocultural, religious, political, legal and economic spheres in which patriarchal power is more evident (Charmes & Wieringa, 2003). The limitations of the Women's Empowerment Matrix include a greater focus on gender power relations rather than power relations in social class or ethnicity. Their potential instrument still does not consider the diversity among women who live within different contexts.

Cueva Beteta (2006) argues that GEM is not a complete and unbiased index for measuring women's empowerment. Despite integrating women's empowerment in the public sphere, GEM only focuses on incorporating the most educated and economically advantaged women. Also, GEM excludes significant non-economic dimensions of decision-making power at the individual or private level (e.g., women's control over their own body and sexuality) and at the household level (Cueva Beteta, 2006). However, Beteta's criticism appears to explore issues regarding the concept, methodology, and secondary data of GEM rather than empirical facts in the field, such as directly measuring women's decision-making power from primary data at the ground level.

Cueva Beteta (2006, pp. 235–236) suggests recommendations to improve the GEM. Firstly, the indicator of women’s political power should include the percentage of women representatives in local government, rather than focus on the number of seats held by women in the national parliament. Secondly, GEM should include an indicator of women’s decision-making power at the individual and household level. Thirdly, GEM should involve societal attitudes toward the equal rights of men and women to education, to be political leaders, and to possess economic power. Lastly, GEM should include information about the strength of the women’s movement (women’s collective action to fight for their rights) and legal or regulatory instruments that enable women’s empowerment.

Governments around the globe, including Indonesia, are facing significant challenges when addressing women’s empowerment. Policy makers often rely on UNDP’s GEM data to establish policies or make decisions about gender inequality and women’s empowerment across regions and over time (Kabeer, 1999; Schüler, 2006). However, they potentially produce misleading information because women's conditions in a region may vary with the national index average, which means the national index reading does not reflect the local context (Gram, Morrison, & Skordis-Worrall, 2018; Schüler, 2006). That said, policy makers should not use this national index as an absolute indicator but rather collect primary data or secondary indicators to address the variations across regions. Therefore, a careful in-depth study through face-to-face interviews with female workers is the best perceived method to capture the reality of women’s empowerment in a regional context, (Bell & Bryman, 2011; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Insights obtained from this qualitative data collection technique will arguably support a gender empowerment measure that is relevant for regional policy.

Gender equality and women’s empowerment are the key elements of the Third Millennium Development Goals (Sen & Mukherjee, 2014). The Third Millennium Development Goals are framed to address gender inequality more expansively in multiple dimensions that eventually decrease the global hunger (Sen & Mukherjee, 2014; Kabeer, 2005). The measurement aspects used to evaluate the goal include (i) reducing the gender gap in educational attainment at all levels; (ii) improving women’s share of non-agricultural wage labour; and (iii) improving the proportion of women holding seats in national parliaments (Ahmed et al., 2010;



Antrobus, 2005; Kabeer, 2005). Meanwhile, Ahmed et al. (2010) argued that a parallel investment in women's economic standing, (MDG 3.1), universal primary education (MDG 3.2) and empowerment (MDG3.3) is fundamental to accelerate women's health status and improve their lives. In Kabeer's interpretation of the instrument (2005), each of the three resources, (education, employment and political participation) is fundamental to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

Kabeer argues that gender equality and women's empowerment potentially improve women's status by increasing their ability to make choices for a better life (Kabeer, 2005). She finds both positive and negative impacts of women's access to these resources on their welfare. For example, access to education may increase women's opportunity for a good marriage or legal ownership over properties (Kabeer, 2005). However, if women have less autonomy or capabilities to question the unjust practices in the development process, the transformation into gender equality and women's empowerment will be constrained. Also, access to employment may grant women a higher sense of awareness and higher power in joint property ownership and decision-making process in their family. However, there is a risk of work exploitation that may cost them their health and, hence, the loss outweighs the gains (Kabeer, 2005). Women's participation in governance structures potentially eliminates inequitable practices only if these women are from the bigger non-elite group, be invited rather than chosen, and have a grassroots constituency to represent and speak to (Sen & Mukherjee, 2014; Kabeer, 2005). In other words, gender equality and women's empowerment need a human rights approach and promotion of the women's movement to activate and energise the goals (Sen & Mukherjee, 2014).

Studies on the role of local government in elevating both collective subjectivity and the capacity of women at the grassroots level are limited. Kabeer (2005) and Eyben and Napier-Moore (2009) pay more attention to the role of the international community rather than addressing women in the local region. This encouragement would ensure that women gain the necessary collective abilities to play a role in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment (Kabeer, 2005; Tjandraningsih, 2018; Yuliantini, 2018). In her investigation, Kabeer (2005) mentions access to resources, agency and achievement that influence the individual's

empowerment process, but leaves out the details of other influencing factors, such as the institutional constraints addressed by Alsop and Heinsohn (2005).

Morrison, Raju and Sinha (2007) and Kabeer (2012) examine possible causal mechanisms from the literature on the explanation of the asymmetric linkages between economic growth and gender equality. Prior research supports the argument that gender equality has a positive impact on economic growth. However, the evidence suggests that economic growth is not always sufficient to support gender equality. Kabeer agrees with the classic text of Gayle Rubin (2011, p. 33–65) that describes “the endless variety and monotonous similarity” of patriarchal hierarchies across the world. However, Kabeer’s work leaves unanswered the question addressed in this current study of how changing attitudes and practices of policy makers into policy recommendations to support subjective and collective women’s agency into the concrete outcome of gender equality. This study aims to examine whether the attitude and practices of policy makers in certain research fields contribute to the asymmetric linkage between economic growth and gender equality.

The hegemonic patriarchy embodied in the structural and cultural aspects influences the attitude and practice of policy makers. Policy makers may misinterpret and limit women’s citizenship when formulating policies, hence gender bias or gender-neutral policies. Gender bias and gender neutrality policies limit women’s capacity to expand their agency to challenge their difficult situation and improve their well-being. Many feminist scholars investigate regional public policy in the context of developed countries but miss the role of policy makers in expanding women’s agency in their transition to formal work. Therefore, to fill the gap, this study researches the role of local government in elevating both subjectivity and collective women’s capacity at the grassroots level to make choices for better lives and explores institutional barriers such as cultural and ideological norms in achieving gender equality.

Accordingly, this study investigates whether the official GEM reflects the intrinsic value of women’s empowerment. Facilitating women to value themselves as individuals who can make choices is important because women can then contribute to their own lives, their families, community and nation. This study explores the way gender experts and policy makers have used stereotypical approaches and

generalisations when developing solutions to address women's segregation in and exclusion from the labour market.

## **2.4 Women's Agency and Economic Empowerment in Developing Muslim Countries**

In Islamic teaching and interpretation in social media, Muslim women tend to be pictured as the victims or passive followers of patriarchal norms (Sakai & Yasmeen, 2016), operating in a monochrome picture, covered in a full veil, and associated with collectiveness rather than individuality across Muslim countries and regions (Abirafeh, 2009; Sakai & Yasmeen, 2016). Abirafeh illustrates that socio-cultural factors shape women's gender role in Afghanistan as the keepers of the family honour. In this section, I describe a spectrum of women's agencies in lesser developed Muslim countries in South and Southeast Asian countries, urban vs rural, to understand the subtle differences in women's agency and empowerment.

To address male dominance, feminist Muslim scholars suggest a way for Islam feminisation to rise. Female Muslim scholars have been progressively capturing and applying a gender perspective when they interpret the Qur'an (religious scripture) and other primary Islamic sources (Barlas, 2002; Wadud, 2006). Their contribution examines women's agency and recognises Muslim women as the signifiers in an era of heightened focus on Islam's role in the globalised world (Sakai & Yasmeen, 2016). Women's agency as an analytical point is of considerable significance because they have criticised the tendency to depict Muslim women as followers or victims of the process of instrumentalisation of religion (Sakai & Yasmeen, 2016). They challenge traditional approaches to understanding Islam and gender that depend on textual interpretations of primary Islamic sources, such as the Qur'an, which are proposed by male scholars (Sakai & Yasmeen, 2016; Wadud, 2006).

Muslim women are frequently classified as a vulnerable group and the victims of patriarchal norms. Indonesia – a Muslim-dominant, developing country – is renowned for its plural backgrounds of socio-economic classes, gender, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, local political entity and geography which in turn have created differences in women's experiences and the measures to elevate their roles

and status in the society. This study use the term “developing Muslim countries” to highlight specific country contexts to examine the heterogeneity of women’s employment conditions, the role of agency, and strategies used in adapting to the new “world/global” economic structures.

Sakai and Yasmeen (2016) reviewed five articles that investigate women’s agency to negotiate their role in Muslim-dominant societies in Asian developing countries (Indonesia, Malaysia and Pakistan) and a new settlement in Australia. These studies examine working Muslim women’s narratives in multiple sectors of economic, political, social and cultural environments to identify construction and description in the contemporary era. From this overview, Sakai and Yasmeen conclude that working-class Muslim women in four countries have the autonomy to take control of producing proper gender roles by employing their narratives.

Adeney-Risakotta (2016) argues that national, Islamic, and *adat* or customary laws are complementarily constructing urban Muslim women in Indonesia. Patriarchal values in customary law and religious law often have higher authority than normative national law, placing women in a subordinate position. Muslim Indonesian women have greater equality compared to those women in the Middle East (Reid, 2014). With global legal pluralism, including the liberal notion that men and women are equal, modern Muslim women in Indonesia have been able to challenge male dominance by constructing the present Islamic civilisation in Indonesia (Adeney-Risakotta, 2016; Sakai & Yasmeen, 2016).

Sakai and Fauzia (2016) found that Indonesian middle-class Muslim women can negotiate between their Islamic values and the demands of the family economy. The need to earn family income has motivated working Muslim women to soften their Islamic values, allowing them to stretch their duties from the domestic to the public domain as income earner. Additionally, Sakai and Fauzia (2016) argue that working Muslim women are playing a significant role in softening the Islamic values and interpretation, and give insights into Islamic womanhood in the new millennium in Indonesia.

Adeney-Risakota (2016) and Sakai and Fauziah (2016) examine middle-class Muslim women’s agency in urban areas. These studies also confirm other significant contemporary studies (Arnez, 2010; Dewi, 2015; Platt, 2017; Rinaldo, 2013)

highlighting various ideas of Islamic womanhood in Indonesia. There is room for further investigation into a higher spectrum of Islamic authorities which support modern Islamic femininity that is appropriate for specific contexts (Sakai & Fauzia, 2016), such as lower-income women's agency in the regional context.

Research by Rahman (2018) found that Afghan businesswomen can negotiate between the global discourse of women's work and employment and the hyper-conservative values of Afghan society that challenge women being involved in the business sector. The research was conducted by narrative analysis through in-depth interviews. Rahman's approach is inspired by Sakai and Yasmeen (2016) who argue that narrative analysis as an ideological instrument that constitutes their political message and describes their identities as Muslim women as the signifiers in an era of a heightened focus on Islam's role in a globalised world. They can legitimise their economic empowerment by using Islamic discourse promoted by the Qur'an and teachings of the Prophet, as well as through an Islamic moral ethos, which plays an essential role in moderating the two dominant discourses. Generally, Afghan businesswomen have effectively employed agency over their own experiences by using Islamic discourse.

In contrast, a study by Abrar-ul-haq, Jali and Islam (2017) on rural women's empowerment stated that rural Pakistani women have a relatively low decision-making capacity on issues about themselves, such as in public protests, political campaigns, and economic security. Abrar ul-haq et al. (2017) consider six components that influence women's decision-making ability: the ability to make large purchases; the ability to make significant decisions; relative freedom from domination within the family; participation in public protests and political campaigns; the level of economic security; and political and legal awareness as part of agency forms.

Two weaknesses of Abrar ul-Haq's study are first, the overlooked degree of empowerment in detail, as Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) explain. Second, the missed presence of material or social attributes as a precondition to employing agency, such as the laws, regulations, norms and customs that affect the accessibility of an individual to the assets needed to achieve the desired outcome. The current study investigates how rural women can act on their actual choices in negotiating economic

structural change and seeks to understand the social constraints that rural women face in achieving their desired objectives.

The present study is located within the literature investigating women's agency in developing Muslim countries. This section has presented a nuanced view of women's agency and empowerment in Muslim developing countries. The next section examines the regional women's labour transition from informal to formal work.

## **2.5 Regional Women's Labour Transition from Informal to Formal Work**

Women in regional (non-metropolitan) areas experience more constraints in labour force participation than their metropolitan counterparts (Strachan, et al., 2002). Traditional patterns of gender segmentation in regions are stronger than in urban areas, causing women to face greater gender-specific barriers, such as in decision making in public spheres (Forsberg & Stenbacka, 2018). Strachan et al. (2002) compare the condition of women's employment across various regional (i.e., agricultural, natural resources, resort, and retirement regions) and metropolitan areas in New South Wales, Australia and find fundamental spatial differences between the metropolitan and three regional areas in women's employment opportunities. Other findings by Forsberg and Stenbacka (2018) indicate that location influences local conditions of gender labour markets and gender relations in certain regions in Sweden. They find that the gender gap in employment in the metropolitan setting is less than the gap in agro-industrial municipalities. Forsberg and Stenbacka's (2018) study encourages local planning to consider the importance of the geographical impact on gender in Sweden. While these studies have focused on the importance of the regional aspect in women's employment in developed countries, women's labour participation in Southeast Asia is diverse and unique.

Booth (2016) and Ester Boserup (1970) note that women's labour participation rates in Southeast Asia are quite different from Arabic, African, and Latin American labour force patterns. Southeast Asian women have become more active in terms of income-earning activities, both inside and outside the household (Booth, 2016). The economic empowerment of Southeast Asian women has been

rapidly growing in accessing educational opportunities, and they have been able to control when and who they marry (Booth, 2016; Jones, 2011). In addition, they have moved into professional, technical and administration positions (Booth, 2016). Boserup (1970) and Booth (2016) maintain that the diversity of the female labour force participation rate in Southeast Asian countries is influenced by income per capita, religion, traditional ethnicity, and colonial legacy. Nonetheless, Booth's (2016) study found a similarity of family patterns in Southeast Asian countries that have historically been a reduced form of "strictly patriarchal" as compared to other developing regions. A mild form of patriarchy has manifested itself in the relatively older age of females in their first marriage, the greater ability of females to make their own decisions about their parents' choice of life partners for them, and higher rates of female formal employment than is the situation in other developing countries (Booth, 2016).

Chi-Wei, Zheng-Zheng and Tao's study (2018) found differences between female labour force participation rates (FPLPR) and economic development in Southeast Asian countries where, in Vietnam the FPLPR declined when the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased, but increased GDP promoted the FPLPR in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand (Chi-Wei et al., 2018). Increasing FPLPR in the developed economy occurs because the economic development-led welfare system increases women's participation in education and training, enabling them to improve their human resources (Booth, 2016; Chi-Wei et al., 2018). With education, skills and training, women have been prepared to seek employment in the formal labour market (Chi-Wei et al., 2018).

The transition of women from informal family work in the agricultural sector to formal non-agricultural work not only elevates family and community income but also contributes to increasing national economic development. This can be seen through the contribution of Indonesian migrant care workers (Bachtiar, 2011; Parinduri & Thangavelu, 2008; Rahman & Fee, 2009). Women from rural areas have migrated transnationally as formal care workers including domestic, child-care, elderly care, and health care workers (Hoang et al., 2012; Pyle, 2006; Tandos, 2017). Studies report that despite their vulnerability to exploitation or sexual harassment from care service providers or recruitment agencies involved in international employment of female care workers (Hoang et al., 2012; Platt, 2018; Pyle, 2006;

Tandos, 2017), their contribution to increasing local and national economic development is significant.

Cook and Dong (2011) suggest that political and economic shifts within developing countries may have an impact on the transition of women's income-generating activities, as well as adding multiple responsibilities. For instance, China's rural economy has shifted from a collective farm and centrally planned economy to the expansion of non-agricultural rural industrial employment in towns and villages. These have brought rapid income growth and poverty reduction (Ravallion & Chen, 2015). This shift provides an opportunity for women to participate as formal workers and as contributors to poverty reduction at the family and community levels.

Prior literature has emphasised that, traditionally, women are employed in farm production as informal family workers and are responsible for staple crop production and family food security (Bigler et al., 2017; Sachs, 2018). However, for some women, political, social and economic experiences changed their livelihoods when they shifted their roles and positions from household carers and informal family workers into formal labour. For instance, Galani-Moutafi's study (1993) noted that the transition from agriculture to tourism had improved women's economic position and their capacity to shift the structure of kinship in a Greek Island context. Moreover, improving the opportunity for women to gain income not only results in reducing men's control over the family's property and resources but also strengthens women's agency to make household and community decisions (Galani-Moutafi, 1993).

In developing (and developed) countries, paid care workers such as domestic workers, babysitters, elder carers and home-health care givers are very often undervalued with low wages and less work security compared to the driver and handyman roles that are filled by men (Sigiro, 2018). In this case, Sigiro (2018) confirms Folbre's argument that work opportunities and wage discrimination ignore care workers' rights and ultimately lead to gender inequality (Folbre, 2008; Sigiro, 2018). Care work is undervalued across all countries - since there is a link to domestic household duties that are dominated by women.



This study explores women's participation and transition from informal family work in the agricultural sector to formal care work in a developing country and contributes to the literature and captures women's ability and willingness to change their social identity and status, using agency.

## **2.6 The Impact of Women's Economic Empowerment on Family Income and Well-being**

The effect of women's employment on marriages and children has changed over time; scholars have shifted from negative to positive assumptions when reviewing research on the impact of women's employment on families (Spitze, 1988). Three decades ago, scholars found that women experienced adverse effects from their jobs, including hazards to marital relations or their children's development. Also, some researchers argued that women in high-status work prefer ultimately not to marry because they assumed that the higher the women's economic achievement, the less they desire to undertake the traditional domestic role as a wife and a mother (Havens, 1973).

Coley and Lombardi (2014) conducted a quantitative correlational study on the employment of 1,586 low-income African American, Latina and European American women in the United States. They investigated the interconnection between women's employment quality (wages and the receipt of health insurance), stability (consistency of work and job transition), and their financial and family well-being. The measured characteristics included maternal employment, children, and family (Lombardi & Coley, 2013). The quality and stability of child care were excluded from the analysis because it may be perceived to play a vital role in explaining the positive links between low-income mothers' employment and child functioning (Lombardi & Coley, 2013). The study found that low-income women's employment significantly contributed to the level of family income, financial stability, and mental and physical health. Accordingly, those findings give space to investigate the effect of low-income regional women's employment and links with family income and children's well-being, by considering the quality of child care provision to explain the causality, and by supplementing the survey data with interviews.

Another study conducted in 23 Sub-Saharan African countries examined how women's power relative to that of their husbands affects women's health, children's health and children's education and reproductive outcomes. Women who take control, or being assigned more decision-making power than their husband, would experience benefits to their reproductive health and their children health. However, the control bring consequences that potentially strain their mental and emotional health (Annan, Donald, Goldstein, Martinez & Koolwal,2021)

Raj et al. (2018) reported the impact of women's economic autonomy and financial inclusion on the risk of intimate partner violence (IPV) in the rural India context. They found that women with a paid job were not threatened by a longitudinal IPV hazard. Similarly, several studies on gender-based violence (GBV) in the Sub-Saharan Africa countries found that women's mutual control over men's income is also connected with the risk of men's economic abuse as part of violence against women (Keith, Hyslop, & Richmond, 2022; Ranganathan et al., 2022). Findings of the study noted that women's income generation, together with a sense of financial independence and increased social support, has promoted the idea of "*power within the self*" (Ranganathan et al., 2022). " In their review, Keith, Hyslop, & Richmond (2022) found that while psychological empowerment interventions are successful in managing the symptoms of GBV, social empowerment interventions are effective in changing gender attitudes and norms and reducing GBV. Interventions to promote economic empowerment, however, was equivocal. These findings acknowledge the need for further study of financial abuse, especially how policy makers design women's economic empowerment policy as part of comprehensive efforts to eliminate women's risk for violence against women.

Fernandez in collaboration with Della Giusta and Kambhampati (2015) explored the interconnection between agency and women's subjective well-being in Indonesia. They investigated the relationship between women's ability to make decisions for their household (finance, children, and own leisure time) and women's subjective well-being (feeling good or happy). They utilised a quantitative approach by analysing The Indonesia Family Life Survey - a collaborative project between American non-profit (RAND) corporation and the Demographic Institute of Universitas Indonesia. Their research found that women's agency has a strong relationship with subjective well-being. Fernandez, Della Giusta and Kambhampati

perceive that women's agency is intrinsically valuable. Therefore, to contribute more insights into regional women in Indonesia, this study probes into the quality of women's employment as well as adequate income, working hours, and work security to better understand women's contribution to their family income, and family structure and relationships in a specific regional context.

From the integrative literature review, this study identified the current pattern of agency and empowerment in prior research across the world. Agency is an intrinsic value that acts as an instrument to achieve empowerment, including in the economy. While central knowledge of agency and empowerment is presently well established in the conceptual, measurement, and empirical fields, these are relatively limited to our understanding of the agency pathway in developing countries' empirical facts in regional areas. Notably, in the contemporary context, it includes economic structural change.

This research offers critical contributions to the key studies of women's transition, women's agency, women's economic empowerment, women's empowerment, and regional policy literature in contemporary Indonesia. Chapters on discussions and analyses provide a more relevant and contextualised framework of thinking about women's work and employment challenges in a developing country, especially in regional Indonesia.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

Developing a theoretical framework is the most significant component in the research process. (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). This study employs structuration and feminist policy making theory to investigate women's transition to and participation in formal paid employment in regional Indonesia. Engaging Anthony Giddens' (1984) structuration approach in conjunction with Naila Kabeer's agency approach, the researcher evaluates Javanese rural women's ability and willingness to change their social identity and status, particularly in the context of woman's agency and economic empowerment. In addition, feminist policy making theory is applied to examine how the regional policy is produced to promote a new level of employment in regional Indonesia through a gender lens.

### **2.7.1 Structuration Theory**

Giddens (1984) introduces a structuration theory that describes the linkage of structure and agency. He stated that agency is the intention and capacity of individuals to do things, and the individuals play a role to shape structure as an outcome or medium of an agent's social practice (Giddens, 1984). Meanwhile, structure is a set of rules and resources that facilitate an individual to do similar social practices in different spaces and times.

The stratification model of human subjects (or agents) proposed by Giddens consists of three levels of consciousness (Giddens, 1984). First, discursive consciousness is the agent's ability to express themselves and articulate their knowledge. Second, practical consciousness refers to the actor's knowledge and self-awareness about their behaviour and core values that the actor cannot always articulate, and finally, unconsciousness is the repressed element that is apart from discursive and practical consciousness.

Referring to Giddens' structuration theory, in the context of gender and patriarchy structures, traditional norms have been created due to the gendered labour division in social roles (McMunn, Bartley & Kuh, 2006). Patriarchal power relinquishes both authoritative and allocative resources to men who are traditionally engaged in social roles as income earners, rather than household keepers (McMunn et al., 2006). According to Giddens' conjunction of structure and agency, the patriarchal structure linked with gender role divisions provides opportunities that enable an agency, as well as constraints that filter or inhibit an agency.

This study draws on Giddens' Structuration theory to explore how power relations operate in society and for individuals. While Giddens acknowledged power as an integral element constructed by individuals in a society, he rejected the concept of inclusive and centralised organisational power arguing that the core of power is the individuals' knowledge and consciousness. Therefore, power derives from both social structure and human agency, and can understood from both a micro perspective (power related to voluntary human activity) and a macro perspective (power in social structure).

Considering women's employment, power from a micro perspective refers to the capacity of an individual to draw on their knowledge for making voluntary, effective choices to modify women's employment status. A macro perspective of power relates to a set of structured regulations, norms and customs that allow the implementation of women's agency.

The present study maintains that a patriarchal structure is responsible for gendered labour and role divisions that further affect women's agency. Giddens (1984) posits that his analysis departs from social dynamics which produce habitual practices, systemic structure forces, and individual agent accomplishment.

Giddens' structure and agency theory is useful in this study since he emphasises the effects of structural changes and the active role of individuals in explaining this social phenomenon. The "structure" refers to the cultural constructs that have become the mainstay in the context of the Javanese, like patriarchal values, traditional Javanese norms, and Islamic beliefs. This research identifies institutions within the structure that manifest into national and regional governments, state gender ideology, legal and regulatory frameworks (gender mainstreaming and care policies), and the education system. Additionally, the economic and employment transition from the unpaid informal agricultural sector to paid formal care service sector are examined. The proposition of structure and agency theory facilitates understanding of the complexity of women's agency and economic empowerment experienced by working women in regional areas in moving to urban areas to participate in the labour market as paid formal workers in the care service sector.

The findings of the present study (Chapter Five) indicate how Giddens' theory explains the phenomenon being studied, particularly the role of agents (actors) within the structural changes in their life and surroundings. This study examines whether women can challenge Giddens' assumptions about the effect of structure (cultural constructs, institutions and regulations, and economic and employment transition) on an individual's behaviour. Can women fight for better economic opportunity and family life? What strategies are applied by those Javanese women to breach the structural barriers? The following discussion will describe how traditional patriarchal values and inequitable distribution of development benefits play a role in constraining women's economic empowerment. The following section also examines

how changing social values due to modernisation and globalisation extend women's access to education and financial resources which, in turn, increases women's capacity to transition to paid formal work.

### **2.7.2 A Feminist Policy Analysis Framework**

McPhail (2003) introduces a model for examining policies with a gender perspective to ensure women are made visible. Mc Phail (2003) summarised the discussion of prior feminist policy analysis, and policy makers who question the gender forces acknowledging women's value in changing the gender structure in a certain society and to value all people. She systematically develops several questions as an instrument to analyse whether a policy has addressed women's issues and brought gender into the policy picture. Also, the instrument investigates how a certain policy measures up in relation to value orientation, state-market control, multiple identities, equality, special treatment or protection, gender neutrality, rights and responsibilities, role change and role equity, and power analysis (McPhail, 2003).

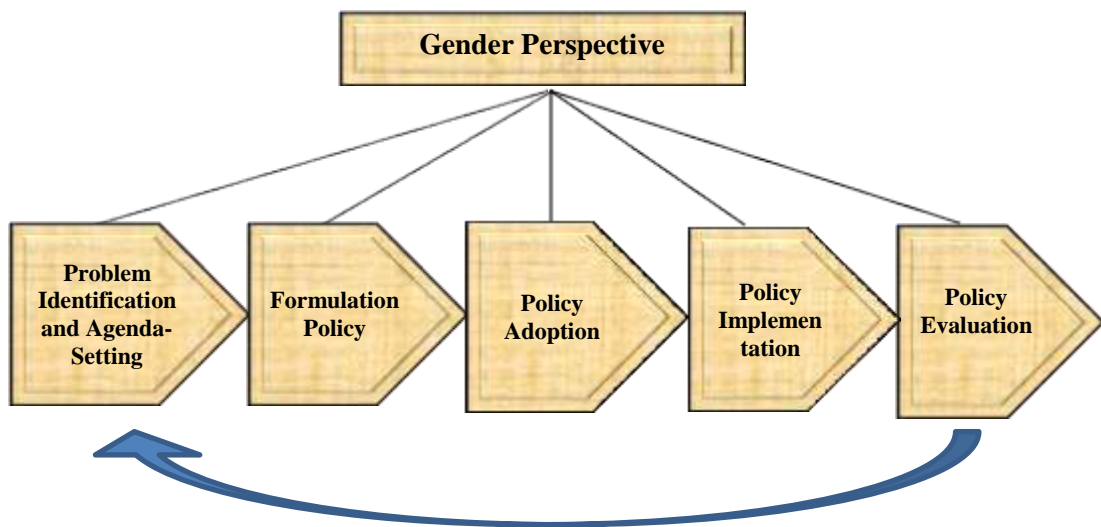
This study investigates the condition of women in regional Indonesia due to inspiration from the feminist policy framework through a gender lens. Formulating seven questions regarding aspects of the feminist policy analysis framework, this study examines the problem identification, formulation, translation, implementation, and evaluation of development programs initiated by the state or regional governments. Moreover, there are seven indicators from the framework which are also applied, they are value orientation, multiple identities, equality, special treatment, gender neutrality, role change and gender relations. These indicators examine the strategies and implementation of the government initiatives. The significance of this study lies on the contribution to the body of research by engaging a feminist policy analysis framework to investigate how structures have hindered or enabled policy making for national and regional development.

The assessment of women's contribution to policy has been challenged across the policy cycle due to the ongoing transition of work status and categories in regional Indonesia. The five stages of the policy cycle according to Anderson (2014) are problem identification and agenda-setting, policy formulation, adoption policy, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. First, problem identification and

agenda setting focus on identifying the problems and setting alternative agendas as public policy targets. Second, policy formulation is typically the stage that encompasses designing and identifying alternative actions for resolving the problem. Third, policy adoption is when policy makers usually accept or adopt a specific solution to the problem. Fourth, implementation policy is the policy makers applying government policy into a field. Finally, policy evaluation that determines the impact of policy reveals the fundamental need for women to be empowered through agency across all policy cycles so that women can make a seamless transition.

Figure 2.4 illustrates the process of incorporating women participation in policy cycles through the embedded gender perspective into public policy cycle. The result is expected to empower women exercising their agency to transition from informal to formal employment.

**Figure 2.4 Integration of a gender perspective into the public policy process.**



Source: Adapted from James Anderson (2014), Dye & Dye (1992), McPhail (2003)

The first question concerns value. Value orientation investigates how the policy pays attention to social justice as well as valuing the inherent dignity of women as part of their citizenship (McPhail, 2003). State-market control questions how the policy considers women’s unpaid labour and work of care that includes care workers as a professional job (McPhail, 2003).

The second question relates to multiple identities. The multiple identities perspective explores how regional policy addresses the various identity classifications of women, such as class, age, religion, and others (Mansfield, Welton & Grogan, 2014). The discussion on feminist policy analysis will cover all women, such as middle class, productive age, Muslim, or married women, and whether the regional policy prevents or promotes the multiple identities perspective in determining the position of transitioning women in their context.

The third question of equality investigates how the policy affects gender equality and equal treatment towards women and men (Lombardo, Meier & Verloo, 2009; McPhail, 2003). This study will examine whether or not the regional policies have incorporated gender equality, treated women and men equally, and paid attention to gender differences to achieve equality. This study investigates regional policies and establishes if informal women workers have been empowered through their agency so that they can participate more actively in formal jobs.

The fourth question addresses equal treatment or protection. Under some conditions, special treatment or protection is needed to achieve equal treatment. The government has developed alternative policy approaches that seek equal treatment by proposing special treatment for women based on their physical and social disparities from men. By protection or special treatment here is meant how the policy gives special treatment or protection to women as manifested in its regulations and programs (Kanenberg, 2013; McPhail, 2003). The term protection and special treatment translates to the way policy acknowledges and manifests in these special treatments of women. This study attempts to examine the visibility of empowerment towards informal women workers to increase their participation in the labour market and sustainable development.

The fifth question is about gender neutrality, exploring how the current policy brings out or hides women or gendered issues as well as the solutions created (Silvey, 2004). A neutral policy is two-edged; it could harm or support women's access to a precious service. It will be against women's interests when men have greater access compared to women to benefit from the policy as women may be less able or willing to attain this access. On the other hand, a neutral policy can work for women though it may disproportionately affect them. This study discusses how



regional policy in Sleman and Gunungkidul districts brings out gendered issues affect women's access to the formal labour market.

The sixth question concerns role change. Available opportunities for role change are an indicator of a feminist framework being utilised in a policy. The analysis investigates whether the goal of a certain policy is for role change or not. Also, the analysis examines the kind of shifting role proposed to increase the opportunity for success. (McPhail, 2003).

The last question regards power analysis. Power relation changes are commonly used to identify whether an alternative policy works within the feminist framework. Power analysis investigates how women participate in the designing, shaping and implementation of the regulation, policy and program in the development process at the grassroots level. Power analysis also tries to understand whether the policy applied empowers women. Furthermore, power assessment questions whether the policy operates to empower women and affect the gender power relationship (McPhail, 2003). This study will discuss how regional policy in Sleman and Gunungkidul districts have empowered women and changed gender power relationships. In a specific context, the set of seven question will be applied to the regional development policy 2016-2021 in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts in supporting women's transition from informal to formal work and decent work.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

Under an integrative review, this chapter has examined the literature to understand the concept and implementation of women's agency and empowerment, particularly in socio-religious, country-level contexts. The theoretical framework of this study engages three main concepts. The first is Kabeer's women's agency that elaborates women's capacity to make effective choices for themselves to achieve their well-being. Second, Giddens' structuration theory explains the relationship between social structure and agency. Mc Phail created a feminist policy analysis framework describing the global and national development in the concept, practice, and measurement of women's agency to achieve their economic empowerment, to make sure that women are visible in the policy cycle.

Regarding the conceptual framework of agency and economic empowerment, UNDP released the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) as instruments to evaluate gender equality progress around the world. However, local stakeholders and policy makers in some countries face some challenges in implementing these measurements because they are not necessarily applicable to the socio-cultural contexts in the given countries.

Regarding women's agency and development in Moslem-majority, developing countries, the researcher found that middle-class women have more control over their economic activities and are not strictly bound by religious and cultural values. The present study will look more closely at women's agency, particularly in lower-class groups and regional Indonesia. Furthermore, women's transition from informal to formal employment generally occurs nationwide, but seemingly is more streamlined among women in urban rather than regional area. The impact of this transition includes but is not limited to increased women's authority over their own agency.

The next chapter will focus on the implication of regional women's participation in the labour force in the Indonesian context. It will detail the socio-cultural contexts, legal framework, and the spectrum of employment which play a role in expanding or limiting women's agency and economic empowerment in Indonesia.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Regional Women’s Economic Participation during Structural Economic Transformation in Indonesian**

This chapter draws upon existing literature on women’s participation in the context of the economic development of Indonesia, highlighting issues at national and local/regional levels. This chapter argues that regional women’s economic participation during the structural economic transformation in Indonesia has been challenged continuously by cultural and structural barriers. Although women in Indonesia have benefitted from the growth in Indonesia’s economy (Schaner & Das, 2016), their participation in civil society is constrained by patriarchal attitudes leading to a belief in and promotion of the “ideal woman” as a wife and a mother assigned to the responsibility to care for family and household.

The outline of this chapter is as follows. The first section discusses Indonesia’s economic development record and its implications for women’s participation in the labour force. The second section discusses the trends in women’s labour force participation in Indonesia. The third section presents the relevant socio-economic legal and regulatory frameworks specific to women and their implementation at national and regional levels. The fourth section investigates how social norms such as state gender ideology, ethnic culture, and interpretation of religious texts constrain women’s economic empowerment. The next section examines gender labour division in unpaid care work. The sixth section explores women’s access to education and skills training followed by a discussion of subjective autonomy and collective voice and representation. The final section explains how policy decentralisation has two faces as both an opportunity and a constraint for women’s economic participation in Indonesia.

#### **3.1 Indonesian Economy: An Overview**

The structural trend in the Indonesian economy is a transition from agriculture to industry and then to the services sector, which, according to Brockman (2014) and Suryadi, Hadiwidjaja and Sumarto (2012), is the fastest growing sector in Indonesia. Along with this transition are the growing gross domestic product (GDP) and income

and a reduction in poverty levels (ILO, 2018b; Schaner & Das, 2016). This employment transition may significantly impact women's economic participation, particularly their earnings and working conditions. Further impacts of longer term growth in the marketplace are declining fertility rates and increasing participation in post-secondary education (BPS, 2018).

The growth opportunities offered by the restructured Indonesian economy have been slow to translate into material gains for women. Indonesia's Human Development Index (HDI) for women is lower than for their male counterparts, that is, 66% vs 71.5% (UNDP, 2018), indicated by their long-term progress in three core dimensions of human development: access to education, a long and healthy life, and a decent living standard (UNDP, 2018). More importantly, Indonesia's Gender Inequality Index (GII) which reflects gender-based inequalities in reproductive health, economic activity, and empowerment, is 0.45, ranking 104 out of 160 countries (UNDP, 2018). These international metrics indicate a considerable distance to go towards gender equality in economic and civic domains.

Urban areas see a growing demand in sectors of traditional women's labour services, such as home care and hospitality services, which opens opportunities, particularly for regional women who previously worked in agricultural or informal sectors. The parallel development of new spaces in urban areas for leisure, lifestyle and hospitality, with the latest trend of digital-driven businesses, has provided more room for regional women to participate in growing service sectors.

### **3.2 Women's Labour Force Participation in Indonesia**

Despite significant GDP growth and reduced poverty (Indonesia, 2015, women's participation in the labour force has remained stalled at around 51 percent (ILO, 2018b). Increasing rates of women's labour force participation potentially contribute to improving the country's productivity and prosperity (Suwarno, 2019). According to the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance (AIPEG), G20 targeted women's labour participation to reach 58.5% by 2025 which will contribute 0.67% to the annual GDP growth, equal to that of the US (Cameron et al., 2018; Sitepu, 2017).

The dynamic of the female labour force in Indonesia has changed since the late 2000s (Matsumoto, 2016). Data suggests that female labour force patterns are responsive to the opportunities provided in the labour market (Matsumoto, 2016) in which young, educated women in urban areas have improved their participation in formal employment (Schaner & Das, 2016; Matsumoto, 2016).

Investigating the trend of female employment from 1996 – 2012 - classified three population groups: young women (15-24), prime working age-women (25-54), and older women (55+)-Matsumoto (2016) found that structural changes existed particularly in young women's employment status moving from agricultural employment to urban employment, and female employment responded more positively to fundamental change than their male counterparts. However, statistics revealed limited participation of rural women in the formal labour market due to their current engagement in informal employment (Schaner & Das, 2016).

A limited number of studies have discussed female labour participation in Indonesia (Alisjahbana & Manning, 2006; Cameron et al., 2018; Margherita-Comola, 2009; Schaner & Das, 2016). One found that the contributing factors to lower participation rates of women in the labour force than their male counterparts are career interruptions, industry employment changes, and education and skills disparities (Cameron et al., 2018). Child-care responsibility is perceived to be the main obstacle for postpartum women to resume their jobs (Cameron et al., 2018; Halim, Johnson & Perova, 2017; Schaner & Das, 2016) because without access to informal child care, these new mothers prefer trading their paid career with unpaid household work, which ultimately costs them US\$255 and US\$319 worth of salary in urban and rural areas, respectively (Halim et al., 2017). Halim et al. (2017) estimate previous earnings as the gap between median income per year in manufacturing and that in farming or sales for urban women of peak age, first giving birth between 22 - 24 years old, utilising the Labor Force Survey (LFS), is USD \$650 per year. This means that if urban women continue working after childbirth, they potentially earn around USD \$650 per year that they can use to pay for private or public child-care services.

The demand for employment in the care sector has increased over the past two decades, encouraging women from regional areas to migrate to urban areas and

even overseas (Ford, 2001; Ford & Piper, 2007) as domestic workers, babysitters, nannies, or workers in elderly care and home health care (Dhewy, 2018). However, care work is generally viewed as either unpaid, less paid, or less secure because the workers are usually retained under poor working conditions, inadequate protections, and low wages, and are susceptible to exploitation or sexual harassment from care service providers, patients or recruitment agencies (Hoang et al., 2012; Platt, 2018; Pyle, 2006; Tandos, 2017). While the shift from agriculture to manufacturing and service sectors, has generally led to improved social status, employment conditions, and wages (Booth, 2016; Matsumoto, 2016), female employees are exposed to the vulnerability inherent in the services sector (Matsumoto, 2016). Also, in a market economy context, care services are often perceived as work that does not contribute to a family income or commercial society (Dhewy, 2018); as a result, care services are often turned over to household management.

According to the Indonesian National Labour Force Survey (*Survei Angkatan Kerja Nasional/Sakernas*, 2017) cited by the Indonesia Central Bureau of Statistics (2018), there were more female informal workers than male formal workers (61.37% vs 54.34%) and a higher figure of female employment in low-paid and insecure jobs (62.22%) compared to their male counterparts (55.10%) in 2015 (Tusianti & Abdurrahman, 2018). Informal employment sectors refer to self-employment (petty trading and home production) and wage employment (casual labour, piece work, and contract labour) (Gallaway & Bernasek, 2002). Reasons such as education background and the presence of young children have lead women to prefer working from home as a paid labourer, or in wage employment with flexitime (Gallaway & Bernasek, 2002). Meanwhile, having infants and toddlers at home does not affect men's decision to work for pay (Gallaway & Bernasek, 2002). To understand why gender gaps in the economic spheres still exist in Indonesia, the following section describes how the legal and regulatory systems specific for women can either promote or constrain women's agency in regional Indonesia to access formal work in the care sectors.

### **3.3 Legal and Regulatory Frameworks on Issues Around Women's Empowerment and the National-Scale Implementation**

#### **3.3.1 Global and National Policy Instruments**

Indonesia's national legal and regulatory framework gives little attention to increasing women's economic empowerment (Ford, 2018). Despite three decades since the ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) in 1984 and two decades since national democratisation in 1998 (Ford, 2018), some laws in Indonesia remain gender-neutral, potentially hiding the reality of gendered problems and solutions while perpetuating discriminative legal implementation towards women. (Ford, 2018). Women are not even specifically addressed in Indonesia's 1945 Constitution. For instance, Article 27 emphasises that all citizens have equal status and the right to work and earn a reasonable standard of living (Ford, 2018). There is no mention of women in the legal and regulatory frameworks of the formal sector workforce, entrepreneurship, or leadership positions in the public and private sectors, or the ownership of assets or access to finance and markets (Ford, 2018). Since rules in labour law are not gender-sensitive to maternal, reproductive and child care rights (Schaner & Das, 2016), there is neither provision for paid time-off during nursing breaks, nor paternal leave.

The rights of women workers are not the priority of Indonesia's government. Law No. 13/2003 on Manpower posits that when both spouses are employed in the public service, family allowances are given to the higher income earner. However, in reality, it is difficult for women to gain family allowances that include health insurance because the 1974 Marriage Law recognises men as the head of the household and breadwinners, hence the allowance receivers (Ford, 2018).

Only few regulations specifically promote gender equality, such as the Presidential Instruction No. 9/2000 on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development that enabled post-Suharto governments to adopt gender mainstreaming strategies, particularly in development sectors, to integrate equity, democratisation, and good governance into the national and regional development planning documents. Indonesia's government attempted to strengthen regulatory powers by proposing the draft bill on Gender Equality to the House Representative Council

(DPR) and the Regional Representative Council (DPD) (Ford, 2018; Gender Institute, 2013). However, since 2012, the parliament debate on this draft bill and issues regarding gender equality have been languishing (Ford, 2018; Gender Institute, 2013).

President Joko Widodo (nicknamed Jokowi) developed *Nawacita* or nine national visions of the Indonesian government (2014-2019) outlining ambitious development goals across diversity of class, geography, and ethnic populations and genders (Suwarno, 2019). The *Nawacita* sets forth 1) Bringing back the state to its duty of protecting the security of all citizens; 2) Building clean, effective and democratic, trusted governance; 3) Developing Indonesia on the outskirts through the strengthening of the regions and villages within the framework of the unitary state; 4) Reforming the legal system and law enforcement, to be corruption-free, dignified, and trusted; 5) Enhancing the quality of human life through the enhancement of education and training; 6) Improving productivity and competitiveness in the global market to strengthen Indonesia's position among Asian nations; 7) Reaching economic independence by mobilising strategic national economic sectors; 8) Revolutionising the character of the country by revising the national curriculum to emphasise citizenship education; and 9) Strengthening "Unity in Diversity" and encouraging social restoration by increasing diversity education and providing space for citizens' dialogue (Indonesia, 2015).

A priority agenda of Indonesia, *Nawacita* is a national aspiration to achieve a sovereign, independent nation of good character by implementing cooperation (Ford, 2018). While significant barriers to the embodiment of this aspiration including poverty and inequality across regions and income groups (Akun & Andreani, 2017; Ford, 2018) remain, Jokowi, under his administration, has continued the strategic financial inclusions developed by the previous government; namely, improving access to savings, credit and insurance; transferring facilities by providing financial education and business identity numbers; and enhancing environmental regulations (Soejachmoen, 2016). However, despite these efforts, *Nawacita*'s vision remains gender-neutral (Akun & Andreani, 2017; Ford, 2018) and overlooks women-specific foci in the strategy for financial inclusion, thus reflecting the government's reluctance to commit to supporting gender equality (Ford, 2018; Suwarno, 2019). Moreover, *Nawacita* does not suggest education that incorporates gender equality



and care ethics (Rahayu, 2014); it fails to encourage women to attend formal and informal education, such as technical and soft skills training, with curricula and methods that accommodate their needs to increase their economic participation.

### **3.3.2 The Implementation of Legal and Regulatory Instruments that Support Women's Economic Empowerment in Practice**

The policies and laws described in the previous section suggest some advancements in gender achievement under the present government of Indonesia. The newest policy initiatives introducing gender equality goals include the National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2015-2019 that adopts the Sustainable Development Goal targets (Ford, 2018; Swaningrum, 2016). This plan proposes some measures to enhance women's roles and representation in political and economic development. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection initiated Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) to accelerate gender mainstreaming policy in collaboration with the Ministry of National Development Planning (Elson & Sharp, 2010; Ford, 2018), and the flagship 3Ends Programs to undertake various women-focused initiatives (Ford, 2018; Tusianti & Abdurrahman, 2018). The GRB employs various analysis instruments of government budget allocation and its outcomes and impacts on different groups of men and women, boys and girls (Elson & Sharp, 2010). In terms of women's economic empowerment, the GRB focuses on gender issues, such as women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid work (care work), the distribution of resources within and between families, and potential budget solutions to reduce gender inequality (Elson & Sharp, 2010). The aims of the 3Ends Program are three-pronged: to end violence against women, to stop the trafficking of women and girls, and to provide economic justice for women through improving access to finance and training (Ford, 2018; Tusianti & Abdurrahman, 2018). These current policies promote the advancement of a national commitment to support women's participation in formal work. However, the progress of women's economic participation remains slow due to cultural and structural barriers (Ford, 2018; Utomo, 2012).

According to Ford (2018), legal systems in Indonesia have been improved and refrain from discrimination against men and women in access to employment and fair work conditions. Reinforcing the right to work embodied in Indonesia's

1945 Constitution, the Indonesian government has stipulated Article 38 of Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights that all citizens have the right to work, to free selection of employment, and to fair conditions of work. Law No. 39/1999 on Human Rights, reinforced by Government Regulation No. 78/2015, assures the right to equal pay for similar categories of work. Regarding recruitment, Articles 5 and 6 of Law No. 13/2003 on Manpower ensure the right to equal treatment during recruitment from employers. Specific to women's employment, three regulations have been established to enhance the current situation. First, Article 49 of Law No 12/2003 confirms the right to voluntarily select and be appointed to a proper job, position or profession, and with special protection for women's safety and reproductive health when working in a risky environment. Second, Manpower Regulation No. Per-03/Men/1989 prohibits employers from dismissing women based on marriage, pregnancy and giving birth. Finally, Law No. 13/2003 ensures women the right to three-months' paid maternity leave during the period of childbirth and to six weeks' paid leave for women who endure a miscarriage.

The implementation of these government regulations has improved some areas of women's lives, including in health, education, economics and politics. There has been a significant increase in women's relative educational position over time from 6.89% to 7.35% (the proportion of tertiary educated women) between 2010 and 2015 (BPS, 2015), and impressive reduction of the fertility rate and maternal mortality rates (UNDP, 2014). Schaner & Das (2016) found improved labour force participation in wage employment among young urban women. Regarding women's participation in politics, Graham (2005) stated that only one decade after the establishment of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Indonesian women became more active in and outside formal government. In addition, the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (2018) recorded an increase in macro measurements of development between 2017 and 2018, such as in the Human Development Index<sup>1</sup> (HDI) from 70.81 to 71.39, the Gender-Related

<sup>1</sup> The Human Development Index measures the length of attendance at school, life expectancy, and income generated (UNDP, 2014).

Development Index<sup>2</sup> (GDI) from 68.08 to 68.63, and the UNDP's Gender Empowerment Measurement<sup>3</sup> (GEM) from 71.74 to 72.10.

However, the existing national gender empowerment index does not consider regional women's agency and economic empowerment as they transition from informal work in the primary industry of agriculture to formal employment in non-agricultural sectors. Women's empowerment status is currently measured using a single quantitative approach rather than a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data, and therefore lacks a detailed record across classes and geographical diversity. Moreover, the current empowerment indicator only embodies the "universal breadwinner" model that promotes women's employment transition from traditional "reproductive" care work to typical male "productive" work (Fraser, 2014).

In terms of the care economy, gender experts and policy makers in Indonesia rely on either the GDI or GEM measures and explain women's participation as "universal breadwinners" in formal employment and decision-making positions (Folbre, 2006). Rather than promoting an increase in women's paid employment by encouraging men and women to cooperate in paid work and family care (Folbre, 2006), the Indonesian government focuses on capturing the outcome of care through improved health, education attainment, and employment participation. Little attention is paid to better measure the monetary value of the input into care that women are primarily responsible for (Folbre, 2006). Therefore, neither Indonesia's GDI nor GEM measures women's and men's participation in their responsibilities for dependants' care, which includes money and time costs (Folbre, 2006).

### **3.3.3 Key Institutions Responsible for Women's Economic Empowerment**

The government assigns this duty to multiple stakeholders, including the Ministry for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in cooperation with the Coordinating Ministry of Human Development and Culture, the Ministry for Development

<sup>2</sup> The Gender Development Index is the measurement that assesses gender differences in human development. The measurement accounts for disparities between men and women in health, education and living standards (UNDP, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> The Gender Empowerment Measurement is the measurement assessed by measuring the number of women representatives in Parliament, professional women, and women's income-generating history (UNDP, 2014).

Planning, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Manpower. The role of each institution is as follows.

The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (MOWE) is the crucial body accountable for implementing gender mainstreaming to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through coordination and encouragement of gender-responsive planning and budgeting at national and regional levels. The Coordinating Ministry of Human Development and Culture is responsible for synchronising policy design, formulation and implementation on issues relevant to human development and culture. The Ministry for National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) plays a crucial role in incorporating gender mainstreaming perspectives into Indonesia's development blueprint document (Elson & Sharp, 2010). The Ministry of Finance encourages gender-responsive budgeting and taxation as well as gender and financial inclusion (Elson & Sharp, 2010). Lastly, The Ministry of Manpower holds responsibility for formulating, implementing and supervising the workforce, labour standards and industrial relations according to policies that affect women's well-being, social security, welfare, protection of reproductive rights, and workplace discrimination (Ford, 2018).

It is apparent that the Indonesian government has established policies and regulations that aim to encourage gender equality but the implementation has neither promoted women's economic empowerment nor protected women workers. The failures and accompanying problems will be discussed in the following sections.

### **3.4 Sociocultural Influences on Women's Economic Development**

Indonesia's State Policy Guidelines or *Garis-Garis Besar Haluan Negara* (GBHN 1983) have recognised women as players in the public sphere and acknowledged their contributions in domestic, societal and economic areas (Robinson, 2008, p. 138). Further, The New Order regime (1965–1998) initiated the concept of "*Peran Ganda*" which determined women's "dual roles" as domestic care givers and income earners for their family (Robinson, 2008, p. 138), thus acknowledging the quality of women's contribution to development (Sen, 1998), and located their role next to men as equal partners (*Mitra sejajar*) and decision makers (Robinson, 2008, p. 138). Since then, subsequent governments have continued to encourage women to take

both productive and reproductive roles (Ford, 2018). Productive role according to Moser (1993, p.29–31), is “work done by both men and women for pay in cash or in kind, including both market production with an exchange-value, and subsistence/home production with actual use-value, and also potential exchange-value”. The reproductive role is defined by The International Labour Organization or ILO (1998, p. 1) as “childbearing/rearing responsibilities and domestic tasks” performed by women, required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force.

However, social norms produce a division of labour that contradicts ideas of citizenship in the country and constrain women’s economic empowerment in Indonesia (Ford, 2018). For example, a strict demarcation between the image of *Ibu* (mother) and *Bapak* (father) in the domestic realm continuously commands women (as wives, mothers and daughters) to dedicate their life to care for their husbands, children and parents (Djajadiningrat-Nieuwenhuis, 1987; Ford, 2018). This role division is perpetuated by the Indonesian Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974 that assigns women to be responsible for family life while the men are the head of households and breadwinners with a prerogative in economic, social and political activities (Robinson, 2008, p. 72). Also, Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia recognises men and women as citizens with equal rights, tasks and responsibilities, but Suharto’s New Order Regime encouraged the idea of what Suryakusuma (2011) identifies as “State Ibuism”—a normative view of women’s main role as wife and mother, thus cementing her place in the family in which men hold patriarchal authority (Robinson, 2008). Therefore, society assumes that the lives of women as wives, mothers and servants are constructed by the state gender ideology and regulated by government intervention.

The enduring hegemony of patriarchal ideology blends with the state gender ideology and ethnic and cultural traditions, especially Javanese culture as the central context of this research. While Javanese culture upholds two paramount values, namely *hormat* (respect towards family members, neighbours and government officials) and *rukun* (get along, avoid conflict and preserve emotional balance) to maintain a harmonious life (Geertz, 1961), these do not promote mutual respect (reciprocity) between people of different ages, sex, occupations or wealth. The socially “inferior” (child, woman, peasant, low-income person) should respect their

“superior” (parent, man, aristocrat, wealthy individual) but the superior are not obliged to return the same level of respect to their inferior counterparts (Geertz, 1961).

Javanese paternalism is the Javanese value that consistently respects and obeys men as husbands, fathers and other father figures, such as uncles and the village heads (Irawanto, Ramsay & Ryan, 2011). Women, therefore, should continue to be submissive to and respect men as spouses, fathers and others in superior positions like uncles, managers, teachers, and village heads, even though this may limit their own freedoms and cause them harm (Irawanto et al., 2011, Munir, 2002).

In addition, the gender hierarchy in Javanese culture places men in a superior position (Kuntjara, 1997; Prasetyo, 2018) as the master or boss of the household (Sullivan, 1994), while women are the submissive, obedient subordinates (*wong cilik*) who must always be cheerful, possess a calm attitude and show a bright, smiling face (Hartiningsih, 2009). Women’s primary role is limited to the domestic sphere as a wife and a mother before taking up other tasks outside of familial matters (Kusujarti, 1997), and some nicknames have been long-established to perpetuate these boundaries. Women are called *kanca wingking*, or faithful followers, and must act as servants to their husbands (Brenner, 1995; Hartiningsih, 2009; Prasetyo, 2018), *wadon*/servants of men, or *wanita/wani ditata*/willing to obey men (Kuntjara, 1997; Prasetyo, 2018; Rahmiaji, 2013). An ideal Javanese woman must stay at home without complaining (Kuntjara, 1997) and submissively follow her husband steps “to heaven or hell” implied in the value *swarga nunut nraka katut* (Hakimi et al., 2001; Hermawati, 2007). This boundary is embodied in the tight traditional Javanese clothing and skirt for women (*kêsrimpêt bêbêt kêtlikung bêngkung*) that constrains their leg movement and the climbing of stairs. All these nicknames interpret woman as individuals who are not free to move or be involved in public activities (Prasetyo, 2018).

Traditional cultural norms, while remaining a pivotal influence on the current day lives of Javanese women (Chun & Khor, 2010; Huda, 2016; Kuntjara, 1997), have blended into a development process that determines women’s status in social, economic and political contexts. After marriage, adult Javanese women are expected to fulfil multiple roles and obligations such as being a homemaker, bearing children,

being involved in the social community, and performing religious activities (Brenner, 1995; Niehof, 1998). Javanese culture acknowledges the significant role of mothers' parenting to teach their children how to "exercise concern for others" (*tepo seliro*), to sacrifice, and to make strong efforts to achieve desired outcomes (Brenner, 2018). By performing *nerima* (gratefully accepting life as it is given), and *prihatin* (focused solicitude), women demonstrate how they willingly accept sacrifice, hardships, and misfortunes in their lives. These hereditary values contribute to Javanese women being known for their patience, strength and self-reliance (Handayani & Novianto, 2004). While the roles of *ibu* (mother) in the *priyayi* class (royal-descendant or high-class Javanese group) are to uphold the dignity of the family by maintaining the correct etiquette, to sustain the network of social and family relationships, and to gain the material tools necessary to live a life in dignity (Niehof, 1998), the low-income *ibu* are merely responsible to be good mothers to their children (Niehof, 1998). However, the field evidence of this study found that these low-income *ibu* in regional areas also had to work to help their breadwinner husbands earn income.

In Indonesia, Islamic teaching and the local culture attribute the responsibility of productive and reproductive work to women, thus perpetuating women's vulnerable position (Prihatiningtyastuti, 2018). The views of women's rights in Islam focus on a central passage from Surah An Nisa'34, the Qur'an cited in the Muslim world, including in Indonesia, to reflect women's subordinate status to men is as follows.

Men are the leaders (*pemimpin/quwamun*) of women, because Allah has blessed them (men) with more than women and because they (men) spend their wealth on women. Because of this, virtuous women are those who obey Allah and restrain themselves when they are without their husband because Allah will protect them. But those wives from whom you fear arrogance-[first] admonish them then [if they persist], forsake them in bed and beat them (*pukulah/daraba*). (Holy Qur'an; An-Nisa verse 34)

Nevertheless, there is a broad diversity in the Muslim world with its various levels of faithfulness to Islamic instruction. Many Muslims believe that An-Nisa verse 34 confirms men's superiority over women (Adamson, 2007; Omar, 2014). This interpretation focuses first on the terminology of *quowamun* in this passage and secondly on the classical understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith (Adamson, 2007) that forces women in Islam into experiencing gender inequality in both familial and

national relations (Adamson, 2007; Omar, 2014). Meanwhile, husbands using their authority as the rulers in the family are perceived to be a potential source of discrimination against women, violating women's rights, and a cause of women's poverty and unemployment (Omar, 2014). This view is perceived by contemporary Muslim feminists as a misinterpretation generated by patriarchal readings of religious texts and historical bias (Omar, 2014). Feminist Muslims consider men to be the "protectors and maintainers" rather than the "rulers" over family members (Omar, 2014) and that leadership in Islam is about responsibility and accountability rather than mere authority, so men who take up this trust (of women and family members) will be accountable to God Almighty on the Day of Judgment (Omar, 2014).

Since Islam and ethnic cultural tradition are two different entities, a major hazard for Muslim society is to confuse and misinterpret cultural practices and religious beliefs (Jaafar-Mohammad & Lehmann, 2011). One common misinterpretation that often leads to divorce is that wives must submissively stay at home as a homemaker regardless their husbands' ability to provide for the family. If they go out to work long hours for additional income, they are perceived as disobedient which may spark household conflict that leads to divorce. In other words, wives must be willing to live in poverty for the sake of harmony (Geertz, 1961). Additionally, the patriarchal social structure of Javanese Islam defines men as the heads of family and hence responsible for earning income for their families (Adeney-Risakotta, 2016; Munir, 2002), while a woman is obliged to submit to her man, as long as he does not ask her to defy Islamic law (Munir, 2002). Therefore, woman has no capacity to resist her husband according to her consciousness (Adeney-Risakotta, 2016) and if marital conflict or divorce occur, she would suffer from negative implications legally and financially (Adeney-Risakotta, 2016). The actual interpretation is that Islam allows divorce under strict condition with a sole purpose to protect the wife's rights. For Muslim couples to divorce, both spouses must be free from external pressure, have given thoughtful and conscious consideration that is free from anger, and one spouse has not performed her/his marital duties/responsibilities (Jaafar-Mohammad & Lehmann, 2011).

Despite Indonesia's rapid modernisation, there has been little change in the gender beliefs that are reflected in the state gender ideology which subsequently



transforms into policy frameworks and programs, and continues to constrain women's economic empowerment within the assignment of unpaid care work (Ford, 2018; Utomo, 2012). Surveying senior university students in Makassar and Jakarta in 2004, Utomo (2012) confirmed that neo-traditional beliefs of the middle class perpetuated the view of men as the breadwinners and women as the secondary earners. As a result, there is a 70% earning gap between paid-work/self-employed men and women reported in the 2007 Indonesia Family Life Survey (Sohn, 2015). From this primary evidence, Sohn (2015) speculates that cultural, religious and social norms in Indonesia have resulted in a high level of discrimination against low income earning women in paid employment. This unjust treatment may stem from employers' perception that women are less committed than men in the labour market, thus enabling men to gain more opportunities, and confining women to be secondary earners despite their higher contribution to their family income (Ford, 2017).

Women often select employment roles that enable them to accommodate family duties which outweigh the importance of waged work and leadership positions (Nilan, 2008; Utomo, 2012). The absence of flexible workplace practices imposes career interruption, thus severely impeding female participation in the labour force (Cameron et al., 2018; Schaner & Das, 2016; Tjandraningsih, 2000). Accordingly, women prefer jobs that allow flexibility despite providing fewer opportunities for advancement (Schaner & Das, 2016). According to Schaner and Das (2016), shifting in this term has a number of implications, either waiting until their children get older before resuming their formal work, or transitioning from formal work to informal work, or even taking up full reproductive work at home. Child-care responsibilities are obstacles to women's engagement in the labour market (Cameron et al., 2018; Schaner & Das, 2016).

In summary, the state gender ideology and religious constraints remain unchallenged in the national context. Therefore, this study will look at the influence of state gender ideology and the interpretation of religious texts on women's agency in society. The situation around women's position within the context of structural transition in specific regional contexts is also investigated.

### 3.5 Gendered Labour Division of Unpaid Care Work

Unpaid care work in this study refers to care services for minor and senior family members. In developing countries, people often define care work as reproductive work with insignificant contribution to microeconomics and macroeconomics (Sigiro, 2018). Therefore, paid care workers, such as domestic workers, babysitters, carers for the elderly, and home-health care givers are often recompensed with lower wages and less work security than male occupations such as driver and handyman (Sigiro, 2018). The under valuation of care work has marginalised women and supported gender inequality. As a result, women enter paid employment alongside fulfilling the expected biological and social reproductive roles in their households (Sigiro, 2018).

Since 2000, the Indonesian government has designed an early childhood project at national and provincial levels called PAUD (*Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* or Early Childhood Education) (Newberry, 2014). PAUD is a volunteer-run community project to support children's empowerment which targets pre-school-aged children from the lower-income society (Newberry, 2014) and to engage women's volunteer labour in their community. However, most development planners of PAUD follow the patriarchal ideology and delegate women to volunteer as an extensions to their roles as "mothers", encouraging women who are already the care givers in their homes to play the same role in this project (Newberry, 2014) thus perpetuating their identity as "mothers" in the private/domestic and in public domains (Blackburn, 2004). Therefore PAUD provides low economic incentives, but imposes an extra burden for these women who feel compelled to participate because this project is based on a parent's responsibility for their children's education (Newberry, 2014).

Regarding senior family members, data from the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics in 2007 stated that people aged 60+ comprise 8.97 percent of the total population in Indonesia, which is projected by the United Nations' World Population Ageing (2013) to double to 19.2 percent in 2050. While more and more elderly people in urban Indonesia are treated in institutions and professional care, most aged citizens cannot afford professional care givers so they are taken care of informally by their family at home (Van Eeuwijk, 2006). In most cases, the care givers in household are the wives, daughters, or daughters-in-law who, according to Van

Eeuwijk (2006), often carry parallel burdens in physical, economic and social aspects, especially when they also work outside the home.

It is evident that the provision of child and elderly care is extremely gendered (Ford, 2017). Women dedicate more than twice as much time than men to care for their children (World Bank, 2012) and the elderly, as well as to health care and education in general (Folbre, 2008). As a result, Indonesian women have a higher chance of an interruption to, or dropping out of, employment after child bearing than in other nations in the region (Schaner & Das, 2016). Setyonaluri (2013) stated that women often have to stop working or suffer career interruption as a result of marriage and motherhood. In other words, child-care responsibilities constrain women's labour market decisions (Halim et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, there is insufficient government economic support for women to assume responsibility for the care of their children and elderly people at home. (Ford, 2018). The government does not offer social security advantages for care givers, assistance or benefits in kind, or incentives to recognise the market value of the work of assistance providers; nor does it stipulate the fees these assistants should charge (Ford, 2018).

Reflecting on the former literature, this study investigates how community and local governments value paid informal and formal care work and the implications for women's well-being.

### **3.6 Women's Access to Education and Skills Training**

Access to education plays a significant role in determining labour participation among women (AIPEG, 2017; Feridhanusetyawan, Aswicahyono & Perdana, 2001; Schaner & Das, 2016; Suwarno, 2019; Tjandraningsih, 2000). The probability of young women entering the labour market increases with their level of education (AIPEG, 2017; Feridhanusetyawan et al., 2001; Schaner & Das, 2016). Therefore, less-educated women in rural areas continue to face challenges to entering paid employment (Nansereko, 2010; Suwarno, 2019; Tjandraningsih, 2000).

Statista (2016) reported that the average adult literacy rate (people 15 years and over who can read and write) in Indonesia increased from 91.98 percent to 95.38

percent between 2006 and 2016. In 2006, adult men had a higher literacy rate (95.16%) than adult women (88.79%), but the trend reversed in 2016 where women outperformed men (93.59 vs. 97.17 percent) (Statista, 2016).

Some measures to elevate women's skills to meet various job specifications include targeted vocational programs. Placement services can effectively link women with skills to relevant employment opportunities (Schaner & Das, 2016). Data from Sakernas (BPS, 2011) show that women who attended vocational schools have a higher chance of gaining paid jobs than those from conventional senior high schools.

Nevertheless, inadequate quantity and quality of training infrastructure can retard accessibility to skills development among women (Tambunan, 2004; World Bank, 2010). Although skills development is pivotal, particularly for less-educated and low-skilled women, Indonesia provides limited schools or training centers to cater for this need, including developmental programs on women's interests (Hartl, 2009; Tambunan, 2004; Widarti, 2004). Low-income and rural women need specific training to solve their long-term problems, such as leadership training in personal development and life skills. (Hartl, 2009). The restricted availability of training infrastructure that acknowledges the voice and choice of women of low income, who are poorly educated, speak only a minority language and reside in remote areas, continues to be problematic for women in some countries including Indonesia (Hartl, 2009). Therefore, training providers should accommodate women's voices as the users of skills development regarding the competencies they want to learn and the way to utilise them (Adams, 2012).

Some training providers offer mobile training, but they often find it difficult to reach isolated areas (Hartl, 2009; World Bank, 2010). Furthermore, the time, substance and approach of service providers may not be suitable to the interests of the local women (Tambunan, 2004), particularly when their levels of education and literacy are low. Many training providers have developed training programs with a top-down approach which, unfortunately, lack of an active and empowering learning process (Hartl, 2009; Tambunan, 2004), and policy makers are not aware that women's interests are not met by the programs. Accordingly, appropriate material, human and social resources are needed to increase women's ability to exercise more

control over their participation in the larger society (Kabeer, 2012; Parker & Ford, 2008).

Women are not homogeneous, and their skills are multidimensional (Chowdhury, 2013). In general, many women are disadvantaged by limited qualifications and irregular and informal employment (Dewi & Rachmawati, 2014). Also, diverse backgrounds of economic class, gender, language, ethnic culture, religion and geography create differences in women's experiences and needs for skills (Suwarno, 2019). Although vocational programs or other technical skills training are perceived significant in fulfilling women's needs to promote their role as a contributor to the family income, training in other sets of skills (e.g., leadership) is essential for women's strategic interests to overcome their subordination to men and assist them during the transition (Atwell, 2006; Kabeer, 2012; Yumarni & Amaratunga, 2015). While jobs with physical tasks require manual or technical skills, employment with more mental tasks require cognitive skills. Possession of non-cognitive skills affects the employability of workers, particularly in the service sector where both personal service and communication skills are significant (World Bank, 2010). In some cases, women need non-cognitive and interpersonal skills to increase their control over their participation in the labour market and to expand communication as well as their leadership skills (Chowdhury, 2013; Cunningham & Villaseñor, 2016; Kabeer, 2012; World Bank, 2010).

Leadership and management skills training are applicable to the labour market and the larger society and are considered fundamental to increasing women's agency by developing attributes such as confidence and authority (Debebe, 2009; Yumarni & Amaratunga, 2015). Although women's leadership in the business sector remains problematic in Indonesia, the number of women workers involved in both informal and formal sectors has increased. However, rarely does the formal sector employ women in managerial positions (Dewi & Rachmawati, 2014). Also, women in the informal sector have not gained independence in economic activities although they have received facilitation from the government. Since the government's facilitation was mainly project-based rather than taking into account women's empowerment as the ultimate goal (Soputan & Kerebungu, 2020). Built upon prior literature, this present research probes into the local governments' extent of

facilitating women's access to skills training that is compatible with women's practical and strategic needs.

### **3.7 Subjective Autonomy and Collective Voice and Representation**

Women gain increasing autonomy in the private sphere after they are involved in economic activities (Fernandez et al., 2015; Yuliantini, 2018). Fernandez et al. (2015) examine the interconnection between Indonesian women's agency (capacity to make household decisions related to finance, children and their own leisure time) and their subjective well-being (feeling good or happy). The research found that women's agency has a strong, although not straightforward, relationship with personal well-being. While Fernandez et al. (2015) applied a quantitative approach in analysing the Indonesia Family Life Survey, Yuliantini (2018) used a qualitative approach to analyse savings and loans activities of five female family heads to understand their subjective and collective autonomy. Yuliantini (2018) shows that the autonomy of these matriarchs increases more significantly at the household level than in collective autonomy. The Savings and Loans microfinance program has been successful in increasing women's access to financial resources and elevating their confidence as individuals at the family level. Schaner and Das (2016) found similar evidence that women who participate in a paid job are perceived to be more greatly empowered, in a sense of having a higher capacity to partake in the decision-making process in their household, and are suffering less spousal violence.

Yuliantini's (2018) work on saving and loans microfinance finds that participation in savings and loans activities has not elevated the collective autonomy of individual women in their communities. Yuliantini (2018) argues their collective autonomy is limited because it lacks capacity-building element that can strengthen women's mobility and networking. Strong mobility and networking is essential for women to develop critical awareness of their subordination and marginalisation. The limited development of women's mobility and networking in their community affects women's strategic interests. Therefore, women's subordination and marginalisation in social networking remains (Yuliantini, 2018).

The studies of both Fernandez et al. (2015) and Yuliantini (2018) confirm what McCarthy et al. (2014) found, namely that projects to empower women in rural

communities have ambiguous outcomes. On one hand, they open new chances for female villagers to be involved in development planning and obtaining space for adaptive learning at the village level. On the other hand, women's decision-making capacity continues to be limited because of the barriers imposed by elite capture and the deeply rooted social hierarchy.

Women's economic participation potentially elevates women's agency across various spectrums. Tjandraningsih (2018) examines the strength of women's decision-making capacity in three living spaces: household, the labour market, and organisations. The results of her analysis show that living in a patriarchal society within a stereotyped gender system is a barrier for women to become primary players in the workforce. Only a few women can practice significant gender roles in the triple activities as a mother, worker, and labour activist all at once (Tjandraningsih, 2018). According to the borrowing power concept offered by Mayoux (1998), there is an increasing number of women workers in Indonesia who are able to exercise power through self-control and autonomy in making decision, and accessing income and resources. But there are fewer women workers who can exert power with collective autonomy (Tjandraningsih, 2018; Yuliantini, 2018). The stereotype of gender roles in labour organisations in patriarchal societies acts as a constraint for women becoming primary players in the labour movement (Tjandraningsih, 2018).

To date, women have limited visibility, collective voice and decision-making power, both in the community and national setting (Ford, 2018; Prihatiningtyastuti, 2018; Yuliantini, 2018). Legislators play a significant role in economic decision making at both regional and national levels, where they have the potential to support or prevent women's economic empowerment (Ford, 2018). The percentage of women parliamentarians increased from 8 percent to 18.6 percent between 2000 and 2012-slightly decreased to 17.1 percent in 2015-(World Bank, 2016), largely due to a 30 percent gender quota being introduced to stimulate women's historically low level of representation. However, for those hoping for an immediate increase in the percentage of women elected to parliament, the outcome was disappointing (World Bank, 2016; Hillman, 2018). There is no reward or punishment for a political party for accomplishing, or not, the mandated 30 percent women's quota (Adriana et al., 2012). The primary platforms and regulations of political parties remain less gender-sensitive and limit the opportunity for female cadres to take significant roles in

political parties (Adriana et al., 2012). Cultural aspects continue to act as the primary barrier to the gender quota's potential to offer more seats to women candidates (Hillman, 2018).

However, once women hold a seat in the parliament, they still experience constraints in affecting policy making because of their often subordinate and marginal status (Adriana et al., 2012). There are only a few women in parliament with sufficient knowledge and skills to contribute to the political decision-making process and specifically to support pro-women policies (Adriana et al., 2012). Decision-making positions are predominantly held by men, even though women are well represented in the public sector (Budiatri, 2016; Ford, 2018). Research by Budiatri (2016) found that women parliamentarians perform more highly than their male counterparts. However, the male parliamentarians play a significantly fruitful role in areas, such as the development of criminal laws against human trafficking (Law on Elimination of Human Trafficking Crimes/ UU PTPPO) and the development of the Law of Citizenship of the Republic of Indonesia (*Undang-Undang Kewarganegaraan*) (Budiatri, 2016).

Women's groups in Indonesia since the early twentieth century have used collective action to elevate women's status and welfare (Lockley et al., 2019). Research found that a variety of backgrounds and motives exist due to different and specific conditions and requirements of each women's group in those collective actions (Lockley et al., 2019). Many Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) are involved in promoting women's economic empowerment with a focus on issues such as religious, cultural, and reproductive health (*Balai Aisyiah*); migrant labour and female-headed households (*Serikat Perempuan Kepala Keluarga-PEKKA*); migrant labour (Migrant Care, Indonesia Migrant Workers Union); and feminist leadership and women's rights (*Sekolah Perempuan/Women' School*) (Ford, 2018; Lockley et al., 2019).

Lockley et al. (2019) show that the gender inequality that women face in their daily lives stimulates women's participation in collective action that operates in formal or informal settings and includes activities of groups or networks of women that want to improve women's well-being (Lockley et al., 2019). Collective action



empowers women to strengthen their access not only to social services but also to legal protection (Lockley et al., 2019).

Based on prior literature, this study seeks to better understand how women's collective actions help increase subjective and collective women's empowerment. We investigate how women's engagement in local groups assists them to solve women's economic empowerment issues, such as in helping women to access public facilities and to improve their livelihoods and gender relations in society.

### **3.8 Decentralising Engagement: Regional Women in Indonesia in the Transition from Informal to Formal Work**

The introduction of political decentralisation has both positive and negative effects on female empowerment. On one hand, it moves from the centralised authoritarian control towards decentralisation that offers democratic power to women in the national legislature. The new system of regional autonomy can provide improvement in political participation, and effective and tailored service delivery to citizens, including women (Noerdin, Aripurnama & Yuningsih, 2007). For instance, decentralisation in several districts like Jembrana Bali, Yogyakarta, Bantul and Kulon Progo has allowed the districts to increase subsidies in essential health services for low-income women (Noerdin et al., 2007). Furthermore, some local governments have started to perceive women as a vital element to development and actively encourage women participation in the decision-making process for resource distribution (Asia Development Bank, 2006).

On the other hand, decentralisation also increases the potential for discriminatory regulations that may negatively impact women (Ford, 2018). Conservative religious interpretations of gender roles have accompanied the decentralisation process (Asia Development Bank, 2006). Some regions have continued to propose and stipulate regional regulations aimed at monitoring and limiting women's movement (Noerdin et al., 2007; Siahaan, 2003; Utomo, 2012). Some local regulations in West Kutai Borneo and Gianyar Bali have denied the role of women in the public space because the local society does not consider women as breadwinners, thus leading to women losing possible sources of income (Noerdin et al., 2007).

Indonesia is well known for its diversity of ethnicity and culture, with 200 divergent ethnic groups scattered across more than 6000 populated islands, 33 provinces and 450 districts (Cribb, 1999; Kimura, 2013). The following section discusses the literature that illustrate various forms of unequal gender relations that are experienced by women workers in some regions, especially in the broad shifting structural trend in the Indonesian economy from agriculture to services, and from low value-added to high value-added sectors.

Akter et al. (2017) examine women's empowerment in agricultural processes among developing countries such as Myanmar, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia by using the Women's Empowerment Agriculture Index (WEAI). Research by Akter et al. (2017) found that Indonesian women living in a patrilineal ethnic culture, especially the Javanese in Yogyakarta and Batak in South Sumatera, play a less active role in the business of agriculture as compared to women in Thailand and the Philippines. They found that women in both Yogyakarta and South Sumatera have limited capacity in decision-making power in rice production, even though the women also contribute to the family income. Women farmers in these particular locations are unaware of their land ownership status and, according to Akter et al., (2017), have no presence or voice in agricultural organisations. Agricultural organisations in Indonesia predominantly have male membership, and those organisations play a primary role in agrarian decision making, especially in Yogyakarta. Decisions about the variety of paddy choices, planting schedules, and irrigation times are made by male members at the community level (Akter et al., 2017). Akter et al.'s (2017) study only measures women's empowerment through women's access to resources and women's involvement in the decision-making process of the agricultural business at the household and community level. Their study does not refer to women's capacity to make a choice about whether to stay or move away from their current unjust situation. Furthermore, their work does not probe to what extent local government policies, regulations and programs are designed to promote women's subjective and collective empowerment.

Studies by Setyaningsih et al. (2012) found that women in West Java can improve their economic status by participating in small and medium enterprises (SME). Setyaningsih et al. (2012) investigate those aspects of SME that could best elevate women's empowerment and found that skills training and leadership style

play essential roles in maintaining the success of their enterprises, apart from educational background, resources, achievement, experience, the need for autonomy, role models, and management commitment. They argue that quality education and employment are effective instruments to enhance women's empowerment in this relation. However, their study does not explore in detail how the role of ethnic cultures operates as a support system or a constraint in the process of women's empowerment. Another limitation of their work is they only focus on the creative industry rather than other types of industry, such as care services.

Women working in small industries still face constraints alongside these opportunities. Examining the opportunities and constraints experienced by women working in home-based industries in East Java, Susanti and Mas'Udah (2017) found that these women receive some benefits, including flexitime and free medical services or extra money for medical treatment. The constraints include the multi-burdens of expectations to play both productive and reproductive (domestic) roles; sometimes their high education attainment is not relevant to their current work and their payment is low. This research recommends that local governments should develop a model of empowering small home-based industries which consider women's practical and strategic interests. The study focuses on issues of women's empowerment, but they only consider women's access to resources without addressing women's ability to make effective choices and to utilise the opportunity to choose. Also, this study only pays attention to women's practical interests in elevating women's socio-economic status rather than to the strategic need to address women's subordination to men. Similar to Setyaningsih et al. (2012), Susanti and Mas'Udah (2017) only focus on small businesses and do not include feminine industries such as care services.

The heterogeneous backgrounds of economic class, gender, language, ethnic culture, religion, local political entity and geography have created differences in women's experiences and the measures to elevate their roles and status (Suwarno, 2019). Gender power relations of class and ethnicity also enrich the levels of women's empowerment in Indonesia. The diversity among women who live in different areas requires specific local approach policies to achieve gender equality and improve women's agency as the outcomes of development. Therefore, the current study explores women's participation and transition from informal family

work in the agricultural sector to formal care work in the Kulon Progo and Gunungkidul districts of the Yogyakarta Special Region province; areas of Javanese ethnic culture and a predominantly Muslim population. We contribute to the current literature by capturing Indonesian women's ability and willingness to change their social identity and status, using agency. Recommendations to incorporate consideration of the care workers' rights to achieve gender equality into policies are provided.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

Indonesia has significantly increased per capita income and reduced poverty levels over the past decades, despite the negative impact of the Asian and Global Financial Crisis on the economy. However, the participation rate of women in the labour force remains stagnant. By analysing reports, statistics and prior works on women's participation and their transitioning to formal employment, we find that the involvement of women in the labour force in Indonesia remains lower than for their male counterparts, and even decreased in 2017. In other words, women continue to have less capacity than men to exercise agency despite Indonesia's sustained economic growth.

The transition from working in the agricultural sector to the service sector has not resulted in a significant positive impact for women's employment in the national context because of four factors. First, hegemonic patriarchal attitudes that are integrated into social norms place women at a social disadvantage. Patriarchal social norms are manifested in gender beliefs about the role of men as breadwinners and women as family and home carers and are major barriers for women's economic empowerment. Second, Indonesia's legal system postulates equal access and requirements to employment for Indonesian men and women; however, the legal and regulatory framework provides limited support for women's economic empowerment. In fact, some national and regional laws are gender-neutral so, paradoxically, are discriminatory towards women. Third, women experience multiple constraints in accessing education and skills training. Lastly, the current national gender empowerment indicator is deficient in assessing women's empowerment across social class and geographical diversity. In addition, the existing national gender empowerment index overlooks women's agency and

economic empowerment as they transition from informal work in the primary sector of agriculture to formal employment in care service industries. As a result, national policy and associated programs lack measures to increase women's agency and economic empowerment in regional and national contexts. This situation contributes to limiting women's autonomy in collective action.

Barriers may vary from region to region. Illiteracy, existing norms, ethnic culture, lack of public infrastructure and geographical aspects collectively inhibit women from accessing education and training. Different backgrounds of economic class, gender, ethnic culture, religion and geography translate into a higher segregation among women workers than for their male counterparts, leading to different experiences and combinations of desired skills.

To further our knowledge of women's agency and empowerment in a local context, it is essential to investigate whether women's improved life quality in the national context has been achieved and impacts gender equality, women's quality of life, and women's agency and empowerment in the country at the grassroots level. Therefore, pertaining to policy and regulations as the opportunity structure of women's agency, this study attempts to understand an additional issue: how regional development frameworks are supporting women's transition from the informal to the formal sector and to decent work in the care sector. This question stems from the researcher's curiosity to understand how the existing gender empowerment index considers women's agency and economic empowerment as they transition from informal work in the primary industry of agriculture to formal employment in non-agricultural industries.

# **Chapter Four**

## **Research Methodology and Design**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains the methodology applied to this study. The chapter starts by outlining the paradigm of research that consists of the ontology, epistemological approach, methodology, research strategy, techniques and procedure, perspective, and the position appropriate for this study. In addition it proposes a modified technical approach to explain why the case study is utilised, which in turn affects the research procedure and the analysis. A modified technical approach in this context includes insider-outsider positions, and computer and human-assisted coding analysis. This current study investigates vulnerable communities, and transitioning communities, in geographically unstable and regional areas. Prior research has predominantly investigated rural women in geographically established areas and relates to more stable employment.

### **4.2 Research Paradigm and Philosophy**

I have utilised a qualitative research design located within a constructivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology. Relatedly the study is predicated on an inductive approach to data collection and analysis. I also employ a feminist perspective and an insider-outsider position to construct a fundamental understanding of the cultural and social background, language certainty, and accessibility. Furthermore, observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions have proved to be reliable methods for collecting rich empirical data and information.

In understanding the research paradigm, Table 4.1 explains the research philosophy and approach used in this research. Furthermore, the following discussion explains why a case study strategy is appropriate for this study and describes the study procedure and the analysis.

**Table 4.1 Research Philosophy and Approach to this Research Project**

	<b>Perspective</b>	<b>Reason Justification</b>
Ontology	Social Constructivism	In this research, the theory is constructed through observing the social reality and observing and exploring the individuals in relation to their experiences and how they perceive and bring knowing reality to their everyday activities.
Epistemology	Interpretivist	This study uses participants' social reality as the research subject to understand the phenomena in which the people live in with their "common-sense thinking".
Approach	Inductive	The outcome of this research is to develop the theory and compare it to relevant literature to confirm or challenge the existing theory.
Methodology	Qualitative	The collection and analysis of data research utilises words rather than quantification to understand social reality and to generate the theory.
Strategic Methodology Research	Exploratory Case Study	The study utilises in-depth exploration of individuals, groups, or phenomena.
Technique and Procedure	In-depth Interview Participant Observation Focus Group Discussion	The study designs a list of questions on specific topics or issues to be included as an interview guide.
Perspective	Feminism	The research emphasises women's views and aims to examine unequal power relations that marginalise and oppress women.
Position	Insider-Outsider	The research employs insider and outsider positions to gain a basic understanding of the cultural and social background, language certainty, and accessibility.

Source: (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2018; Yin, 2018)

#### **4.2.1 The Ontological Approach**

Scholars employ the concept of ontology to discuss the assumption that is produced by the nature of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). My answer to the question of the nature of reality is the ontological position (Sutrisna, 2009). The most familiar ontological division is objectivism versus constructivism. Objectivism is an ontological position that emphasises social phenomena and realities are independent of, or have limited, human actor influence (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016; Sutrisna, 2009). In contrast, constructivism is an ontological position emphasising that social phenomenon and realities are continually being influenced and accomplished by human actors (Bell et al., 2018; Sutrisna, 2009). Therefore, while the objectivist perceives that one objective of the natural reality is experienced in a similar direction by each and every human actor, the constructivist perceives that social reality is constructed by each human actor differently (Saunders et al., 2016).

The ontology underlined in this research is constructivism, where social reality is constructed by women individuals in relation to their experiences and how they perceive and bring knowing reality to their everyday lives (Bell et al., 2018; Paul, 2017). Constructivism and structuration theory share comparable understandings about the relation between the individual and the social reality in which they exist, that is why social reality needs to be understood from the formation of individuals' discourse practices.

A constructivist ontology assumes that social reality is formed and structured according to diverse individual interests, ideological constructs and norms. In short, it assumes that individual's learning takes place through social interaction. So, in this study, women as individuals are viewed as constructing their own meaning about their social lives and related reality. Women then try to negotiate the socio-cultural constraints within their living environment. In this regard the design of the study allows for an understanding of women's experiences in negotiating within the limitations of structural conditions and gender barriers.

In this research, theories will be generated based on observations and interviews which explore the narratives and experiences of women who perform domestic duties and undertake agricultural work, and those in care services.



#### **4.2.2 The Epistemological Approach**

Epistemology relates to how a scholar designs a research agenda, questions, methods and data, and ultimately provides valid and legitimate knowledge to contribute to their field of study (Tsoukas & Chia, 2011). The assumption of epistemology navigates the theory of knowledge and builds a research contribution (Saunders et al., 2016). I work with human actors within their social reality as the research subjects and consider social reality as a way of understanding social phenomena (Saunders et al., 2016).

Aligned with the epistemology of Structuration theory, this study maintains that social reality needs to be understood directly from the subjective interpretation of individuals (women) of their experiences, feelings, meaning-making, translations, and negotiation of their gender identity and social status as women's agency from their own language. Women's perception of their social reality is explored in order to generate theory. This study is supported by the philosophy of interpretivism to understand women's behaviour and to elicit the subjective meaning of the socially active, rather than to explain women's behaviour as the object of natural science (Bell et al., 2018).

In this respect in my investigation I, as an interpreter, try to understand the opinions and the conditions of the informants in a way exactly, or at least close to, what the informants mean. In understanding social phenomena, the result of this study is an outcome from the point of view of women workers as the participants in the interviews. In the first phase, I act as a listener and record the participants' views to capture women's agency and economic empowerment (Creswell, 2014). Awareness and consideration of my own interaction with the reality/subject researched are important to ensure I do not apply my own meaning to women's agency as they transition to formal work.

In the current study I apply flexibility in identifying and exploring information during interviews with the intention of uncovering findings, particularly from the individual perspective, then ultimately to generate the conceptual and theoretical work as an outcome (Bell et al., 2018). I am able to shift the course of my explorations with ease when compared to quantitative research, to increase the

opportunity of genuinely revealing the values of the people I am studying (Bell et al., 2018; Creswell, 2014). I also adopt a flexible structure that focuses on individual meaning and pays attention to the complexity of a situation in my final written report (Bell et al., 2018; Creswell, 2014).

#### **4.2.3 The Methodological Approach**

This study employs a qualitative approach since the information that will be constructed from this study is the effect of an interactive social experience and each subject human actor might differently interpret this social reality or phenomena in the interview (Bell et al., 2018). I use a qualitative approach to explore and understand the interpretations individuals or groups attribute to a human or social problem (Bell et al., 2018; Creswell, 2014). This approach is useful particularly for the scholar who wants to conduct individual interviews to gain in-depth data to describe complex phenomena (Anyan, 2013). The process of qualitative research includes presenting questions and procedures, the participants give the information, then data analysis is inductively developed from specifics to general themes, and I create interpretations of the meaning of the data (Bell et al., 2018; Creswell, 2014). As a researcher, I stayed in the field for several weeks to collect as much data as possible in connection with the research questions (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative studies are useful in producing substantial descriptive detail which helps to emphasise the significance of the contextual understanding of social behaviour. It means that I must understand the participant's behaviour, and believe in and value the context of the social setting (Bell et al., 2018). In this direction, behaviour that may emerge as irrational or odd can make perfect sense when I understand the specific environment in which that behaviour operates (Bell et al., 2018).

This qualitative research is an inductive study to identify the agency of women workers in the transition from informal to formal work in regional Indonesia. For fieldwork, I employ three data collection methods; namely, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. As an investigator, I carefully develop interview questions to demonstrate my curiosity and openness toward the meanings shared by participants in relation to the construct of women's agency as they transition to formal work (Creswell, 2014).

In Indonesia, especially in Javanese ethnic culture, various conditions such as gender, marital status and ethnicity, as well as class may affect data collection during fieldwork (Warren & Hackney, 2000). This suggests that the investigator might find various answers to research questions depending on whether the informant is male or female, single or married, and middle or lower class. To obtain local access, acceptance and trust, the investigator should apply various strategies in rural Java, especially if investigating sensitive themes like reproductive health and domestic violence issues. For example, a Javanese woman may not speak openly in a group discussion interview as she might hold reservations about providing answers which are different from her fellow interviewees' answers. Such unique characteristics and cultural practices are well documented in prior studies (Andayani, 2001; Berman, 1999; Smith-Hefner, 1988, 2007). Therefore, focus group discussions on how women's economic empowerment influences their decision making on reproductive health is considered less effective in gaining valid data since some women who are higher in their social status often interrupt an explanation of fellows from a lower social status (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009; Brannen & Pattman, 2005). To best obtain valid data, which truly represents the interviewees' voices in the cultural context of Javanese women, this study employs individual semi-structured in-depth interviews using a mix of both Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia languages.

During the interviews, when asking the informants sensitive questions about their income, relationships with their spouses, division of labour and reproductive health, I was aware of the need to understand appropriateness of the questions. Giggling, soft tones, short answers, *aman* (safe) or covering of the mouth were common when a woman was answering questions about these issues. These gestures indicated to me that women might be embarrassed, or upset, or disappointed in talking about their limited income, relationships with their spouses, division of labour, or reproductive health practices. Several women avoided eye contact, had watering eyes, or even cried in the middle of the interviews. Sometimes their voices were trembling with emotion when they shared their bitter experiences of the domestic violence of their ex-husbands or their disappointment in their husbands for not approving of them looking for another job. Speaking in a humorous way is another strategy for increasing the close relationship between interviewer and

informants and for encouraging women to answer questions about their relationships with their spouses.

During two-month fieldwork, I adopted a flexible approach to support meaningful data collection. Initially I employed individual semi-structured in-depth interviews to access data from local government officers in Gunungkidul District including Manpower Department, Regional Development Planning Agencies, village societies, and women's empowerment agencies. In Sleman District, I accepted the offer from an officer of the Regional Development Planning Agency to arrange focus group discussion meetings (FGD) with some regional government officers who work with women and individuals in the economic development area. The FGD meeting produced dynamic, fruitful discussions. Some explanations from one sector were confirmed, corrected, or completed by information from another sector. The FGD provided an opportunity for me to observe the dynamic interaction and solid cooperation between the members of the group and to identify the way people perceived certain issues and express their opinions to their peers (Jangsten, Hellström & Berg, 2010; Lindh, Severinsson & Berg, 2007).

In the second phase, this study undertakes a documentary analysis of local governments' annual reports (Gunungkidul and Sleman). According to Bowen (2009), documentary analysis enables a researcher to obtain background and context, suggests supplementary questions to be asked, provides additional data and a tool for tracking change and development, and provides verification of findings from various data sources. This study carefully conducted documentary (secondary data) analysis requiring that secondary data such as United Nations/ILO reports, Indonesia's national labour force survey (SAKERNAS), and the middle term national and regional development planning documents be examined and interpreted to gain meaning, obtain understanding, and construct empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss (2014). Using documentary analysis, I reviewed the number and ratio of female to male labour force participation from ILO reports, demographic and labour supply information from SAKERNAS, and the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM) from the national and regional development planning documents which are utilised to measure a standard of quality of life (HDI) and women's empowerment (GEM) both nationally and across districts between Gunungkidul, Sleman and other districts. The secondary data is analysed

together with data from individual interviews and on-site observations, using a thematic approach (Bowen, 2009).

In the third phase, since the employment of interviews might be considered potentially superficial or biased, further investigation to provide greater in-depth insights was undertaken, using on-site observation. The latter also supports the epistemological approach that underpins the study's methodology. I employed observation to create closer contact with people's behaviour in the social context, mapped out fully over a long period of time (Bryman, 2011; Mohajan, 2018). In this phase, I also practised writing a diary of fieldwork experiences, to note all my observations of women workers' daily activities, such as observations made of the activities of one female head of village in the afternoon while she also practised as village midwife, and activities of the child-care workers in their workplaces.

#### **4.2.4 Case Study Analysis**

This section provides an in-depth rationale for the case study as a research strategy. As part of this investigation, I describe an extensive literature review of case study research and offer the results of this review.

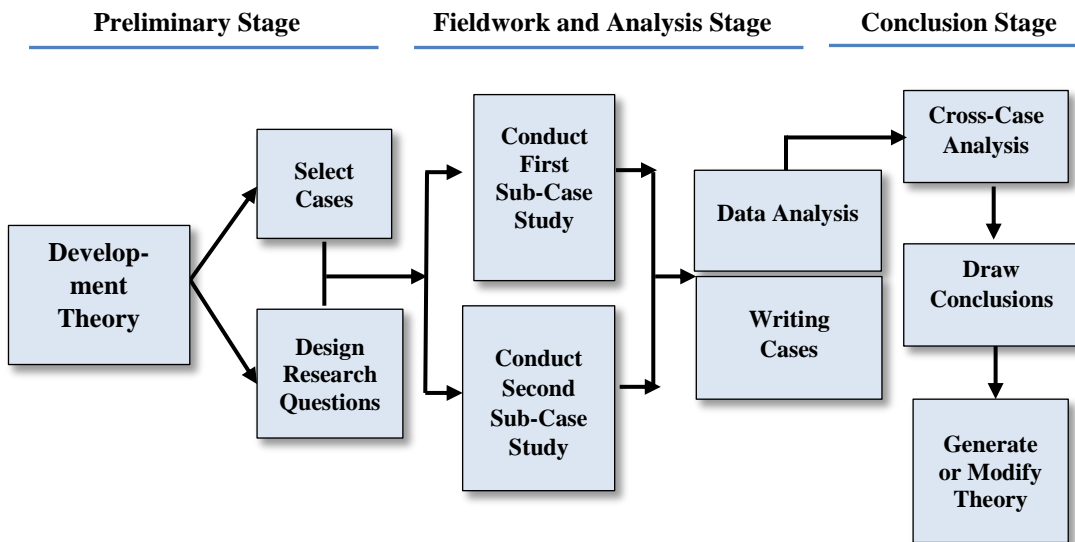
According to Platt (1992, p. 46), a case study is "logic of design ... a strategy to be preferred when circumstances and research problems are appropriate rather than an ideological commitment to be followed whatever the circumstances". Brown (2008) offers descriptive details about how the research location functions, and how to enhance understanding of a specific phenomenon. A case study is distinguished from other research approaches because the concentration of the research is a bordered system or phenomenon or case (Brown, 2008).

Prior research has explored the case study as an in-depth research process, such as by Merriam (1988), Yin (Yin, 1994, 2011, 2018), Stake (1978), Eisenhardt (1989) and Dooley (2002). Brown's work (2008), that reviewed the extensive literature on case study research, introduced me to the first review on case study research and to ongoing debates of the case study's value. For instance, Merriam (1988) as an educator applied case study research in the area of education to offer a practical or pragmatic approach towards a qualitative research method. Yin (1994, 2011, 2018) as a methodologist and a consultant in policy research, offers a holistic

and systematic outline for conducting the five elements of case study research for rigorous study. In addition, Stake as an interpreter argues that the case study has the power to make the research “down-to-earth and attention-holding” (Stake, 1978). To expand the rationale for the case study as a choice of research strategy, I also examine Eisenhardt (1989) and Dooley (2002) who elaborated on the case study’s contribution to theory building.

This current research utilises the case study as a strategic methodology for investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, employing multiple sources of evidence when the border between phenomenon and context is not distinctly evident (Yin, 2018).

**Figure 4. 1 The case study research methodology flow.**



This research selects the case study as a strategic methodology for three reasons. First, a key objective of the study is to describe a contemporary (in contrast to historical) phenomena, by explaining the “how” or “why” of as a social phenomenon (Stake, 1978; Yin, 2018). Second, I have little or limited control over a behaviour event (Meriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). Thirdly, I need an extensive and in-depth explanation of some complex social phenomena (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018).

This study applies exploratory case studies to two regional areas in Indonesia, namely, Gunungkidul and Sleman districts of the Yogyakarta Special Region. The two sub-case studies provide an understanding of diverse and detailed features at the

grassroots level in order to examine or criticise policies (Mohajan, 2018; Yin, 2011). In this study's context, case studies in the specific areas provide the relevant context and space for me to investigate complex sociocultural constructions that enable or challenge women's status and roles, and how policies at the grassroots level inhibit or encourage women's labour force participation in their communities. In addition, this study seeks to provide a detailed exploration of why the transition from working in the agricultural sector to the service sector has not resulted in a significant positive impact on women's employment in the national and regional contexts.

Literature that focuses on the transition to the care sector was examined for three reasons. First, the care industry is closer to the stereotyping of roles and jobs into "feminine" and "masculine" dichotomy norms. As a result, this phenomenon limits the aspirations, preferences and capabilities of women's and men's job choices (ILO, 2016). Second, while "feminine" occupations typically need interpersonal and emotional skills and extension of family labour division, "masculine" jobs require physical strength, rational risk-taking, and decision making (ILO, 2016). As a result, "feminine" jobs are linked to poor working conditions in a lower paid and limited social protection environment (ILO, 2016). Third, the care sector is part of the services industry where jobs are growing, and home care services are run by small or medium enterprises in several major regions including Gunungkidul and Sleman.

The selected sub-case studies, Gunungkidul and Sleman, were identified based on their similarities and differences in location characteristics (see table 4.2). Gunungkidul and Sleman are of Javanese ethnic background. The similar ethnic backgrounds of these regions will help to understand how norms and ethnic culture influence women's labour force participation and work transition. Their similarities also extend to the various levels of economic development. These two regions have experienced economic structural changes from being primarily in the agricultural sector to moving to other secondary or tertiary sectors as an alternative to improving people's welfare (Yogyakarta Province, 2012). In the last two years, there have been emerging home care services run by small or medium enterprises in Gunungkidul and Sleman.

Table 4.2 Geographic and Socio-economic Backgrounds of Sleman and Gunungkidul Districts

Demographic Characteristics	Sleman District	Gunungkidul District
Total Area	574.82 km <sup>2</sup>	1,431.42 km <sup>2</sup>
Population in 2020	1,125,804 people	747,161 people
Revenue in 2020	Rp. 2,482,902,313,- (equal to AUD \$248,290)	Rp. 1,932,893,321 (equal to AUD \$193,289)
Education		
Literacy rate in 2017	100%	99.56%
Expected years of schooling in 2017	10.79 years	7.43 years
Human Resource:		
Formal worker in 2017	389,540 people	133,479 people
Informal worker in 2017	246,602 people	288,912 people
Health:		
Life expectancy of birth in 2020	74.81 years old	74.07 years old
Main Industry	Trade, service, agriculture	Marine, tourism, agriculture

Source : Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017, 2020

Differences between the cases include the distance from the central provincial government, environmental characteristics, and the level of well-being. Sleman is closer to the central provincial government (Yogyakarta Province, 2012). Sleman has more extensive water resources and more fertile lands. In contrast, Gunungkidul is more remote with a poor water supply. In addition, Sleman citizens are comparatively wealthier and better educated, whereas Gunungkidul suffers from poor infrastructure, limited education and low per capita incomes (Sleman District, 2016; Yogyakarta Province, 2012).

Sleman is located in the southeast part of the province of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The district comprises 574,82 km<sup>2</sup> or 18 percent of the area of the Special Region. The Merapi eruption in 2010 had a severe impact on Sleman causing



environmental damage and disruption to the social economy, and agriculture (Kusumasari, 2015). After the disaster part of the population stayed in the agricultural sector as agricultural labour (Jannah & Hudayana, 2013). Others were able to adapt post-disaster, even increasing their resilience to achieve a better life in the agriculture sector (Kusumasari, 2015). The volume of agricultural land decreased due to a functional land shift from agricultural to non-agricultural use, such as housing (Sleman District, 2016). As a result, people's livelihoods are no longer based purely on farming, but include trade and services (Sleman District, 2016).

Gunungkidul is a district of Java, Indonesia. Gunungkidul is one of the five districts in the province of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. It is located in the southeast part of the province of the Special Region. The district comprises 1,485,36 km<sup>2</sup> or 46.63 percent of the area of the Special Region of Yogyakarta province. Gunungkidul is bordered on the north by Klaten and Sukoharjo districts of Central Java province; on the east by the Wonogiri district of Central Java; and on the south by the Indian Ocean. Gunungkidul is bordered on the west by Sleman and Bantul districts.

**Figure 4. 2 Special region Yogyakarta Province map.**



Source: Petatematikindo, 2015

Drought and water scarcity are persistent problems in Gunungkidul (Ekasari, 2009; Martias, 2015). This situation is worsened by the karst landscape which

emerges from a combination of high rock solubility and a limited water supply. Drought during the dry season means crop damage and yield failure that lead to loss of income for farmers (Martias, 2015). Vulnerability to these natural conditions contributes to the high local poverty rate (Antriyandarti et al., 2018; Rahayu, 2008). Meanwhile, in the local context, Gunungkidul District has also experienced socio-economic transformation. Gunungkidul is an agrarian society based on rice and corn production, commonly as subsistence crops. However, the contribution of the agricultural sector to Produk Domestik Regional Bruto (PDRB) (Regional Gross Domestic Product) declined from 34.17% in 2012 to 25.77% in 2014 (Gunungkidul District, 2016). In contrast, the tourism industry's contribution to Gunungkidul's PDRB has slightly increased from 5.16% in 2012 to 5.71% in 2014 (Gunungkidul District, 2016).

Dooley (2002) outlines six elements required in developing a case study that include selecting the research questions, selecting the cases, defining data gathering and analysis techniques, preparing for data collection, collecting data, and evaluating and analysing data, as well as preparing for the report writing. Yin (2018), complements the role of case study research and suggests five components of research design which are particularly significant in theory building, such as the case study's questions, its propositions, its case(s), the logic linking the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings.

First, case study questions provide a significant direction related to the most relevant research method to be utilised. As it is mentioned above, "how" and "why" are the most likely questions to be appropriate for case study research to clarify the circumstances of the current research question. Yin (2018) also suggests three helpful steps that should be taken to develop more desirable questions, such as: first utilise the existing literature to shape the key topics of interest. Second, assess whether the questions in these studies are likely to produce new questions for new research. Third, examine an alternative set of studies on a similar topic. These steps may strengthen the relevance and significance of potential questions or even suggest directions of focus.

Second, the research proposition should lead attention to something that should be tested within the sphere of research. In the context of the present research

on the topic of women's participation in and transition from informal work, I began with the following question: how does women's economic empowerment through labour participation contribute to their family income and family structure and relationships? This "how" question, capturing what the present study is really interested in addressing, directs this investigation to case study research as the appropriate method in the first place. This approach forces the study to develop some propositions. Making these propositions not only leads this study in the right direction but also reflects an important theoretical issue that potentially directs the research to look for relevant evidence.

Third, selecting the case requires a process of identification. I require questions as well as study propositions to identify the relevant data information to be collected about the individuals in the case study. For example, the propositions in studying these individual women workers might be limited to the influence of the transition from informal to formal work. Such apparently general topics, however, require a sharpening of the relevant scope and subsequent requirements for data. In addition, defining the boundaries of the case study means selecting topics and identifying research questions to be answered or propositions to be tested by the case study with regard to the relevant social groups, geographic areas, and the time period. In this context, I select women workers who participate in and shift from informal work in the agriculture sector to formal work in the care service sector in regional areas in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts. Research on the transition of women's economic empowerment in transitioning from informal to formal work, particularly in the service sector, is still limited.

Fourth, linking data information to propositions includes pattern matching, describing, building, time series analysis and a logic model, as well as cross-case synthesis. I need to combine or assemble the case study data as a direct reflection of the study propositions in the actual analysis. For example, recognising that some or whole of the research propositions include temporal order would imply that I might eventually utilise some type of time series analysis. In this context, I connect data information to many propositions that include pattern matching or contrast in time series analysis (ten years, five years, two years, and the present situation) and spatial analysis (comparing Gunungkidul and Sleman districts).

Fifth, identifying and addressing criteria for interpreting the strength of a case study's findings is an important component of the research process. Rival explanations become a specification for interpreting the strength of the research. Addressing and rejecting a rival explanation strengthens the research findings. In addition, anticipating and enumerating the potential significance of a rival explanation is part of a case study's research design.

Theory plays an important role as a guide for the study on why acts, incidences, structure and ideas happen (Sutton & Staw, 1995). However, according to Vaughan (1992), the theory acts paradoxically in that it has the potential to guide where to look, but at the same time it might hide the study from seeing. In addition, the study's theoretical propositions can act as key issues from the literature of research (Yin, 2018). Finally the propositions direct the complete research design and facilitate surprisingly explicit thoughts for deciding the data to be collected and the strategies for interpreting the data (Yin, 2018).

The desired theory can be embraced by research design that includes the five components outlined above. In addition, Rosenbaum (2002) suggests a preference for some theory development before data collection to gain a more complex pattern of the expected results. The advantage of the complexity of the study is a more articulated design and an increased capacity to analyse the eventual data of the study (Yin, 2018). There are two alternative ways of how theory is used to gain a richer understanding. First, by reviewing completed case studies. Second, by examining and reviewing the completed case studies for the researcher's starting propositions or, as a more daring research journey, by trying to acknowledge the importance of a case study's results and conclusions (Yin, 2018). Important theoretical issues coach the findings and conclusions, even when the aims of the research may not be openly expressed at the beginning of the case study (Yin, 2018). Case study research reviews the theory that is relevant to what the study wants to investigate and involves discussing the topics and ideas with colleagues and teachers and asking challenging questions about the topic of the research. In addition, reviewing theory and literature are important to develop why I propose to conduct the study, and setting the aim to learn as a finding of the study are ways to address the challenges to theory development (Yin, 2018).

Another strength of case study research is that it has the potential to make a contribution to modifying or building theory (Dooley, 2002). Theory building is a difficult process from the perspective of case study research (Dooley, 2002). However, case study research has the capacity to embrace multiple cases from prior studies that have similar phenomena and boundaries, to shape theory building or modification (Dooley, 2002). In the formulation of theory, researchers must be aware of the full range of theories that might be relevant to the current study. According to Yin (2018), there are four types of theories that include: individual theory (such as individual development, personality, individual perception and interpersonal interaction); group theory (for example, family functioning, informal groups and interpersonal networks); organisational theory (for instance, organisational structure and functions, and inter-organisational partnerships); and social justice theory (such as uneven access to technology, and marketplace inequities).

In the current study, I am aware of the benefit of cutting across illustrative theories. For instance, subjective or individual perception theory could be useful in formulating further substantiation of woman's agency theory. However, the question has risen in term of how researchers can understand the way women's economic empowerment through labour participation has contributed to their family income, family structure, and relationships. This question directs me to apply decision-making theory that can involve individual, group, organisational and social justice theory (Carroll & Johnson, 1990).

Utilising theory plays a critical role in assisting researchers to generalise the lessons learned from the case study (Yin, 2018). Generalisation in the case study context is not the same as statistical generalisation. With statistical generalisation, a conclusion produced from sample data collected is applied to the universal population (Yin, 2018). Generalisation in the case study is derived from a situation of research specified at the early stages or revealed at the conclusion of the research study (Yin, 2018). The generalisation of the case study is at a conceptual level Providing a supporting argument is needed to formulate an analytic generalisation as a claim (Yin, 2018).

There are four criteria for judging the quality of research design; that is, construct, internal, external and reliability validity (Gibbert, Ruigrok & Wicki, 2008;

Yin, 2018). Construct validity is recognising valid operational measures of the concept being investigated. I implement this tactic by utilising multiple sources of evidence and having key informants to review the draft case study report (Yin, 2018). Internal validity (especially for explanatory or causal studies, but not for exploratory studies) seeks to establish a causal relationship, with the belief that a certain condition directly causes other conditions, as differentiated from the bogus relationship. External validity performs if and how a case study's result can be generalised. I identify and employ theory or theoretical propositions in a single case study to address the external validity of this current case study. Reliability shows that the operation of the research, for example, data collection procedures, is able to be repeated, with similar findings. The aim of reliability validity is to reduce biases and errors in research (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Riege Andreas, 2003; Yin, 2018).

In this study, I follow similar procedures that have been explained by previous researchers and organised a similar investigation process. To follow similar procedures in a case study means investigating a similar case over again, not just duplicating the findings of the original case study by investigating another case. In this present study, I apply a triangulation process (Davies & Dodd, 2002) to enhance the validity and reliability of the qualitative study, by comparing and cross-checking data from women workers, local government stakeholders, observations and relevant reports.

#### **4.2.5 Feminist Research Methods**

Women have been often ignored in the prestigious spheres of human activities such as science, economics and politics (Anderson, 2000; Narayan, 2004). As a result, these human activities have been predominantly viewed from the masculine perspective in that women have been often excluded (Anderson, 2000; Bell et al., 2018; Narayan, 2004). Women's work has been often misinterpreted as secondary and inferior compared to men's work (Anderson, 2000; Narayan, 2004).

Feminist epistemology criticises mainstream theories about human knowledge and human enterprise as men-dimensional and deeply imperfect because of the exclusion and misinterpretation of women's involvement (Anderson, 2000; Grasswick, 2011; Narayan, 2004). Feminist epistemology suggests that including

women's involvement in the domain of science, knowledge and other human activities leads to a broader and very different picture (Anderson, 2000; Grasswick, 2011; Narayan, 2004).

Feminist sensitivity is associated with qualitative research. A qualitative approach is inherently compatible with the feminist approach for three reasons (Bell et al., 2018). First, qualitative research treats women as subjects who are able to control themselves during the whole research's technical procedures (Mies, 1996; Olesen, 2011). Second, the qualitative approach encourages the perspective of the women being interviewed. It means the research allows women's voices to be heard (Jansen & Davis, 1998). Third, the equal gender relationship goals of feminism can be realised (Parpart et al., 2000).

I apply a feminist qualitative research approach because the study employs women as participants and explores gender relations. It also helps to understand the different aspects of human activities and challenges gender biases (Anderson, 2000; Narayan, 2004). The extract below indicates an example:

I (the researcher) started to make appointments with my informants. From the beginning, the informants had the authority to decide on their involvement, as well as to decide the location and time, at their convenience, to do an interview. Sania (not her real name), one of my respondents, preferred to do the interview in the evening in her workplace. As a carer of the elderly, she told me that she would seek permission for me to enter her workplace and subsequently provided access details.

Entering a small house in the night and in a busy neighbourhood was a shift in my situation from outside to inside the house. I did not find anyone except Sania and an elderly lady who was in a deep sleep in a quiet room. The small house had complete facilities but without any monitoring equipment. This situation showed me the level of trust that the lady's children placed in Sania as her carer. I began by introducing a global picture of my project and outlined what kind of information was needed. I tried to build an egalitarian relationship between myself and the interviewee by inviting her to share her experiences as a source of knowledge for my current research, as well as her contribution to the research aims. I referred to the semi-structured interview guidelines when needed.

As researcher I followed Sania's cues in sharing her experiences. She even took the initiative, in soft tones, to share her experience of domestic violence before I raised the subject.

(Diary note, November 2019).

My diary notes show how the nature of the relationship between researcher and informant has been developed. The semi-structured in-depth interview model

employed in this thesis is inspired by feminist research, particularly Oakley's article "Interviewing Women" (2013) and Harding's article "Feminism and Methodology" (1987). Oakley advises interviewing in a limited hierarchical and exploitative manner, to encourage a two-way communication process and to develop a close relationship between interviewer and interviewee. An in-depth and open-ended interview with informants is acknowledged as "a strategy for documenting women's own account of their lives" (Oakley, 1981, p.48), that would bring women's experience to the surface. Harding (1987, p. 7) suggests that the feminist scholar should consider the informant's experiences as "new resources for research".

Accessing potential informants not only requires giving information about the study but also giving an assurance that informants are in a position to examine choices around whether or not to give their consent to be involved (Miller & Bell, 2002). In this context, formalising their consent is important in considering the ethical implications of studying people's lives (Miller & Bell, 2002).

#### **4.2.6 An Insider-outsider Positioning of the Researcher**

In anthropology, fieldwork has a similar meaning to conducting a study in a location that is distant from "home", a location that is strange and challenging (Riyani, 2016). However, many anthropologists have conducted fieldwork in their "home" with their own culture since the late twentieth century (Okely, 1996).

The investigator applies a specified feminist epistemology and acts in her position as an insider-outsider (Acker, 2001). I identify myself in two dimensions, the first of which reflects the home of origin of my social life in relation to the Javanese Muslim woman (Acker, 2001). I am a Javanese woman who has been socialised in Javanese culture over her entire life. However, since I was born, I have also been assimilated into a middle-class, urban community. I employ my "insider" experience as a Javanese woman (Acker, 2001).

There are various benefits in applying research with an insider or "home/own" country position (Dyck, 2003; Narayan, 1993). I drew on the experiences of prior scholars who have conducted fieldwork in their native/home/own country; for instance, in having access to informants, reliability of data collection, mastery of the native language, gaining the trust and openness of



informants, and having a basic understanding of the political system, and the local cultural and social background (Ellis & Adams, 2014; Ergun & Erdemir, 2010; Narayan, 1993).

While conducting research in Indonesia, I entered the research location by introducing myself as an Indonesian national with a Javanese ethnic background. I speak Javanese, as it is my mother tongue, and Indonesian fluently. I interacted with informants (women workers) mostly in the Javanese language and with local government officers in the Indonesian language. In addition, during my time doing the fieldwork, I also wore the *hijab* veil to signal my conformance to the religious beliefs of the majority of Indonesians. Therefore, in my interactions with the informants, I delivered a stance as an insider; that of being a Javanese, Muslim woman.

In terms of the political system as well as local culture, I could effectively undertake fieldwork in the Special Region of Yogyakarta province, Indonesia. That this thesis topic is not politically sensitive means data is accessible. The Indonesian government promotes *Pancasila* as a state ideology that recognises a pluralistic, multicultural and inclusive society. Even the topic of this thesis is relevant to two of the five principles of *Pancasila*: the fourth principle that states “Democracy led by the wisdom in consensus or representatives”; and the fifth principle that states “Social justice for all Indonesians”. Therefore, only three days were necessary to gain approval for undertaking research, with a letter provided by the regional government. In addition, I could easily ask a variety of questions of government officials as well as obtain secondary data such as grand design manpower development documents and the Regional Report on Sustainable Development Goals. Yogyakarta society is characterised by full of harmony, politeness, wisdom and hospitality, which allowed for easy access to information (Mulyana, 2017).

In the second dimension, I identify myself as an outsider when I study Javanese lower-income women who live in a rural community (Acker, 2001). I have worked in the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection for twenty years and also joined academic training that allows me to have different perspectives and reference viewpoints from being an insider, as experienced by Purwaningrum and Shtaltovna (2017). To start with, I was equipped with academic training as a

feminist sociologist, which has taught me to reflect on empirical facts or findings, to understand why and how the facts are happening, and to predict some potential implications that might exist in the future. My academic training enhances my ability to adapt, explore and modify theories while recording reflections from the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Geertz, 1996). The exploration of theories and experiences in this context means I am involved in this exploration process through both my identity and my open-mindedness to social interactions that shape an analytical approach from critical social theories (Purwaningrum & Shtaltovna, 2017). As an outsider, I employ other strategies for the exploration of this research by introducing myself as a PhD student who usually lives in urban areas. So, I take a middle ground position.

### **4.3 Ethical Issues**

This thesis follows the ethical guidelines approved by Human Research Ethics at the Curtin University under reference HRE2019-0761. This is a study on human subjects hence, as required by Curtin University research ethics guidelines, informed consent was sought from each participant and agreement recorded (written or audio), as well as permission to record information via audio-visual formats. It is important to inform the participants of the aim of the research early in the interview process.

In the middle of the interview, Sania said someday she would like to read a narrative book that includes her experience. Then she asked me to write her story without using her real name. Sania was worried that someday her husband could read her story if her original name were mentioned in the report. In the early stage of the interview, I had forgotten to explain about the employment of pseudonyms for informants. So, I ensured her I'd use a pseudonym when my thesis was written. This guarantee of using pseudonyms was essential to continue her trust when telling her story.

At the end of the interview, I asked Sania to sign the informed consent that I had mentioned early in the meeting. The richness of information that she shared led me to worry that, in the end, she might change her mind about participating. Lucky me ... she dealt with and signed the informed consent. After she had signed, she surprised me by offering her availability to assist my study if needed. I asked Sania if she had colleagues with similar jobs and activities in the women's community groups. I was fortunate that she was willing to give the names of her colleagues to me.

(Diary note, November 2019).

My diary note shows in a practical way the feminist researcher's dilemma between ethical issues and the outcome of the research. I balanced voluntary participation versus the tenuous link between the aim and outcome of my research, through the

notion of “informed” consent (Miller & Bell, 2002). In this context, respecting the signed informed consent reflects that I respect the informant’s voluntary participation and encourage the informant to be more involved in the research, rather than practising coercion or ignoring getting their written consent (Miller & Bell, 2002). I employ pseudonyms for all informants to protect their confidentiality as well as possible future negative implications for informants’ lives.

Through providing information about the study in the informed consent, I not only obtained access to certain potential informants but also access to key gatekeepers who have power over other informants (Kennedy-Macfoy, 2013; Miller & Bell, 2002). The giving of sufficient information is essential for me as a feminist researcher because this process increases the participants’ capacity to exercise their choice to be involved or not, as well as to permit other informants to participate in the research (Miller & Bell, 2002).

In the collection of data, I eliminated personal political bias and potential conflict of interests with my current employment position. The location of data collection is outside my area of employment. This ensures “zero influence” and addresses bias concerns.

#### **4.4 Participant Selection**

The fieldwork was conducted in Gunungkidul and Sleman, from November to December 2019. These districts were selected because, first, the areas are located in Java Island which contributes 58.9 percent of Indonesia’s GDP as compared to other areas such as Sumatera (23.8%), Kalimantan (9.3%), Sulawesi (4.7%), Papua (1.8%), Nusa Tenggara (1.3%) and Maluku (0.3%) (Indonesia, 2015). Second, very little socio-economic research has been undertaken in this area, particularly on women’s economic empowerment. Western scholars have mainly conducted research on the Javanese with a focus on women and Islam (Brenner, 1995; Dewi, 2012; Hefner & Horvatic, 1997); women and culture (Brenner, 1991; Lysloff, 2001); women and population (Gerke, 1992; Hugo, 1992; Hull, 1975); women and health (Pitaloka, 2014; Pitaloka & Hsieh, 2015; Salma, Sudargo & Rahmawati, 2016; Singarimbun & Manning, 1976); and women and agriculture (White, 1985). There is some research on women’s participation in the economy of Java, such as on women and

entrepreneurship (Alexander, 2018); women and local non-government organisations (Berninghausen & Kerstan, 1992); and women and credit (Lont, 2000), however this has not focused on women and economic empowerment. This current research aims to understand how women's economic empowerment through labour participation contributes to their family income and what effect it has on family structures and relationships. Thirdly, this is my home town where it is suitable for me to employ an insider and outsider position.

I applied nonprobability purposive sampling to ensure a rich sample variety and to obtain maximum benefit from applying an interpretative phenomenological approach in order to explain the research questions (Bell et al., 2018; Mohajan, 2018). The purposive sampling approach will also allow for heterogeneous exploration at a micro level (Carter & Fuller, 2015, 2016; Gopaldas & DeRoy, 2015) which enables theory development and will reflect the general essence of women's capacity to make choices as part of the empowerment process (Creswell, 2014).

First, I developed criteria and determined the sample size to select the interview participants using heterogeneous sample selection to illustrate various women's experiences in the transition from unpaid informal to paid formal work. The criteria for participation selection were that they were informal workers in the agricultural sector, women who have transitioned to formal care work with insecure conditions, and women who have transitioned into formal care work with secure employment conditions. More specifically, the first criterion is informal unpaid workers who are farmers in their own family's agricultural business and who have not received any payment for their labour. The second criterion is paid informal workers who have worked in the care service sector, have received low pay, have worked without any work contract and are in a relatively poor working condition and social protection environment. The third criterion is paid formal workers who have contract work in the care service sector with a monthly salary. These criteria are important because they directly reflect the purpose of this study and guide the identification of information-rich cases (Merriam, 2009).

From each of the three criteria, I selected five participants from the different stakeholders in order to obtain the most representative candidates from Gunungkidul

and Sleman districts, therefore accounting for 30 regional women (mostly Moslem) as the participants of this study.

**Table 4.3 Participant Information**

No.	Regions	Individual Interview				
		Unpaid Informal Worker	Workers Transitioning from Unpaid Informal to Paid Informal Work	Workers Transitioning from Paid Informal to Paid Formal Work	Stake-holders	Total
		(Farmer, Stock Farmer)	(Domestic Worker, Elderly Care Worker, Child-care Worker)	(Kindergarten Teacher, Nurse)	officials from the offices of regional development planning agencies, district manpower, women's empowerment, family planning boards, and non-government individuals or non-government organisations	
1.	Gunung-kidul	5	5	5	5	20
2.	Sleman	5	5	5	5	20
						40

I applied purposive snowball or network sampling to select participants who met my criteria for participation. Through my personal and professional networking, I contacted leaders of communities and organisations in Sleman and Gunungkidul districts to help recruit potential participants that met the three working criteria mentioned above (unpaid informal, paid informal, and paid formal). In addition, I contacted the local NGO that works in women issues, particularly for domestic workers. This local NGO gave two names of its members who are domestic workers and rural women activists. Also, I contacted day-care and early age education centres in some areas in Sleman and Gunungkidul to find participants that fell under the criterion of paid informal workers. Finally, I visited the regional government officials to interview stakeholders, such as Regional Development Planning Agencies, Manpower Agencies and the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Office. The demography of the participants is presented in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4 The Profile of the Research Participants**

Category		Gunung kidul	Sleman	Total Number	Total Percentage
<b>Number of Participant</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>	Below 21 years	0	2	2	6,7
	22 to 35 years	3	5	8	26,7
	36 to 50 years	6	6	12	40
	50 to 60 years	5	2	7	23,3
	Above 60 years	1	0	1	3,3
<b>Education</b>	Elementary School	4	3	7	23,3
	Primary High School	2	1	3	10
	Senior High School	2	3	5	16,7
	Diploma/Undergraduate Degree	5	8	13	43,3
	Other (Not in school yet)	2	0	2	6,7
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	13	11	24	80
	Single	0	3	3	10
	Widowed	1	1	2	6,7
	Divorced	1	0	1	3,3
<b>Type of Work</b>	Farmer	5	5	10	33,3
	Informal work	5	5	10	33,3
	Formal work	5	5	10	33,3

Table 4.4 shows that the majority of regional women in this study are in productive age but they gained a low level of education. Also, most of them are married and this enables the researcher to probe into the dynamic of the interrelation between a wife and her spouse that affects women's agency and economic empowerment. It is important to note that the data in Table 4.4. is not representative of the overall rural women population in Sleman and Gunungkidul districts, but only a fraction that belonged to my study. However, those who participated are reflective of the general profile of regional women in the districts.

The informants' educational backgrounds varied from women who had never finished primary school to women who had an undergraduate degree. The distribution was as follows: never attended school (6.7%); attended primary school (23.3%); attended junior secondary school (10%); attended senior high school (16.7%); and diploma/undergraduates (43.3%). Some women are married (80%), some single (10%), some widowed (6.7%), and some divorced (3.3%). The informants' ages range from below 21 years old (6.7%); to between 22–35 years old (26.7%); to between 35–50 years old (40%); to between 50–60 years old (23.3%); and 60 years old and above (3.3%).

Additional participants in the research included informed stakeholders who were officials from the offices of regional development planning agencies, district manpower, women's empowerment, family planning boards, and non-government individuals or non-government organisations in order to elicit their perspectives on supporting women's empowerment in their communities. The research selected five key stakeholders for each district.

## **4.5 Data Management**

The data storage provisions are outlined in the Research Data Management Plan and meet the Curtin University Research Data and Primary Materials Policy (see Appendix). I have completed a Curtin University research data management plan to guarantee compliance with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

The folder structure is managed such that folders are ordered in a hierarchical manner. Data, data analysis and procedural research analysis are classified and each of these has its own set of sub-folders including relevant documents. Each folder is named indicating source and type. The logical naming format has been applied to all files included. Obtained data information is likely to be managed in various ways depending on the source of the data. The organisation methods were not finalised until the data were received from the different providers.

During data collection, the data were kept on a password-protected device and backed up regularly to the Curtin R Drive and ultimately stored there only. The purchase data information was stored in the same password-protected drive and folder. All hard copy data were stored in a locked cabinet in Curtin University's Hub (student's office), Bentley. To ensure the safety of the data, access to the Curtin University's research R drive is provided with electronic storage of the data and will include all physical documentation in a digitised format.

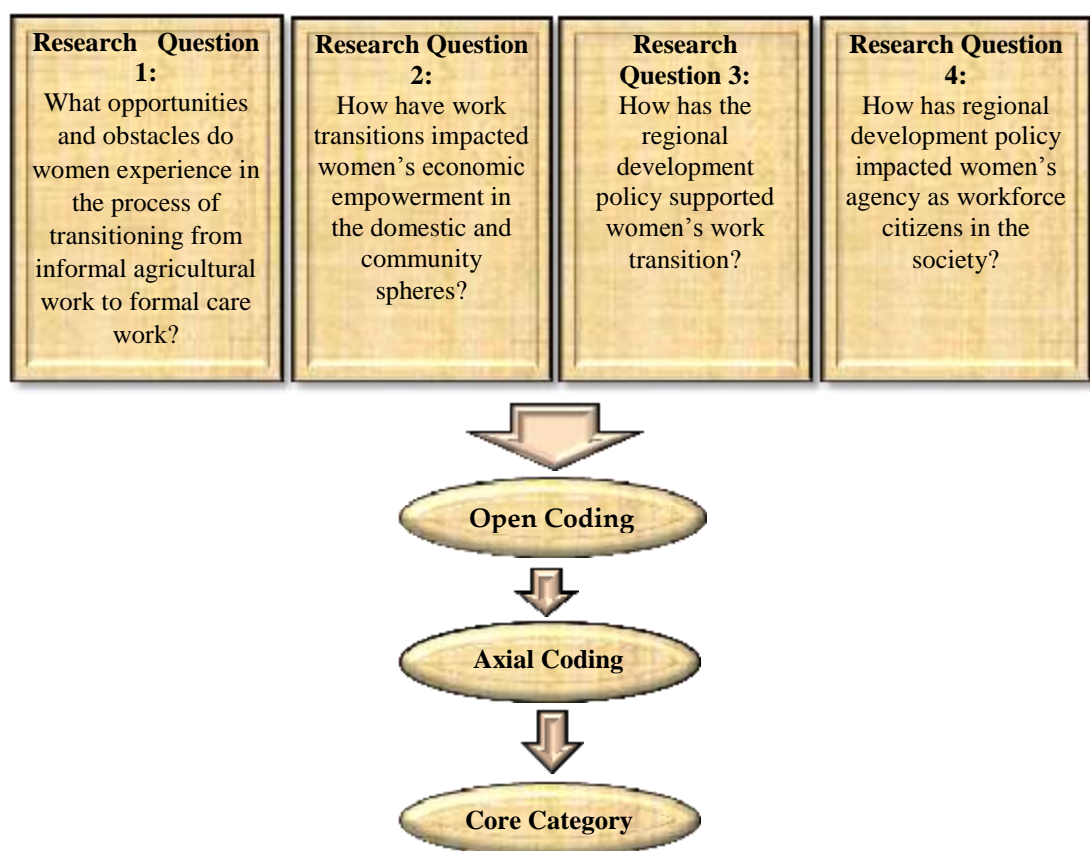
## **4.6 Overview of the Approach to Analysis**

According to O'Connor's work (2012), grounded theory coding strategies are a compatible and powerful data analysis mechanism to investigate the case study approach and focus group data. The analysis utilises a case study approach, all the

data collected passed through three stages of coding: initial (open) coding, axial coding and selective coding (O'Connor, 2012).

Figure 4.3. describes the coding stages from the beginning to the final step in the research to illustrate the research protocol in the case study approach. The beginning stage was open coding derived from the common ideas obtained from the informant's related statement and the saturation. The common ideas were gained and grouped based on the relevant statement and similar circumstances.

**Figure 4. 3 Coding procedure.**



In the open or initial coding stage, I analysed the text line by line and put codes to the text from the critical statement of interview transcripts. Then I grouped them into several specific categories or themes (Hallberg, 2006; Holton, 2007). I created codes based on a similar meaning to the text or directly from the text itself. I created codes based on the difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence, causation and meaning to gain varying forms (Saldaña, 2021). The codes represent a concept that will potentially be part of the theory (Holton, 2007; O'Connor, 2012).



From the initial coding process, I obtained a list of codes from the analysis of the initial interviews.

In the axial coding stage, I organised each category from the open coding phase into subcategories. In axial coding, for each category developed in the open coding phase, I identified conditions, actions and interactions associated with the phenomenon and connected and merged categories into subcategories (O'Connor, 2012; Saldaña, 2021). This procedure was arranged by considering the similarity and linkage of the various backgrounds. The connection between these themes may interact as causal conditions, strategies, and effect factors in response to the category (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

In the selective coding phase, I integrated and refined the theory. Since categories are only descriptions of the data, they must be further expanded to form the theory (O'Connor, 2012). This can start with identifying the core or central category around which the theory will be developed (Holton, 2007; O'Connor, 2012). The core category must be central in that all other categories must connect between the core category and subcategories and frequently emerge in the data (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; O'Connor, 2012; Rabinovich & Kacen, 2013).

In coding analysis, following Conway's suggestion (2006), I combined human coding rather than solely or strictly applying computer-assisted coding. According to Conway (2006) and Nacos et al. (1991), computer-assisted coding can highlight broad categories of coverage, best in simple word counts, and in quick word analysis. However, the weakness of computer-assisted coding is it's difficult to recognise subtle nuances in the coverage and to connect an attribute to a particular person as a research subject (Conway, 2006).

The complexity of the category is the central aspect of comparing human and computer-assisted coding (Linderman, 2001). While computer-assisted coding applies best when categories are simple and easily operated, Linderman (2001) argues that human coding is more effective in capturing complexities in a wide-range and inclusive categories. Therefore, I used the combination of computer and human coding to gain reliability and confidence in investigating the complex phenomena

and basic understanding of the socio-cultural background, language certainty, and accessibility of rural Javanese women to formal employment.

## **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter provides a justification for the case study approach applied to this research project. It first explained the paradigm of research that is composed of constructivism-ontology, interpretivism-epistemology, the inductive approach, qualitative methodology, and then describes an exploratory case study as a research methodology strategy. The research employs a feminist perspective and an insider-outsider position to obtain a basic understanding of the cultural and social background, language certainty, and accessibility. Furthermore, observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions have proved to be reliable methods for collecting rich empirical data and information.

The ontological position is constructivism that emphasises social phenomenon and realities are continually being influenced and accomplished by the human actor. In this study, the theory is produced by observing the social reality and exploring individuals in linkage to their experiences and how they perceive and bring knowing reality to their everyday activities. This research is supported by the epistemology of interpretivism to understand women's behaviour and to elicit the subjective meaning of social activities, rather than to explain women's behaviour as the object of natural science.

This investigation employs a qualitative approach since each human actor might interpret social reality differently in the interviews. This study aims to generate or modify the theory and to compare the outcomes to the relevant literature to confirm or challenge the existing theory.

I utilise a feminist qualitative research approach to study women in the context of gender relations in order to understand various influences of the world on human activities, as well as to challenge male bias in the contemporary situation. The researcher is both an insider and outsider in the research process, I speak the Javanese language and hold a middle-ground position.

Finally, I confirm that the case study is my chosen research strategy for the exploration of women's participation in informal and formal work in Gunungkidul and Sleman. The two sub-case studies provide a good understanding of diverse and detailed features at the grassroots level to be able to exercise or critique policies. My interpretation leads to a more complete understanding of particular factors and situations, and offers affective information that is unable to be obtained otherwise (MacNealy, 1997). I am aware that a limitation of the case study approach is that it is rarely generalised. However, the case study approach provides a contribution to the unique understanding of the individual, organisational and social, as well as political, phenomena (Yin, 2018). In addition, inspired by Brown's experience (2008) in conducting her constructivist feminist research on education, I believe the case study provides a constructivist feminist paradigm within the theoretical framework of women's agency as well as women's economic empowerment. Furthermore, I am also confident that the case study approach will provide rich and important insights to capture contemporary phenomena within the real-life context of women's participation in informal, and transition into formal, employment as well as their behaviour in a regional area in Indonesia in terms of human resource management. This current study employs multiple sources of evidence taken from observation, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and the results of document analysis.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven analyse case studies from the Sleman and Gunungkidul districts to examine women's participation in and transition into formal employment in regional Indonesia.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Challenges to and Opportunities for Javanese Regional Women to Increase their Participation in the Formal Sector**

#### **5.1 Overview**

The findings of this research are reported in three separate chapters, each addresses and discusses a specific research question. This chapter focuses on understanding how the changes in economic structure in Indonesia impact women's status on the local development context. More specifically, it addresses the first part of the Research Question (RQ1), “*What obstacles and opportunities do women experience in the process of transition from informal agricultural work to formal care work?*” To answer this question the chapter is structured as follows: the first section explains the challenges to expanding women's agency, the second section deals with women's strategies to transition into paid formal work, and the third section covers the opportunities to transition into paid formal work.

This chapter argues that transitioning both from agricultural to non-agricultural, and from informal to formal labour has had less impact on women's formal employment opportunities than expected, due to structural and cultural barriers which continue to position women as underutilised human resources in a regional development context. Regional women's economic participation in the structural economic transformation in Sleman and Gunungkidul has been obstructed by cultural factors (such as multiple burdens, acceptance attitudes, man's domination, and misinterpretation of religious values), and structural factors (for instance, limited financial resources, limited education attainment, limited skills transition, rigidity of recruitment and selection processes, limited flexibility of job opportunities, and inadequate infrastructure facilities).

#### **5.2 Challenges to and Opportunities for Transitioning into Paid Formal Work**

This subsection explains the research findings that relate to the economic opportunities for and obstacles to women's agency in regional Indonesia in their

experiences in accessing formal work in the care sector. I interviewed 30 primary informants, mainly Muslim women workers, about their experiences with different categories of work (unpaid informal, paid informal, and paid formal) separately and simultaneously in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts in November 2019. The issues raised and discussed with these women concerned their work motivation, views on working women, capacity to make choices or decisions, experience in changing their previous occupation, access to decent work, access to occupational skills training, and their ability to make decisions at the individual, family and community levels.

To understand challenges to and opportunities for transitioning into paid formal work, Table 5.1 summarises the key themes that emerged from the interviews and represents a compilation of the barriers to and opportunities for the expansion of rural women's agency. This table provides a description of the challenges and opportunities in women's agency as they transition from informal work in the primary sector of agriculture to formal work in non-agricultural industries, that is, care work in Indonesia. The interview manuscripts were in *Bahasa* and translated into English and then organised by applying NVivo Pro software available from Curtin University.

Table 5.1. consists of three-order themes. The first-order themes include a descriptive data interpretation that adheres faithfully to the informants' terms. There are 14 initial themes emerging from the interview with 30 rural woman workers that reflect their experiences, voices and perspectives when examining their capacity to make choices. These themes were extracted during the open or initial coding stage where I analysed the critical statements in the interview transcripts line by line and put codes to the text narration.

The second-order themes involve the conceptualised descriptions of the data which evolved from analysis in the axial coding stage based on the first-order themes. I organised each category in the first-order themes in an open coding phase by identifying the conditions, actions and interactions associated with the phenomena, thus connecting and merging categories into three bigger themes (O'Connor, 2012). For example, the traditional labour and role divisions in the first order constitutes the cultural construction factors in the second order.

The third-order themes describe the challenges to and opportunities for women workers to transition into paid formal work as the central phenomenon that includes cultural constructs, structural barriers, and modernisation/development. The challenges to and opportunities for expanding women's agency as the core category must be central in that it must connect between the core category and subcategories and frequently emerge in the data (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; O'Connor, 2012; Rabinovich & Kacen, 2013). For example, the make-up of the Javanese cultural construct manifested in traditional labour and role divisions is a significant barrier for rural women in Java to exercise their agency.

Table 5.1 The Barriers to and Opportunities for Women’s Agency as they Transition from Informal to Formal Work

First-order Concepts	Second-order Themes	Aggregate Dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional Labour and Role Divisions</li> <li>• Paternalism</li> <li>• Acceptance Attitude</li> <li>• Misinterpretation of Religious Values</li> </ul>	Cultural Construction Factors	Challenges to Expand Women’s Agency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited Financial Resources</li> <li>• Limited Education</li> <li>• Limited Skills Transition</li> <li>• Rigidity in Recruitment and Selection</li> <li>• Limited Flexibility in Job Opportunities</li> <li>• Inadequate Infrastructure Facilities</li> </ul>	Structural Factors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient Access to Financial Resources</li> <li>• Sufficient Access to Education and Skills</li> <li>• Changing Social Norms</li> <li>• Equal Labour and Role Divisions</li> </ul>	Modernisation (Development)	Opportunities to Expand Women’s Agency

Source: Interviews result of fieldwork, November 2019

Women’s economic participation during the structural economic transformation in Sleman and Gunungkidul districts has been limited by cultural and structural barriers. Cultural factors include traditional labour and role divisions, acceptance attitudes, man’s domination, and misinterpretation of religious values. Structural elements involve limited financial resources, limited education attainment, limited opportunities for skills transition, the rigidity of recruitment and selection

processes, limited flexibility of job opportunities, and inadequate infrastructure facilities.

Although development as part of global change is implemented unfairly and unevenly, it still provides space for a few Javanese rural women to extend their capacity to make effective choices. They show self-esteem, self-direction and authority when they want to act or shift from their current jobs to achieve greater welfare. Opportunity elements which take the form of proper access to valuable resources (finance, educational attainment and high-level skills) and shifting social norms affect the labour and role divisions at the family level.

A more comprehensive picture of women's work during their daily activities that connects to their type of work, roles and main employment status is provided in Table 5.2.



**Table 5.2 Women’s Roles in their Daily Activities and their Main Employment Status**

No.	Activities	Sphere/ Scope	Type of Work	Role	Main Employment Status
1.	Preparing food	Household/ Domestic Sphere	Reproductive	Household Carer	Unpaid Work
	Cooking				
	Washing				
	Cleaning				
	Caring for Children as Member of Family				
	Caring for Grandchildren				
2.	Farming (Rice and Livestock)	Public Sphere	Productive	Income Earner (Family Income Contributor)	Unpaid Family Work
	House Keeping				Paid Informal Work
	Caring for Children				Paid Informal Work
	Caring for Elderly People Non-member Family				Paid Informal Work
	Teaching				Paid Formal Work
	Nursing				Paid formal work
3.	Community Health Service Providing	Public Sphere	Community Welfare Service	Community Welfare Carer	Unpaid (Volunteer Work)
	Community Informal Education and Skills Provision				
	Community Loan Provision				

Source: Observation result of fieldwork, November, 2019

As shown in Table 5.2, a clear picture that emerges from the qualitative data shows that women play multiple roles in their daily lives. At the family level, women as wives and mothers carry out activities in the domestic sphere. They play their roles as a household carers and unpaid workers. However, in the research locations, it is found that women also perform additional roles to support both their productive

activities (as family income contributors) and community welfare service activities (as community welfare carers).

## **5.2.1 Challenges to Expanding Women's Agency**

### **5.2.1.1 Cultural Constructs**

The make-up of the Javanese cultural construction, manifested in various forms of traditional labour and role divisions, male domination, women's acceptance without complaint, and misinterpretation of religious values, is a pivotal constraint for women in Java to be able to be autonomous in their mobility in the public space, as well as for their ability to change their employment status.

#### **5.2.1.1.1 Traditional Labour and Role Divisions**

Patriarchal hegemony blended with ethnic culture and misinterpretation of religious values assigns a woman to hold dual or multiple responsibilities (reproductive, productive and community managing work) in her daily life. This was experienced by Ibu Ria and Ibu Icha who represent regional Javanese women.

Before working outside, in the morning I must finish all my household chores such as cleaning and dishwashing, and I wash the clothes during the night since the water runs well in the night-time. I have to manage my time well. In principle, my husband allows me to work outside as long as the household chores are done. (Ibu Icha, early-childhood education teacher, Sleman District)

Ibu Icha has worked as an early-childhood education teacher since 2012. Her motivation to work in this area is because she likes to interact with children. In 2009, her village authority instructed that every hamlet should have an early education centre. To become an early educator there, it is not compulsory to have a formal educational background in psychology. She completed several short training courses. Her husband allows Icha to work outside as long as she can finish her domestic chores. She is actively involved in community activities such as being an early education cadre, a committee member of a tourism awareness group, a committee member of a village-owned enterprise, and being vice head of the early educator union. In her village, a limited number of people are actively involved in their community, since the majority are busy with dairy farming. Thus, predominantly,

people pay more attention to family activities such as milking, collecting food for the cattle, and selling dairy products.

#### 5.2.1.1.2 Paternalism

Some women interviewed were disappointed because their ambitions were restricted due to male control over their ability to make decisions.

We could do an online business, but I do not have financial capital. Previously I wanted to have a small shop, but I did not have the funds (capital finance) to start my business. My husband does not support me. (Ibu Hana, cattle farmer, Sleman District)

Ibu Hana works as a cattle farmer following the direction and will of her husband. Hana's husband instructed her to look after their cattle to keep Hana at home. Hana wants to work as a trader, but her husband does not agree with her wishes. All of the family decisions are made by her husband. She feels her aspirations have not been heard by her husband. Yet, Hana keeps silent and obeys her husband's instructions as she is tired of conflicting with him.

Based on the enduring hegemony of patriarchal ideology, which blends not only with state gender ideology but also ethnic and cultural traditions and perceptions of Islamic teaching, I propose several reasons that prompt Hana's husband to prohibit her from going into the public space. First, the role of Hana as an unpaid care worker in their family would be hampered. Second, the role Hana has as a guardian of the family property and manager of the family's finances would be disturbed if Hana had activities outside of the home. Third, his dignity would be destroyed, as his capacity to play his main role as breadwinner would be questioned or outperformed. Fourth, one perception of Islamic teaching is that pious women should stay at home to guard the dignity of the family by limiting their interactions with non-*mahram*<sup>4</sup> males (Makinuddin, 2005).

Javanese culture places men in a superior and dominant position that means the role and position of women is regarded as to be beneath men (Kuntjara, 1997;

<sup>4</sup> “*Mahram*: is a male who cannot marry the woman. In practice, this is a male relative.” (Vidyasagar & Rea, 2004). *Mahram* “refers to all those males whom a woman cannot marry at any time in her life whatsoever. In other words a male who is forbidden permanently, forever (e.g., one's father, brother or son, etc.)”. (Hidayat & Nurcahaya, 2019).

Prasetiyo, 2018). Javanese women are considered *kanca wingking* (followers) which means partners who have to faithfully serve and follow their husbands as heads of the family (Brenner, 1995; Hartiningsih, 2009; Prasetiyo, 2018). Javanese women are called *wadon* (servant of men) or *wanita* which means *wani ditata* (willing to be ordered by men) (Kuntjara, 1997; Prasetiyo, 2018; Rahmiaji, 2013). Besides, ideologically and legally women are acknowledged as dependent wives who live for their husbands, families, communities and states (Sears, 1996; Sullivan, 1994; Suryakusuma, 1996).

My dad does not allow me to work outside of Yogyakarta province. My dad worries that something wrong could happen to me there. To get his permission is difficult. (Ibu Fita, day-care worker, Sleman District)

Ibu Fita is an educated Javanese woman who is single and works as a babysitter. This is just a temporary career while she is waiting for registration for university enrolment. Her parents allow her to work outside their home, as long the work is not outside their province. On a similar note, concerned for her security, Fita's father prohibits her from migrating to another area. In other words, these fathers allow their daughters to work outside the home, as long as their mobility is under the control of the father.

There were a range of emotional responses from the participants during the interviews, including being chagrined, cheerless, sour, hopeless, and distressed. I could see similarities in the ways Javanese women respond when pushed to preserve family and community harmony. Especially when negative feelings such as sadness, anger and disappointment exist in their feelings, but the women must accept and keep these negative feelings to themselves to prevent them from disrupting harmony and in order to minimise conflict (Geertz, 1961; Jay, 1969). The majority of Javanese women support ethnic values of the ideal Javanese woman to maintain harmony and balance by practising *nerima* (Geertz, 1961; Jay, 1969). They are forced to follow the principles of harmony and balance throughout their entire lives to manage conflicts by implementing an attitude of acceptance without complaint.

#### **5.2.1.1.3 *Nerima* (Acceptance Without Complaint)**

Javanese culture dictates that the ideal Javanese women must be *alus* (refined or calm) and act with great dignity (Berman, 1999). To be *alus*, women must control

their feelings to avoid potential disharmony, and show the combined values of *nerima*, *sabar* and *ikhlas* (Geertz, 1961, pp. 240-241). *Nerima* defines acquiescence and acceptance, *sabar* means patience and the absence of anger, and *ikhlas* defines a sincere belief in the inevitability of fate, hierarchy, class and gender (Geertz, 1961, pp. 240-241).

Ibu Hana shared her experiences while holding back tears, reflecting her deep negative feelings while maintaining peacefulness. Like most Javanese women, Hana prefers to keep problems to herself in order to reach the Javanese women's ideal self, which is to be accepting and patient (Andayani, 2001).

I will do everything to establish a (good) family. It seems that I have to be submissive. If my husband does not agree with my ideas, I have to accept it.  
(Ibu Hana, cattle farmer, Sleman District)

From Hana's experiences, this study finds congruent evidence between state discourse in Indonesia's marriage laws and daily practices concerning women's position.

#### **5.2.1.1.4 Misinterpretation of Religious Values**

Sometimes, my husband's (extended) family comments on why I and my husband do not live together in the same house. I have not seen my husband for more than three months. So, according to Islamic religion, we are on a break in marriage. We are living separately because of our difficult situation. We both try to respect our parents. My husband prefers to care for his parents and lives in his parents' house. But my husband's income is not sufficient to cover all our family members. I have to work outside of my house to reduce my husband's burden. (Ibu Tiara, age-care worker, Gunungkidul District)

Ibu Tiara is an aged-care worker. She has been a domestic care worker since her youth. At this moment, as an aged-care worker, her income is greater than her husband's. Tiara is a pious Javanese Muslim woman who is married but is living a separate life. According to a misinterpretation of Islamic teaching, it is compulsory for a woman to follow and live together with her husband. Any woman who does not comply with this pattern or rule, who makes her own choice to work outside the household, creates a rumour and this is officially called a break in marriage.

The religion of Islam and ethnic cultural tradition are two different processes. A major hazard for Muslim society is to confuse and misinterpret cultural practices and religious beliefs (Jaafar-Mohammad & Lehmann, 2011). In fact, divorce in Islam

requires only basic reasons that protect women's rights, such as the husband and wife must be free from external pressure; both of them have been thoughtful, conscious, and free from anger; and one spouse does not perform her/his duties/responsibilities (Jaafar-Mohammad & Lehmann, 2011). Patriarchal society makes a derogatory judgment, in the name of this (misinterpreted) Islamic teaching, on a woman worker who has decided to work outside of her household. Based on Tiara's experience, this study argues that confusion between cultural practices and religious beliefs potentially acts as a barrier to expanding women's agency in their achievement of well-being.

#### **5.2.1.2 Structural Barriers**

Structural and cultural barriers interact with each other to shape a specific socio-interaction in the society. This interaction leads to specific forms of attitude and behaviour that limit agentic capacity of community, both directly and indirectly (Dutta, 2016). In the next discussion, I investigate women's capacity to practise greater control over critical factors in their lives and their involvement in the larger society. I find that limited access to finance, education and skills transition, rigidity in recruitment and selection processes, limited flexibility in job opportunities, and inadequate infrastructure facilities, form structural barriers which are critical factors in women's fight to participate in the labour market, shift their employment status and lift their economic status in their family and society.

In the following I also find that low-income Javanese women respond in various ways to the interaction of sociocultural barriers to expand their agency. For some poor women cultural traits shape traditional behaviour and attitudes so that they passively accept their fate with little effort to improve their condition (Khuluq, 2008). In contrast, some women in need implement strategies to face and overcome these solid barriers to be able to enter into a paid job.

Poverty in regional Java is common. Poverty is worse in regional Java since there is limited development of agriculture and infrastructure (Niswati, 2014; Strauss et al., 2004). Relative poverty is understood as having limited access to material resources, such as financial and educational, compared to an average person in a different location (Khuluq, 2008; Niswati, 2014). Connected to this, poverty involves

limited security, freedom and protection, as well as participation (Pronk, 1993). This study confirms Pronk's work (1993) and adds another limitation arising from the impact of poverty: a limitation to women's confidence and capacity to make choices.

#### **5.2.1.2.1 Limited Financial Resources**

My parents work in agriculture and that gives limited income for our family, especially in the dry season. This condition of poverty pushed me to work as a domestic worker when I was a child and had just graduated from junior high school (year 9). (Ibu Martha, domestic worker, Sleman District)

Martha comes from a poor family, her family had financial difficulty in supporting Martha's education attainment. Martha was forced to support her family's income as a domestic worker from a young age. The majority of parents in rural Java do not believe that education is a social investment for future well-being (Rohman, 2013). Martha's experience confirms Prasilowati's argument (2000) that women have to drop out of school because of social, cultural and financial barriers. Structural barriers manifest themselves in rural societies due to women's subordinate position in the patriarchal system. Cultural barriers manifest in a female's avoidance of open conflict as well as in adopting an attitude of acceptance. An economic barrier is manifested in low-income families with the high cost of education (Prasilowati, 2000).

The fact that the government has mismanaged the protection of women's (economic) rights in legal and regulatory policy (Ford, 2018) is discriminatory conduct because it perpetuates feminisation of poverty and gender inequality for women which, according to Mishra (2018), ultimately limit women's capacity to make choices, especially in their transition to paid formal work.

I do not have business skills, because I did not attend school. Therefore, I worry that I am not able to properly calculate. (Ibu Mega, traditional massage therapist, Gunungkidul District)

Mega's experience reflects her family's limited access to financial resources and this leads to limited access to educational attainment. Limited access to precious resources leads Mega to have few choices that would potentially change her income status. The needy tend to accept and perceive poverty as their fate (Zahrawati, 2020). As a woman in need, Mega's situation is influenced by three aspects: cultural poverty, structural poverty, and patriarchal norms (Zahrawati, 2020).

Mega's case is an example of how poverty is not only about limited financial resources, but also about the problems of powerlessness, obstruction of access to employment opportunities, and barriers to accessing jobs which would improve her well-being. In this matter, Mega's income is only sufficient to cover daily consumption needs. This situation then leads to a cycle of insecurity, few choices, and perpetual poverty.

A limited number of Javanese workers are able to negotiate and complain about their poor work situation. Mismanagement by the government in protecting women's (economic) right in legal and regulatory policy that is associated with ethnic values of the ideal Javanese woman to maintain harmony and balance by practising *nerima* places women into low social and economic status. Regional low-income and less-educated women are forced to follow the principles of harmony and balance through their entire lives to manage conflicts by implementing an attitude of acceptance without complaint. The sequence results in a cycle of exclusion and oppression through having to perform multiple tasks, poverty, discrimination, exploitation, and violence.

### ***Multiple Burdens or Time Poverty***

I do the cooking, washing, caring for grandchildren (when my daughter works as a trader close to the beach), and work in the rice field from 7 am to 5 pm So, I do everything. When there is not sufficient water availability, it is my difficult time. It means failed crop productivity. (Ibu Umi, dryland paddy farmer, Gunungkidul District)

Ibu Umi, defined as a "poor" woman because of her situation as a low-income woman farmer in a dryland area, has a great burden to fulfil her duties in a harsh environment. In this context, difficulties in accessing sufficient resources (such as water) increase the burden of women's work; both reproductive and productive work (Martias, 2015). Umi's comments reflect how she must deal with the time pressure of playing multiple roles in the household, the market, and the community.

### ***Wage Inequality***

I hope women, especially those who work as domestic workers, are increasingly aware of (to be against) inequality in their treatment. There is discrimination in wages between men and women in my neighbourhood. For instance, men who become taxi drivers, sometimes feel that their occupation is of greater status than domestic workers. A domestic worker is often looked



down upon due to their limited education, low skills, and low salary. Even my domestic worker colleagues agree with that perception. (Ibu Martha, domestic worker, Sleman District)

Ibu Martha complains about how society does not fairly treat her occupation as a paid informal female worker compared to paid formal male workers. This different treatment is demonstrated not only in remuneration but also in the viewpoint of respect for the occupation. There is unequal treatment in Martha's occupation including limited wages and an absence of respect or appreciation for her profession. Domestic workers also often suffer discriminatory treatment in the form of physical, psychological and sexual violence, non-payment, and limitations on their movements and decision making (Afifah, 2018).

### ***Exploitation***

The amount of salary is inconsistent. For example, I was given Rp 900,000 (approx. AUD \$90) this month, and the prior month I only received Rp 600,000 (approx. AUD \$60). From my salary, I was only able to buy gasoline for my transportation. It was no problem, I am okay. But I have to work a side job to earn additional income. (Ibu Isla, early-childhood education teacher, Gunungkidul District)

Ibu Isla is a young mother. Her occupation is as an early-childhood education teacher and online retailer of goods such as fashion bags, wallets, and watches. She does online retailing in her spare time. Her salary was between Rp 600,000 to Rp 700,000 (approx. AUD \$60–70, as of the exchange rate in 2019) per month. That is much lower than the minimum wage in Gunungkidul District which was around Rp 1,571,000 (approx. AUD \$157) per month in 2019 (Setiawan, 2021).

Care work, formal and voluntary, is a further source of gendered exploitation. This can be seen from the employment and experiences of women as teachers in early-childhood education centres. The PAUD project is a project for children before they reach formal school age, aimed at the needy in society, to promote children's empowerment (Newberry, 2014). This project includes women's volunteer labour. Women feel forced to be involved because this project is based on a parent's responsibility for their children's education. Thus, women's role as being care givers in their families promotes their involvement in this project (Newberry, 2014). The gender designation informs the employment and experiences of women as educators in early-childhood education centres. The volunteer-run child welfare (early-

childhood education) program, or PAUD project, provides low economic incentives and leads to additional burdens for women.

Women formal workers who work as elementary teachers also receive a low salary, as all care work in general is relatively low paid. Policies or systems unfriendly to women lead to disadvantaging women even though they have successfully entered formal work. In this context, the policy structure maintains women in a subordinate position and vulnerable condition.

### ***Violence***

Violence is an attack or assault on a person's physical or psychological integrity (WHO, 2021). Violence against women can be physical, sexual and mental, direct and indirect and, in many cases, there is a gender dimension behind the violence (WHO, 2021).

In the past, I slept in a very small room. I slept on my mattress that was very close to the refrigerator and TV. So, sometimes I often got electrocuted. I only stayed there to work for seven months. I did not get any permission whenever I wanted to visit my village. I rarely sent letters to my family, but when I did, my family never received them. Finally, I could return to my village. (Ibu Tiara, elderly care worker, Gunungkidul District)

Ibu Tiara narrated her experience working as a maid for a family in Jakarta in 2001 where she endured violence physically and emotionally. Her employer did not give her decent place to sleep at night but put her in a room with dangerous electronic appliances. She was also deprived of her rights to communicate with her family. In this case, Tiara suffered from direct violence from her employer and decided to return to her village after seven months of employment.

In the recent period of social change, formal agreements (working contracts) are taken into account in working relationships between employers and domestic workers (part-time babysitter, elderly care worker, or cleaner). Some domestic workers I interviewed prefer flexible working arrangements, and do not live in their employer's home because they can receive more wages, come and go as they like, use their phone at work, have a time for chat with other workers, have freedom in outfit selection and work with a contract that includes agreements on wages and working hours. Tiara commented:

I am regarded as one of those brave people to negotiate with my employer; for example, I wanted to make an agreement on how much the salary would be for my working hours, and about the facilities. Recently I dared to negotiate, unlike in the past where I just accepted how much salary I would receive. Now, I have Sundays off. I heard my friend also received the BPJS (government health insurance) facility from her employer. (Ibu Tiara, elderly care worker, Gunungkidul District)

Only a limited number of Javanese domestic workers can negotiate their salary as well as additional allowances, working hours, working loads and health insurance. This study demonstrates that some female domestic workers are able to negotiate to improve their working relationships after undertaking an empowerment or leadership training course that strengthens their employment status and improves their socio-economic welfare security. Eventually, they can transition from paid informal worker to paid semi-formal worker status. In this case, as a researcher, I believe that educating low-income rural women is a significant part of empowerment to achieve the goal of a more decent employment. The evidence above suggests that local governments have not provided empowerment or leadership training especially dedicated to the women working class who work in the care sector.

#### **5.2.1.2.2 Limited Education**

I wanted to keep studying, but, my parents did not have enough money to support my studies. When I was 15 years old, my neighbour who works as a *becak* (rickshaw) driver offered me a job as a domestic worker. At first, I was not interested in this job, but my parents encouraged me by persuading me that I would get a high salary and a good employer. I trusted them and decided to accept this offering. (Ibu Tiara, domestic worker, Gunungkidul District)

Ibu Tiara shares her difficulties in gaining access to education because she came from a poor family. In fact, apart from financial issues, girls in rural areas face several barriers in accessing education, such as living far from school, as well as their society having a robust patriarchal culture (Levine & Kevane, 2003). Parents in rural Java believe that daughters should not go to school since it would interfere with their nature as daughters, wives and mothers in performing specific roles which are *macak*, *masak*, *manak* (dressing up, cooking and delivering babies) (Pakpahan, 1996).

Tiara's case illustrates that women who want to work outside to contribute to a family's income could end up with low-skilled and low-income jobs as domestic

workers. In this context, working as a domestic worker without any experience may lead to various types of abuse such as violence or vulnerability to dismissal according to the employer's whims. Women in regional areas with low educational attainment face barriers to entering into a paid job (Nansereko, 2010; Suwarno, 2019; Tjandraningsih, 2000).

Only a small proportion of rural Javanese women have been educated sufficiently, simply because of socio-economic constraints (Prasilowati, 2000). This study also shows that the optimism of Indonesia's 1945 constitution to ensure every citizen's right of equal access to education, has not been evenly implemented by regional governments. This research also confirms that women in regional areas have limited participation in paid employment because of their low educational attainment (Schaner & Das, 2016).

Supplementing non-formal education and skills training with a low-cost or free of charge education would facilitate needy regional women in reducing their marginalisation and powerlessness (Prasilowati, 2000). The following section will examine how low-income regional Javanese women access informal education and skills training to enhance their skills as a means to expanding their agency and fulfilling their civil rights in the development process.

#### **5.2.1.2.3 Limited Skills Transition from Unskilled/Lower Labour to Higher-killed Labour**

Needy women in regional Gunungkidul and Sleman face multiple-layered difficulties in gaining access to skills training. These difficulties emerge from having less access to skills training information, and the limited availability of training infrastructure which excludes the preferences of women in need. This phenomenon is similar to the findings of previous research that suggests access to training for less-educated women, who speak only a minor language and who live in remote areas, continues to be problematic (Hartl, 2009).

To access the cooking course was easy for me because I knew the location of the course. I gathered the courage to ask for this course's place and found it by myself. However, I have not taken the cooking course. The opportunity for me was limited since the quota of participants has been filled for this year. I will register to join a similar course next year. (Ibu Martha, a domestic worker, Sleman District)

According to Ibu Martha, she did not have serious problems in accessing skills training information and in accessing the location. This can be understood since Martha is a domestic worker who has broad networking skills from her previous women's leadership training. However, there are many women in need who still have no information about what, where and when appropriate skills training is available. Even Martha herself, who knew the skills training information in advance, still missed the participant quota information.

The above-mentioned situation signals the limited quantity of training infrastructure that leads to reduced accessibility to women's skills development (Tambunan, 2004; World Bank, 2010). Although skills development is crucial, especially for lower income women who have low educational attainment and therefore limited skills (Widarti, 2004), this phenomenon also exists in the Gunungkidul and Sleman districts. In the context of human resource development, limited access for Javanese regional women to skills development training leads to reduced employment opportunities as well as to decreasing women's confidence in earning for their family and contributing to economic growth as good citizens in their society (Jie Chen & Chindarkar, 2017; Vyas, 2018). Apart from the information barriers, several hidden barriers also limit women's access to skills training courses that are provided by regional governments. Such barriers can be caused by technological, psychological and institutional barriers (Hashim, 2008). Javanese regional women's limited capability to operate computers and smartphones and to utilise social media form a technological barrier. A psychological barrier in the context of this study means that Javanese women in need often have less confidence to join activities in public spaces. Institutional barriers emerge when Javanese women face difficulties in both the scheduled times of training, and in the national language (*Bahasa Indonesia*), that are utilised in training courses, compared to their routine schedule of household chores and Javanese ethnic language that they are used to in their family spaces.

In fact, there are many skills training courses, but our tight activities constrain our opportunity to join these courses. (Ibu Ria, cattle farmer, Sleman District)

There are skills training courses that are arranged by university students with the KKN program<sup>5</sup>. One skills training course teaches us how to make various snacks. But, different from other people, I was not interested in this kind of training. So, I could not memorise the content of this skills training (laughing...). (Ibu Ema, livestock farmer, Gunungkidul District)

While Ibu Ria experienced time constraints in getting access to skills training, for Ibu Ema the skills training offered was inappropriate for what she needed. In both cases, the skills training offered was ineffective in helping the women.

The realm of the Javanese relationships within the bureaucracy of regional government is strongly affected by the culture of Javanese connections in the family context (Irawanto et al., 2011). Javanese culture implements *bapakism* or “fatherism” as a guiding principle for interpersonal relationships (Goodfellow & Goodfellow, 1997). This principle is reflected in the strength of respect for the father, and infiltrates from family boundaries into the wider society (Bourchier, 2014; Goodfellow & Goodfellow, 1997). Fundamentally this principle is a type of Javanese paternalism and patronage which requires submission and respect by women and children within Javanese society. Power holders utilise Javanese values such as “acceptance”, “order”, “harmony”, “respect” and “hierarchical relations” to sustain their superior position and to reinforce the subordinate position of others (Tickamyar, 2011, p. 38). Furthermore, the characteristics of traditional bureaucracy depend more on power concentration rather than on solving the problem of how power should be distributed and utilised (Yuliani & Humsona, 2017).

#### **5.2.1.2.4 Limited Families’ and Women’s Access to Financial Resources**

I do not think I can change my work. I am old. I cannot see an alternative job to farming. (Ibu Ira, dryland farmer, Gunungkidul District)

I do not have business skills, because I did not attend school. Therefore, I worry that I am not able to properly calculate. (Ibu Mega, traditional massage therapist, Gunungkidul District)

The experiences of Ibu Ira and Ibu Mega reflect their families’ limited access to financial resources and this leads to limited access to educational attainment. The

<sup>5</sup> KKN is an abbreviation of *Kuliah Kerja Nyata*. In Indonesian higher degree education (university or college), is compulsory for final year students to engage with communities in rural or suburb areas and assist the communities with development programs by applying practical knowledge that the students have gained from the university to the community and teaching the community to improve their particular skills and knowledge. Usually, this program takes from one month to three months.

finances of Ibu Ira's family are limited due to their limited income as farmers. The agriculture sector is the main income source in Gunungkidul District. The condition of these women is worse because there has been less attention paid by policy makers toward the geographical characteristics of Gunungkidul as a remote, dry land, karst area with a low level of rainfall and poor agro-climatic conditions which create less agricultural productivity leading to poverty in the agriculture sector (Suripto, 2009).

Reflecting on Ira and Mega's words when they shared their feelings, they describe their limited sense of how they can change their poverty. These women's experiences have also been caused by the lack of opportunity to expand their capability to improve their well-being (Rowlands, 1997).

#### **5.2.1.2.5 Rigidities of Recruitment and Selection Processes**

I would like to apply for public officer recruitment. But there is a limited (quota) number of government officer vacancies for every two years in Gunungkidul. (Ibu Rima, nurse, Gunungkidul District)

To apply for government officer recruitment is hard since the selection process includes an interview and many steps of selection. (Ibu Matari, nurse, Gunungkidul District)

Indonesian women have participated in public governance and community activities over a long period of time. However, their nominal civil rights to be involved in public (formal) sector employment has been limited (Nugroho, 2016)., It is difficult for women to negotiate and to overcome the dominant factors of the cultural patriarchy of the bureaucratic system in Indonesia (Nugroho, 2016). The experiences of women studied in this research illustrate the rigidity in recruitment practices in public sector employment. Ibu Matari, a nurse in a private hospital, works with limited security guarantees in her job, such as working at night without any safe transportation facilities. She tried to gain a higher status job by applying for the position of regional government health officer. However, the rigid process of recruitment as well as the limited vacancies, have forced Matari, like Ibu Rima, to be patient and reapply in the following year. From Matari's case, she represents regional women who have achieved appropriate educational attainment, but still experience cultural barriers that do not allow them to work outside their residential area, and also face structural barriers which limit their opportunity to fulfil their civil right to participate in the public formal sector.

The rigidity in recruitment processes for standard, full-time formal work in Indonesia creates a constraint for newcomers to the labour force and particularly for (married) women to participate in the labour market, so they choose part-time work which often provides more flexible opportunities for them.

#### **5.2.1.2.6 Lack of Choice: Rigidity vs Flexibility in Scheduling**

Although the percentage of Indonesian women participating in the paid labour force is around 51 percent (ILO, 2018), female employment in Indonesia has shifted from the agricultural sector to vulnerable work in the service industry (Matsumoto, 2016). The evidence indicates that more women have entered into paid work in jobs with flexible working time schedules, covering part-time work, contract work, self-employment and temporary work (Townson, 2003). Yet the opportunity of women to access non-standard jobs remains fairly poor, as there is limited realignment of policies which promote and protect individual well-being and gender participation (De Ruyter & Warnecke, 2008).

I finish my household chores by 11 am. Working for someone else means that I have to go and return at exact times. This is different to working as self-employed, which allows you to work in flexitime. (Ibu Ema, livestock farmer, Gunungkidul District)

Ema is a cattle farmer and trader, working as a trader from morning to night, five days a week. Her occupation as a trader means she moves from location to location. She also has experience as an assistant chef in a restaurant near the beach. Eventually, she stopped working as a chef's assistant as she did not feel happy under the control of other people who imposed excessive work demands.

My aunt is jobless. I have asked my aunt to look after my child for the last two weeks. She looks after my child until 11.00 am since she has to pick up her own child then. She needs an occupation, but no jobs allow her to work for half a day. (Ibu Nuril, village women activist, Sleman District)

The understanding that Javanese women face a dilemma between being a good mother and being a good income earner persists in the realm of women in this study. According to the literature review and in-depth interviews in the two places, women continue to face barriers to shifting into better jobs that allow them to play their double roles. The social norms of Javanese culture mandate a married woman with children to carefully calculate her energy and time to perform her domestic



reproductive and productive work. (Lindawati & Smark, 2015). Two participants who shared their experiences reflect that they need flexible job time to fulfil their child care and domestic responsibilities. Based on this finding, it appears that the limited availability of jobs that accommodate low-income and married woman inhibits their chances to expand their economic empowerment.

#### **5.2.1.2.7 Inadequate Infrastructure Facilities**

Low-income women who live in regional areas face limited water and sanitation availability, less affordable housing/informal settlement upgrading, and fewer transport services (Habitat, 2013). Ibu Umi's and Ibu Gita's experiences reflect that limited infrastructure investment across sectors has the potential to inhibit women's economic empowerment. The findings of this research confirm the argument of Mohun and Biswas (2016) that limited cross-sector infrastructure investment has the potential to specifically inhibit direct and indirect job creation; increase the risk of violence against women; increase women's burdens; reduce household health and welfare; and obstruct women's mobility as well as employment access.

Women should not work far from their house. I am worried, who will look after my grandchild when my daughter works? (Ibu Umi, cattle farmer, Gunungkidul District)

Umi's concern about her grandchildren's security reflects that supporting women's economic empowerment needs woman-friendly settlement planning. Woman-friendly settlement planning in this context covers adequate child-care facilities or an appropriate living space in her own house for a woman with child-care responsibilities. A married woman with children who are less than five years old needs child-care facilities when she has to work far from her residence. Moreover, women working from home still need an appropriate and affordable living space that would advantage women with child-care responsibilities in their own settlements (Mohun & Biswas, 2016).

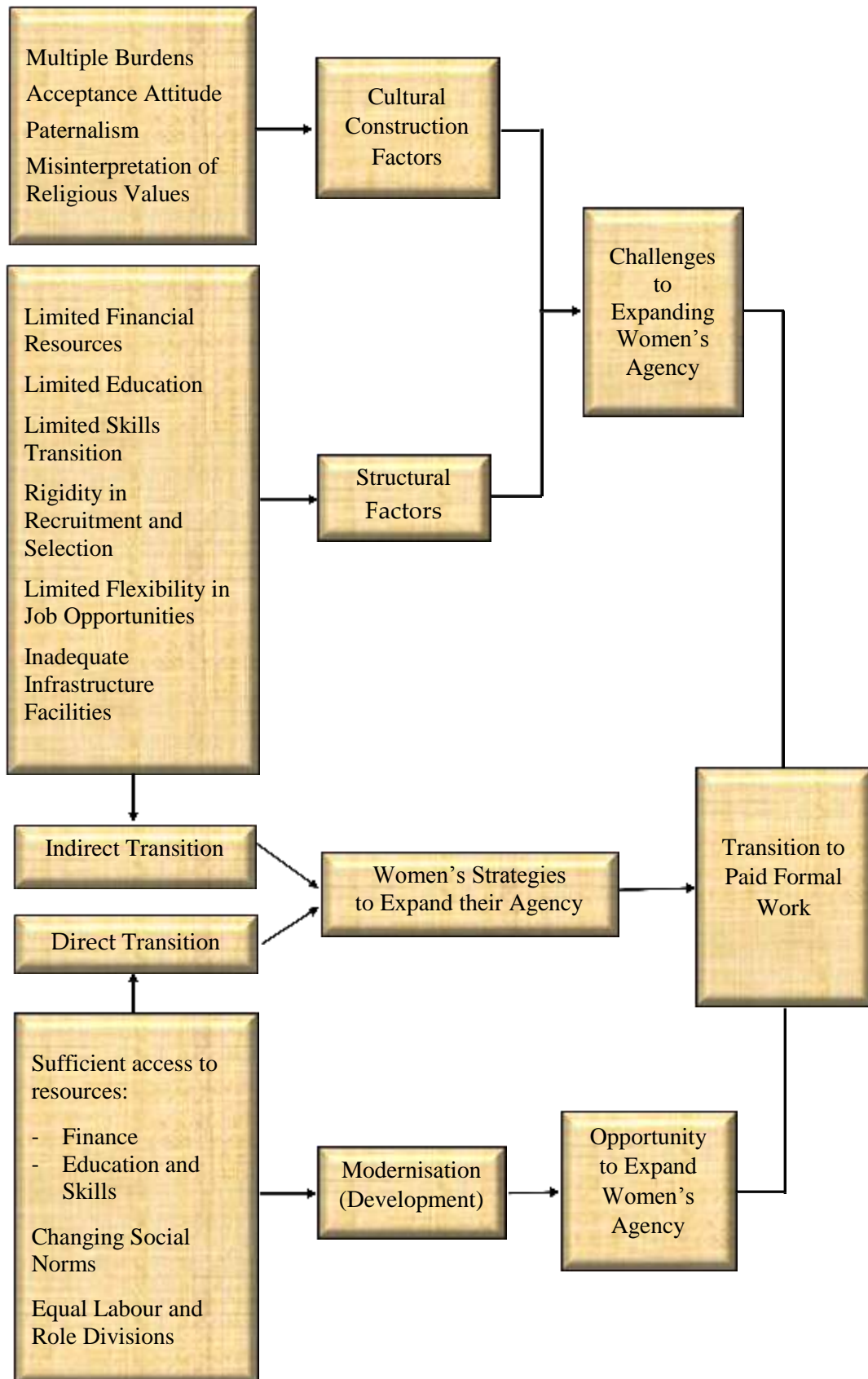
I am worried about my daughter's safety when she returns home late from her workplace. Especially if there are no transportation facilities available. There is rarely public transport in my surrounding neighbourhood. (Ibu Gita, cattle farmer, Sleman District)

Gita shares her concerns about the inadequacy of public transport in her settlement. She is worried about when her daughter returns late from work and fears the potential harassment she may receive when using public transport.

I do the cooking, washing, caring for grandchildren (when my daughter works as a trader close to the beach), and I work in the rice field from 7 am to 5 pm. So, I do everything. When there is not enough water available, it is difficult. It impacts on the failed crop productivity. (Ibu Umi, dryland paddy farmer, Gunungkidul District)

The researcher utilises Umi's experience to examine how lack of adequate safe water supplies contributes to increasing poverty and reducing women's agency.

**Figure 5.1 The challenges to and opportunities for women’s agency as they transition to formal work.**



## 5.2.2 Women's Strategies to Transition into Paid Formal Work

Listening to women's voices and acknowledging their experiences in their daily lives, I am aware of how, in their daily circumstances, only few women can implement various strategies to achieve their desired transition to paid formal work. The following subsections demonstrate how these women have realised and responded to the reality they experience.

### 5.2.2.1 Indirect Transition

One important strategy used by older women farmers in negotiating the transition from traditional work to paid formal work is investing in the human resources of the next generation. Poor women assume that their family's economic status would be stagnant, or even worse, in the future, if they did not act. Investing in human resources by moving their children away from the village for further education is nothing new (White, 2012). In Javanese culture, this strategy of poor families to overcome their financial problems is well known as the tradition of *ngenger* (to follow or to join) (Kutanegara, 2017). During both the Old Order (1945–1965) and the New Order (1966–1998) the practice of *ngenger* was a popular way for poorer residents to send their children away in order to improve their (future) quality of life by working for richer families, without pay, with the expectation of gaining schooling in return (Kutanegara, 2017). In the past, low-income families would give a priority to sending their sons first rather than their daughters. At that time, younger girls' mobility was restricted (White, 2012).

Currently, the new version of this investment in human resources includes both genders and sometimes the children pay for the education themselves. Both boys and girls in regional areas are often encouraged, and sometimes forced, by their parents to move away from their residence to other (urban) areas to receive a higher education. Ibu Meta and Ibu Ona share similar experiences in investing in human resources to achieve a better quality of life in the future.

I often say to my children not to follow my (job) path (as a farmer). Being a farmer is hard, trying to cultivate (in dry land) and a lot of animal pests eat my crops. This poor situation cannot promise anything for the future. (Ibu Meta, dryland farmer, Gunungkidul)

Meta is a poor and elderly woman farmer who cultivates dryland paddy. She manages her farm by herself with only one person to assist. She does not have the motivation to change her job as a farmer since she feels that although her income is limited, it is enough. She has two children. The oldest child works abroad as a migrant worker, and the youngest studies in junior high school. Her eldest child is motivated to support the family income. According to Meta, she has a strong bond with her children. Thus, they would obey her when she gives them advice to better their future lives.

One of the women I interviewed had the authority to exercise power in the domestic sphere for nurturing her children; whereas another informant said she did not exercise her full power to direct her children. She only encourages them to attain higher education to have more job alternatives. For instance, Ibu Ona, an elderly woman farmer mentioned:

I ask my children to attain sufficient education. In addition, my children are not interested in working as farmers. They want to have a different fate to their parents. (Ibu Ona, farmer, Sleman)

Ona has worked as a dairy cattle farmer since 1999. She has two children. She is aware that educating her children is her main responsibility as well as being within her authority. However, she deals with her children by giving them freedom to choose their own life regarding their job alternatives. Her daughter has decided to study in the accounting faculty, and dreams of becoming a bank accountant in the future.

Both Meta and Ona represent elderly, unpaid informal workers who employ strategies to transition to paid formal work through their descendants. Another two women (Ibu Fita and Ibu Rema) also come from farming backgrounds, who then have transitioned to non-agricultural jobs. They told me the reason for transitioning was that working in agriculture was not a guarantee for improving their economic status. Fita stated that:

In my opinion ... as parents, they want their children to have a much better life than they have. So, how could this burden be placed on only one person? It's a pity that one person has to support many people, for his wife for his children. (Ibu Fita, babysitter, Sleman District)

A job as a babysitter, according to informants, is not promising for the long term. Two informants claim that their jobs in baby day care and a spa are only a stepping stone for transitioning to another job. Informants Rena and Fita only work as babysitters as a temporary measure, while waiting for admission to undergraduate degrees.

My work in day care and a spa is just a stepping stone. Next year, I will continue on to undergraduate school. (Ibu Rena, babysitter, Sleman District)

#### **5.2.2.2 Direct Transition**

In-depth interviews with my primary informants indicate that only few women have access to valued resources such as material, human and social resources. Lack of access to such resources affects their ability to make a direct transition into the paid formal labour force. The following section will explain the attitudes of young middle-class women in regional areas who can directly transition into paid formal work, like Ibu Rita, Ibu Laras and Ibu Risti. Their access to a higher degree of education has stimulated their freedom to choose and achieve their future goals such as being an elementary school teacher in a public school in Gunungkidul District for Rita, being a kindergarten teacher in Gunungkidul for Laras, and being a kindergarten teacher in Sleman District for Risti. All of them are aware of the advantage of continuing to higher degree education as a strategy to enter paid formal work. Laras has received support from her parents to act on and achieve her desired goals. In this context, Rita has a higher degree of empowerment than Laras, because she has the capability to set goals and fight to realise these goals by herself.

I graduated from the second year of a diploma (college) course, then worked as a temporary or casual teacher. After that, I graduated as a Bachelor in Education. Currently, I am working as a full-time elementary school teacher. (Ibu Rita, elementary school teacher, Gunungkidul)

I have been a teacher since 2009 after I graduated from an educational vocational school. New regulations required that teacher professionals had to graduate with a Bachelor of Education. Therefore, I continued to study in *universitas terbuka* (online and distance learning university) from 2009 to 2015 in Yogyakarta. (Ibu Laras, kindergarten teacher, Gunungkidul)

After working as a kindergarten teacher for a year, Laras decided to study an undergraduate degree in 2010. Having taught for one year is a requirement for enrolment as an online (open) and distance learning university student. Her

motivation to study a bachelor's degree in the education field is to increase her knowledge of parenting that would potentially support her domestic chores in the future.

### **5.2.3 Opportunities to Transition into Paid Formal Work: Women Income Earners and the Interplay of Women's Agency**

In a small number of cases, there are women who possess an awareness of their situation, which reflects their ability to expand their agency. However, women with such a view can be seen as a minority, who are often overlooked as role models by the majority of women who have limited self-confidence, when they want to shift from their current job. In this respect, these Javanese regional women may be enabled to make choices provided they have sufficient access to financial resources, education attainment, and equal labour and role divisions in the household, which are a result of global social and economic changes and development processes.

Women are heterogeneous in terms of their circumstances and regional Javanese women demonstrate various degrees of empowerment when they exercise their agency, particularly in engagement in paid work and in the interplay of their agency in family and community decision making. In respect of this research, the degree of empowerment is assessed by the existing capacity to make choices, the application of choice, and the desired outcome (achievement) of choice. The empirical facts demonstrate that, predominantly, low-income and less-educated Javanese women who live in regional areas have limited capacity to create a purposeful choice. Some of them can create choice but still struggle to transform choices into desired actions. On the other hand, several Javanese regional women who live in an environment with a higher level of opportunity structure (law and regulation structures, as well as norms governing behaviour) and greater access to resources (such as financial, educational, informational, psychological, and social) tend to be able to examine their capacity to develop the desired choice, and to act purposefully. Several regional Javanese women from the middle class are able to challenge their structural position as their desired outcome. Participation of women in the labour force leads to increasing women's capacity to play a role as an income earner and decision-making contributor in the family and community. But the

majority of them are still struggling to achieve their desired outcomes in terms of a decent salary that is comparable to that earned by male workers.

### 5.2.3.1 Social and Economic Changes

The spread of global feminist ideologies underline women's empowerment and challenge native gender ideologies in which injustice, inequality, and interdependency of the sexes are critically examined and linked to policy agendas based on justice and equality (Gerke, 1992; Niehof, 1998).

These issues are relevant to Javanese women in seeking to realise aspirations in work and well-being (Niehof, 1998). Development practices whether gender-oriented or not have become central to daily lives. The impact of economic development and other processes such as industrialisation and urbanisation have impacted on living standards (Niehof, 1998). Improvements in education, health, agriculture, family planning, infrastructure, and public facilities have all affected women's status and well-being (Gerke, 1992; Niehof, 1998; Schaner & Das, 2016; Williams, 2019). The spirit of nationalism and the introduction of feminist egalitarianism is in line with the awakening of women's consciousness in Indonesia.

Once young women receive an education, they have the potential to improve their well-being. They have new aspirations about women's roles to live up to their expectations as becoming ideal women (Niehof, 1998). These new standards are influenced by ideologies of modernisation rather than dictated by the indigenous gender ideology of women's *kodrat* or natural destiny (Kuntjara, 1997; Niehof, 1998, p. 254).

From a religious perspective, the mother has to work at home. Yes, it is true, in terms of religion. However, I think it depends on the family's policy whether parents allow women to work outside the home. Religion might indeed prohibit women from working outside the home. But, in my opinion, this can be allowed if women working outside home have the family's approval to support the family income. Personally, by working we can receive a salary as well as knowledge. Besides, I want to deeply explore the knowledge I gain from this (working experience). (Ibu Laras, kindergarten teacher, Gunungkidul District)

Currently women working outside the home, even far from their residence, is ordinary today. They may have to return late to their home according to their occupation. In the past, the majority of women stayed at home as housewives. Now, women work also to support themselves as members of the family. In current times, it's not only the man who can make decisions.



Sometimes, women also are able to make decisions. It might be that in the past, people thought that only men were able to make decisions. But this is no longer valid in this time. Only people with less insight preserve their traditional thoughts. (Ibu Rima, nurse, Gunungkidul District)

Sullivan (1994) examined the livelihood of a Javanese low-income class urban family in Yogyakarta, and Lont (2000) researched urban Javanese women's responses to microfinance credit institutions. Women's work motivations are influenced by many factors. Some women decide to work because of economic factors such as to alleviate poverty within their family. Changes in sociocultural conditions also play an important part in encouraging women to contribute to the family income. This process is present in Gunungkidul due to the impact of the development of tourism along its south coast. The emergence of a tourism sector causes residents to aspire to a lifestyle such as the tourists have, with various accessories attached, such as bags, clothes, and jewellery. This motivates the local community, especially young women, to earn income so they can realise these lifestyle ambitions.

In the rural context, this study finds that middle-class Javanese women who work in paid employment do not perceive that their role is only as wife and mother but they also see themselves as family income contributors. Interviewee Ibu Laras as an individual is able to adapt her identity as a rural Muslim woman to change the conservative ideology that frames women's work. The new adaptation of thought framing shapes women's ability to make effective choices and decide to work outside the home with their belief that it is more appropriate to their particular contemporary setting (Latif et al., 2018; Murray & Ali, 2017). In addition, rural Muslim women also employ strategies in response to hegemonic patriarchy by negotiating with their parents, spouses, and family members to get their permission or agreement for them to work outside of the home.

### **5.2.3.2 Access to Financial Resources**

My wage is greater than my husband's. My target is to have our own house. I prefer to save money rather than apply for credit from a bank. I don't like bank credit, because I have to pay bank interest. It is better to save money, rather than to spend this amount of money on bank interest ... I do not want work as an employee forever. In the future, I wish to have my own business such as a laundry or cooking business. (Ibu Martha, aged-care worker, Sleman District)

Martha's educational background is limited. However, her involvement in informal leadership training as well as her long hours of work experience have led to improving her capacity to exercise agency. She is able to negotiate with her potential employers about salary, working hours and working conditions. Therefore, Martha has some control over the money that she earns and uses. Martha's story represents the few Javanese women who have a strong bargaining position within their household, since Martha has some control over earning income as well as managing their finances. Therefore Martha's financial autonomy is strong, enhancing her status in the family structure.

### **5.2.3.3 Access to Educational Opportunities**

The participation rate of women in developing countries who attain education is increasing due to more emphasis on women's education and improved government, donor, and women's organisations' support (Ogawa & Akter, 2007).

After I finished senior high school, I was invited to fill a kindergarten vacancy once all the kindergarten teachers were recruited to elementary school. I have been teaching kindergarten since 2008. I continued to study at university through the online and distance learning system for five years. (Ibu Ria, kindergarten teacher, Gunungkidul)

For Ibu Ria, participating in the labour market was relatively easy. The quote shows that Ria, who had sufficient access to high educational attainment, has the confidence to apply for various job vacancies. Ria's experience represents middle-class Javanese women who have enjoyed the opportunity of higher education over the last three decades (Ogawa & Akter, 2007; Schaner & Das, 2016). Ria has been teaching kindergarten since 2008. Educating children as a religious calling of doing good deeds is her motivation. Besides being a kindergarten teacher, Ria has another income as a small trader on the beach every weekend. In this case Ria represents women who have the ability to manage their time effectively amongst a number of activities. She can play multiple roles as a wife, as a mother for her family, and as a good citizen for her society.

Having an advanced educational background is considered an entry point to participation in the labour market for many Javanese women. However, only a limited number of women gain this privilege. This privilege allows women to scale up their skills. Women in my study like Ibu Isla as a Bachelor of Education, have

sufficient educational background to lead them to explore other new knowledge by self-learning.

I have graduated with a Bachelor of Education. Besides working as an early education teacher, I also have an online business. At first, I searched Shopee (a business app) to start a small business online, then, my cousin taught me how to sell through the business online. Finally, I learnt by myself. (Ibu Isla, early education teacher, Gunungkidul District)

This study confirms prior studies that argue that attaining education can lead women to have choices in order to increase their bargaining power (Joseph, 1997). Isla's experience signifies that she is able to learn by herself to start an online business as her side job. This confirms that access to education has elevated her human resource qualities, increasing her confidence in exploring new knowledge and opportunities.

#### **5.2.3.4 Work and the Division of Labour in the Household**

Equal division of roles between husband and wife in the household results in equal relations between men and women. Several informants indicate that an equal relationship does exist between husband and wife in contemporary Javanese society. This is because they are equally responsible for domestic and public work. There is no compelling division of roles between the husband and wife, so both of them perform both roles.

For informants, the concept of absolute equality is one which covers all aspects of domestic life. Husband and wife share equal responsibilities in their domestic life. For example, with Ibu Ria, she and her husband both work in the education sector. She works as a kindergarten teacher and her husband works in administration in a high school. Both work in the public sphere to earn an income. In relation to the division of domestic tasks, Ria states that her husband helps her by doing household chores such as washing and sweeping.

My husband assists me (to do household chores). He also does the washing and sweeping. We cooperate. (Ibu Ria, kindergarten teacher, Gunungkidul District)

Cooperation between husband and wife is also carried out by Otty who works as a babysitter in Sleman District. Even though both work outside the household, roles and work division in the house are delegated equally.

### 5.3 Conclusion

Gunungkidul and Sleman districts have achieved significant economic growth and poverty reduction. However, the participation rate of women in the labour force remains lower than men. By analysing secondary data and the results from fieldwork on women's participation and transition into formal employment, this chapter finds that regional Javanese women are still less involved in the labour force and labour market compared to men. In other words, women continue to have less capacity than men to exercise agency despite the sustained economic growth in Gunungkidul and Sleman.

The transition both from agricultural to non-agricultural, and informal to formal employment has had a less significant impact on women's employment, due to structural and cultural barriers continuing to place women in a disadvantaged position with respect to labour market opportunities in the regional development context. The cultural challenges to participation include multiple burdens, acceptance attitudes, man's domination, and misinterpretation of religious values. Structural factors consist of limited financial resources, limited educational attainment, limited skills transition, rigidity of recruitment and selection processes, limited flexibility in job opportunities, and inadequate infrastructural facilities. Limited valuable resources (such as material, human and social) reinforce women's incapacity to practise control over critical factors in their lives and their involvement in the larger society.

Although development as part of global change is implemented unjustly and unevenly, it still provides space for a few Javanese rural women to develop the capacity to expand their agency. They show self-esteem, self-direction and authority when they want to act or shift from their current jobs to achieve better well-being. Opportunity factors which take the form of sufficient access to valuable resources (finance, educational attainment and high-level skills) and changing social norms affect the labour and role divisions at the family level.

These findings from the field research suggest that transition from informal to formal employment has had a minor impact on women's employment and continues to place women as an underutilised human resource in the regional development

context. The next chapter elaborates how transitioning impacts women's economic empowerment through labour participation that contributes to their family income and family structure, and its effect on their status at family and community levels.

## **Chapter Six**

# **Economic Empowerment and the Interplay of Women's Agency**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter addresses Research Question 2: “*How have work transitions impacted women's economic empowerment in the domestic and community spheres?*” To answer this question, this chapter captures informants' shared experiences and perspectives on their experiences in earning more income and how it affects women's empowerment. The first section of this chapter elaborates on women's empowerment at the individual level when women's capacity to make choices and negotiate is limited and when they decide to enter paid work. The second section focuses on women's empowerment at the family level, and the third section highlights external support in shaping women's collective.

Women's empowerment has been articulated by women themselves, either individually as the subject or collectively at the family or community level. They know what they need, such as education or training to increase their knowledge or skills, so they can lift their socio-economic position. The findings of this chapter argue that women who participate in employment bring an increase in women's status in both family and community structures. It means that earning higher income leads to improving women's control over the family's property and resources and strengthens women's agency to participate in other household decision making, such as family planning, the family's financial arrangements, and deciding on the children's education. In addition, earning a higher income is in line with an external support system in various forms of social community groups. It plays an essential role in improving women's capacity to participate as active agents and on equal terms with men in reshaping the society in which they reside in ways that contribute to society's well-being.

## **6.2 The Effect of Women's Participation in Employment on Women's Status**

To understand women's economic empowerment as they transition from informal work in the primary sector of agriculture to formal work in non-agricultural industries, (care work) and the consequences of women's economic empowerment through labour participation on their family income, family structure, and its relationship to their status at family and community levels, I present a table consisting of three-order themes and an aggregate dimension that encompasses the effects of participation on empowerment (Table 6.1.).

Table 6.1 illustrates four-order themes. The first-order themes include descriptive interpretation data that adhere fully to the informants' terms. There are twelve initial themes emerging from the interviews that reflect the women workers' experiences, voices, and perspectives when they examine their capacity to make choices. These themes were extracted during the open or initial coding stage where I analysed the critical statements of thirty rural women's interview transcripts line by line and put codes to the text narration. These emergent themes include decisions made with the husband's permission, decisions made by women independently, family income pressures, hereditary family businesses, women's own decision, man's arrangement, share between man and woman's arrangement, woman's arrangement, Man's input into decision making, woman's input into decision making, joint/family members' input into decision making, and encouraging women's groups. Then I grouped the texts or themes that carry similar meaning into emergent categories (Hallberg, 2006) based on the women workers' experiences, voices and perspectives when they exercise women's economic empowerment.

The second-order themes involve conceptualised descriptions of the data which evolved from analysis in the axial coding stage based on the first-order themes. I organised each category in the first-order themes in an open coding phase by identifying the conditions, actions, and interactions associated with the phenomena, thus connecting and merging categories into six bigger themes (O'Connor, 2012). The second-order themes indicate various forms of agency that reflect women's motivations and decisions to enter paid formal work to improve their personal well-being (internal motivation to work) (O'Connor, 2012), women's

control over household decision making (decision making for family planning, the family's financial arrangements, family decision making on the children's education), and women's capacity to improve society (agent of change). The third-order themes describe various levels of agency exercised by women when they transition into paid formal work to improve their personal well-being. The fourth-order themes explain the central phenomenon of the effect of women's economic empowerment and its relationship to their status at the individual, family and community levels.

The relationship between these produces an interconnection based on the causal condition that becomes an element of the main category selected. It must connect between the core category and subcategories and frequently emerge in the data (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; O'Connor, 2012; Rabinovich & Kacen, 2013).

**Table 6.1 The Effect of Women's Participation in Employment and its Relationship to Women's Status at Individual, Family and Community Levels**

First-order Concepts	Second-order Themes	Third-order Themes	Aggregate Dimension
With Husband's Permission	Internal Motivation to Work	Empowerment at the Individual Level	The Effect of Women's Participation in Employment and its Relationship to Women's Status at Individual, Family and Community Levels
Independent Women's Decision			
Family Income Pressure	External Motivation to Work		
Hereditary Family Business			
- Women's own decision	Decision Making for Family Planning	Empowerment at the Family Level	
- Man's arrangement - Share between man and woman's arrangement - Woman's arrangement	Financial Arrangement in the Family		
- Man's input into decision making - Woman's input into decision making - Joint/Family members' input into decision making	Family Decision Making in Children's Education		
Encouraging Women's Groups	Agent of Change	Empowerment at the Community Level	

Source: Original compilation of the author's research



This study suggests that workers who are paid higher amounts do not only contribute to their own lives and family income but also challenge their status in the family and community. Some evidence in this study suggests that the recognition of women's contribution to income leads to their voices being heard in the creation of key strategic family and community decisions. The following section investigates the effect of engagement in paid work in forming women's capacity to exercise agency at the individual, family and community levels.

### **6.2.1 Women's Empowerment at the Individual Level**

Upon interviewing Javanese female workers in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts and understanding the experiences these women contended with thus far, I argue that employed Javanese female workers have various levels of agency when they exercise their autonomy to transition into paid formal work to improve their personal well-being. The following subsections discuss some excerpts from the interviewees on how women decide to enter paid work. This study finds four kinds of women's motivations to work that portray diverse levels of economic empowerment (power/control over their movement).

#### **6.2.1.1 Women's Motivation to Work**

To understand how women expand their agency at the individual level when they decide to work outside the household, this research explores their motivations to engage in paid work. The findings of this study show two factors that influence women to decide to work. Firstly, are external (family) reasons such as economic motivation to support the family's well-being. Secondly, are internal (personal) reasons such as dream achievement (future goals), self-existence, and satisfaction (personal well-being).

The phenomenon of working women is not a strange thing in contemporary Indonesian society. The traditional gender division of labour in the household in patriarchal countries such as Indonesia often determines that men play the role of breadwinner while women work as family and household carers. However, the empirical evidence shows that women in Indonesia perform not only as household keepers but also as income earners. Women being involved in income-earning activities in the public sphere is an inevitable reality.

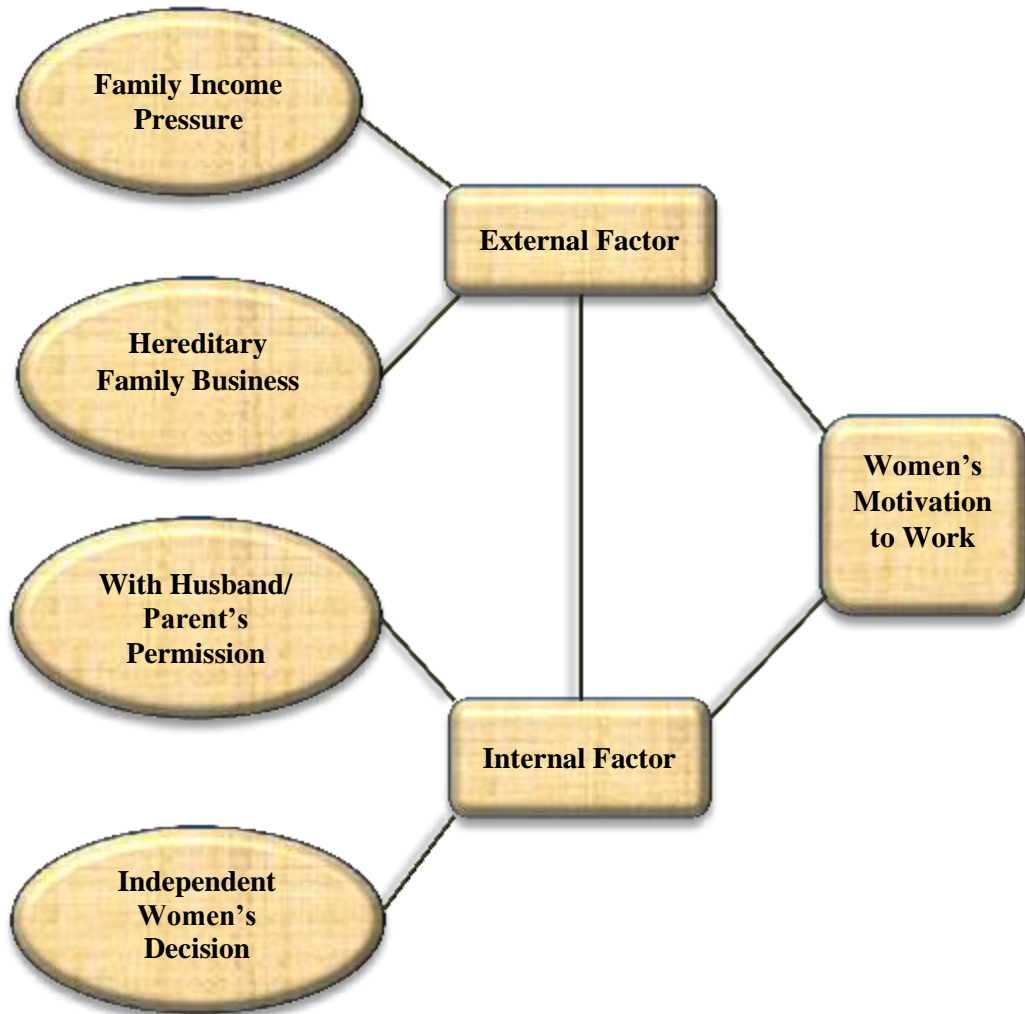
Javanese women in regional areas are not a homogeneous group, as reflected in the different motivations that they have. Various background motivations are at play when women decide to participate in the paid labour force. These considerations involve family (external) and personal (internal) reasons. Family reasons can involve being an income and welfare contributor, and personal reasons include self-existence and independence. Various economic conditions including sociocultural aspects affect women's decisions to work. Their decisions are based on the reasons why women work, and what type of "proper" jobs are performed by women.

The participation of women in the paid labour force has contributed significantly to their family's welfare. This creates a situation where women play two roles at once; namely, the domestic role which is being in charge of taking care of the household; and the income-earner role as working outside the home or as a part-time worker to meet the livelihood needs of the whole family.

There are two factors that influence women's decision to work. First are external factors like covering family income pressures (poverty) and continuing hereditary family businesses. In this respect, women have no choice but to sustain the extended family business rather than prioritise their own decision to work. Second, are internal factors that include the intention to achieve financial independence, to gain wider knowledge, and to obtain self-satisfaction. Internal factors cover both women's decisions with their husband/parents' permission, and women's independent decisions.

In the context of women's agency, I argue that women's motivation to work based on external factors implies a lower economic empowerment status than women's motivation to work based on internal factors. Women who are more confident in making independent decisions have a higher economic empowerment status (intrinsic agency) compared to women who make decisions with their husband/parents' permission and who need legitimisation from their spouses/parents to realise their decision. The following Figure 6.1 is a visual portrayal of factors affecting women's motivation to work outside the home.

**Figure 6. 1 Women's motivation to work.**



***External Factors***

Economic motivation is one of the factors that drive women in households in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts to decide to work. The main reason is to meet family costs. Therefore, women have a motivation to work to support their husbands' responsibility as the main breadwinner, to increase the family income, as demonstrated in the following statements from several low-income Javanese women such as Ibu Ira, who has no other choice except fulfilling her obligation to work in order to support the family income.

I have to work on the farm. If I do not assist my husband, for sure our income would not cover our daily needs. (Ibu Ira, farmer, Gunungkidul District)

One of the informants in Gunungkidul District indicated that economic considerations are her main motivation to participate in the labour force. Women

who do not have sufficient skills to support their involvement in paid formal work, do not have any alternative except to continue the hereditary work of their parents as cattle farmers.

There are so many cattle farmers in my surrounding environment. The occupation of cattle farmer is passed from parents to future generations. (Ibu Ria, cattle farmer Sleman District)

Ibu Ria is one of the female cattle farmers in Sleman District who has been breeding dairy cows for generations. From before she married, her parents taught her how to raise livestock. When she was married, she decided to continue raising dairy cows. As her husband is also a cattle breeder, the couple cooperate to meet the economic needs of the family. The husband's authority also influences her decision to work with him, with his permission.

My husband allows me to work. We have cooperated in working as breeders since the beginning. (Ibu Ria, cattle farmer, Sleman District)

Similarly, Ibu Gita has decided to continue working as a cattle farmer after marriage because it is permitted by her husband. Yet, it seems Gita has more authority than Ria. According to Gita, even if her husband did not allow her, she would still work because she wants to be financially independent. Since Gita's husband has passed away, she has taken over the role of the breadwinner in her family. She has also taken a side job as a paid labourer in the golf industry.

My husband allowed me to work. I would stay working since I am not comfortable if I just ask for money (from my husband). (Ibu Gita, cattle farmer, Sleman District)

Concern for family welfare is an important factor that influences women's involvement in earning activities. Women often become breadwinners due to having husbands who are not fully employed or whose income cannot meet family needs. Since in the beginning these women were not prepared (or expected) to be the main breadwinner, often they have limited choices or can only rely on skills inherited from their parents.

Avoiding poverty is a significant condition that forces women to participate in the labour force. Several informants indicated that they were forced to work at a young age to help meet family needs. As mentioned above, the low economic status of some families inhibits their opportunity to continue to higher education and

pushes them into work. The girls are unable to make a choice, and inevitably have to work. The authority to make the decision belongs to the superior parents rather than themselves.

The quotes below demonstrate the experiences of women who come from impoverished family backgrounds. They had limited education and menial jobs. Both were forced to work for the first time at an early age because of the economic condition of their families who could not afford to send them to school. They started to work as domestic workers as children; namely Ibu Mira at 12 years old, and Tiara at 15 years old.

I had no other choice. My parents were poor farmers who experienced difficulties in meeting their daily needs. So, working (at a very young age) is normal. (Ibu Mira, domestic worker, Gunungkidul District)

These women began work at a young age. Their limited skills and youth made them feel that they had to surrender to working as child domestic servants. Mira's work included caring for the employers' children, cleaning the house, and doing other domestic work such as washing and cleaning.

### ***Internal Factors***

Women have various motivations when they decide to participate in the labour force, such as contributing to the family's income, becoming financially independent, and having the ability to control their own property. Some women shared their motivation that they wanted to assist their husband to earn income and to be financially independent.

The evidence confirms that women who decide to work to become economically independent are generally professionals with higher income and education. The woman wants to achieve "individual welfare" by her efforts. In addition to improving their individual welfare, women decide to work with the aim that they would have control over their family assets. For example, Ibu Ema and Ibu Risti say:

... by working, it helps the family financially anyway. I am not comfortable if I merely ask my husband for money. The point is, if I have my own income, I do not need to ask my husband (if I want to purchase something). Thus, my husband just needs to finance basic spending such as electricity and water subscription fees. (Ibu Ema, farmer, Gunungkidul District)

We still hope that women can be independent, it's my principle that *jadi wong wedok iki orang mung krido lumah ing ngastoh jalok segoh wong lanang* (a woman should not merely open her hand to receive rice from a man). I educate my children (by being a role model). I also work, it gives me more independence. But I suggest a woman can work without the intention of disrespecting her spouse. We can earn money to add to our family income. So, in my opinion women should work. (Ibu Risti, kindergarten teacher, Sleman District)

Likewise, Ibu Hesti reveals the same work motivation. She is accustomed to earning money and has control over her own money. When she married, Hesti continued to do the same thing. In Hesti's case, she has access to high educational attainment and experience in working outside the house. Hesti's access to valuable resources leads to a greater space for her to examine her desire to earn an income for two reasons: firstly, for fulfilling her primary and secondary needs; and secondly, for complying to her right to manage her own income.

I am used to work. Just imagine, I still need to manage and spend my own money to buy everything that I want to buy like in the past. Even though my husband has given me money since we were married. (Ibu Hesti, early education teacher, Gunungkidul District)

For unmarried women, taking paid work is an opportunity to be free from economic dependence on their parents. Several informants in Sleman, namely Ibu Andin and Ibu Fita, mentioned that they sought paid work to decrease the economic burden of their parents with their self-awareness.

I work to add to my allowance since I am not comfortable if my parents still supply my allowance. (Ibu Andin, kindergarten teacher, Sleman District)

I work just to look for experience. In my opinion, finding work experience is better than just sleeping at home or having nothing to do as an unemployed person. My future goal is to be a career woman. If I can work, automatically, we can share responsibilities rather than only ask for money from my parents. By working, someday I can assist my parents or my husband (to earn family income). (Ibu Fita, baby day-care worker, Sleman District)

Fita works as a baby day-care worker. Her motivation to work is to utilise her spare time while waiting for the announcement of a place in college. Her decision to work is supported by her parents, with the limitation as long as the work location is still in the Yogyakarta area. According to Fita that means she has the freedom to take any type of job as long as she does not leave Yogyakarta.

Two informants who have not yet married have the freedom to make decisions relating to their education and employment. Their decisions are not influenced by their parent's preferences. For example, Ibu Andin can choose the subject/major to be learned as well as to work as a teacher. In Andin's case, she gets power-sharing from her parents through her parents' permission.

I decided to study in the faculty of (early age) education science. My parents have always given me support and their blessing for every subject that I wanted to learn. (Ibu Andin, kindergarten teacher, Sleman District)

In more prosperous family groups, women's decision to work may no longer be based on purely economic motives. Women have other considerations when they take up the opportunity to work outside the home. For Ibu Rima, who works as a nurse, her motivation to work is to gain experience of working outside the home.

After I graduated from senior high school, I continued to study at a university, then applied for a job vacancy. By working as a nurse, I want to get work experience. (Ibu Rima, a nurse, Gunungkidul District)

Economic factors are indeed a major consideration for women to choose to work, in terms of helping their husbands to increase their family income. Yet, women who work in public spaces also have other agendas such as to examine their existence as well as to "empower" themselves outside their domestic space, like Rima who works as a nurse in hospitals, to add experience outside their roles as wives, mothers, and carers for children at home.

Many women justify working as a means to go outside of the home. Some informants who work as teachers have other considerations for working besides its economic value. They use it as a "justifier" when deciding to participate in the labour force. One example is Ibu Ria who decided to work after marriage. She wanted to have some activities outside the home to get "out" from routine domestic activities.

I don't know why I want to work. I do not like just to stay at home. At one time I had to drop my child to school, who was in kindergarten. Thus, we could depart from our home together to go to school. (Ibu Ria, kindergarten teacher, Sleman District)

For women, working can also be a means for self-actualisation in public spaces. As stated by Ibu Icha, an early education teacher in Sleman District, she also works as a teacher so that she is not idle at home. By working in the public space, Icha has the

opportunity to socialise with other colleagues. Since Icha is a very active person in various community activities, her passion for joining in public activities leads her husband to allow her to work outside the home.

My husband saw that I could socialise in the public sphere. Then he supported me to work outside the home. (Ibu Icha, early education teacher, Sleman District)

Socialising and gaining new experiences and knowledge are other motivations to work outside the home. Based on the explanations above, it can be concluded that women, in addition to acting as wives and housewives, are also breadwinners who improve the family's standard of living. They contribute to household welfare as well as regional and national economic growth through additional income from their work. Various motivations become a background for why women decide to enter the labour force. The motivations to work are not solely to meet economic needs, but also as forms of self-actualisation, empowerment, doing good deeds and devotion.

The degrees of level of empowerment proposed by Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) assist the current study to map out the degree of empowerment of Javanese women in the case study regions. In the context of this research, the degree of empowerment is assessed by the existing capacity to make choices, the application of choice, and the desired outcome (achievement) of choice. The evidence from this study shows that low-income and less-educated Javanese women who live in regional areas have limited capacity to create purposeful choices. Some of them can create choice but still struggle to transform choices into desired actions. Several Javanese regional women who live in an environment with a greater opportunity structure (the law and regulation structures, as well as norms governing behaviour) and greater access to resources (such as financial, education, informational, psychological and social) tend to be able to examine their capacity to develop their desired choice, and to act purposefully. Participation in the paid labour force increases women's capacity to play their roles as income earners and contributors to decision making in the family and community. But the majority are still struggling to achieve their desired outcomes in terms of a decent salary.

This study confirms prior research findings that empowerment initiatives should focus on improving women's access to resources to begin with, and end with



achieving a desired outcome. The desired outcome in this context is an emerging women's awareness to define themselves as women, as citizens, and as human beings, to shift from an unjust and unequal condition to creating an environment which promotes their right to decent work (Cornwall, 2016; Sholkamy, 2010).

### **6.2.2 Women's Empowerment within the Family**

Generating income influences how married working women interact with and take positions in the family (Nurhayati, 2019). Their contribution of income to the family leads to an emerging ability to make family decisions that manifest into decisions around family planning, financial arrangements, and the children's education.

The involvement of women in earning activities in public spaces, as the researcher found in Gunungkidul and Sleman, has consequences. For women who are married, the choice to work outside the home may lead to dual roles where she must act as a wife or mother, and as a paid worker at the same time. Moreover, the duties and responsibilities of women may increase when they work in both the domestic sphere and in the public sphere. Some women become the main breadwinners, in addition to performing their duties as a housewife, mainly due to economic burdens.

Flexible working hours for farmers enable women who work as farmers to divide their time when they carry out domestic and public responsibilities. For example, Ibu Ona and her husband work as farmers. They divide their time between them to care for children and work in the fields.

When my husband does weed control on the farm, I stay at home. He doesn't object, because we understand each other. We have to be patient if at that time not just one person can handle everything (taking care of the household and work). (Ibu Ona, cattle breeder, Sleman District)

Informants indicated that a fair labour division in terms of domestic and public work creates an equal relationship at the family level. Cooperation between husband and wife plays a significant factor in creating fair division of labour between couples. Ibu Otty works as a babysitter in Sleman and even though both she and her husband work outside the home, they share their home duties.

The role of extended family members such as parents also influence women's decision to work. Ibu Matari is married and lives with her parents, while her husband works outside the city. So, control over child care, domestic work, and work in the public sphere is decided within the extended family.

Decision making about parenting the children is done by me and my family (parents), my husband and I also discuss this together. My parent drops in and picks up my son from his school. (Ibu Matari, nurse, Gunungkidul District)

#### **6.2.2.1 Decision Making for Family Planning**

Based on observations in the field, families in Sleman and Gunungkidul districts are aware of the use of family planning. However, most contraception methods are the responsibility of women rather than men. According to Ibu Ema, a family planning cadre, all women in her village had used and were familiar with the family planning program. The local village government also plays an important role in the socialisation of family planning into the village community.

(Most people in) the community around here have used (contraception) ... the Family, Welfare Movement invited members of the community to come to the village community health centre to inform them about the family planning program (and advise them on the usage of contraception). (Ibu Ema, farmer, Gunungkidul District)

Ibu Matari indicated that she had previously practised family planning after having her first child, but now she does not use it because her husband works outside of her district and is rarely at home. As another experience, Ibu Rima noted that she has not practised family planning because she has not yet had a child. She would discuss family planning with her husband.

My husband is not staying here currently. I practised family planning when my husband returned (from work outside the district) and my child was one year old at that time. So, automatically I used contraception. (Ibu Rima, nurse, Gunungkidul District)

Rima's case is an example of a woman who has adequate knowledge about women's health as well as earning a good income. Ibu Tiara in Gunungkidul District and Ibu Palupi in Sleman District have made their own decisions to use contraception for birth control. According to Palupi, many women in Sleman make a decision based on their awareness of using contraception.

Martha, a domestic worker in Sleman, represents Javanese women who decide not to use contraception due to concerns about the impact on their health. Her decision not to practice family planning is her own decision, without discussion with her husband. As an aged-care worker and the breadwinner Martha is more dominant in making decisions than her husband, and she is worried about the side effects of contraception. Therefore, she has decided not to use contraception.

I read that contraception such as the pill and injections might cause some spots on the face. Apart from this, my friends who use (pills and injections) often have headaches and their period stopped. I am afraid (of the side effects). (Ibu Martha, aged-care worker, Sleman District)

### **6.2.2.2 Financial Arrangements in the Family**

The type of financial arrangements in the household reflects gender relations in the family. Financial management is carried out to decide on purchases or the fulfilment of household needs related to shared needs and personal needs. In the context of this study, when women contribute to family income earning, they influence the dynamic of financial arrangements in the family.

#### ***Where the man is dominant in the financial arrangements in the family***

From this study, the social conditions of work, and the income of the informants and their husbands determine the financial arrangements of each family. Informants who become the main breadwinners in the family tend to be dominant in managing finances. On the other hand, women with lower incomes tend to depend on their husband's decisions to take action related to the family finances.

For instance, for Ibu Umi who is a cattle breeder in Sleman, her husband plays a dominant role in their financial arrangements. Her husband works as a Merapi volcano tour jeep driver, with a higher income than Umi. Their income fluctuates every month, but Umi is routinely given money for household needs by her husband. She indicated that her husband is not transparent about his income, and only gives a certain amount of money to her for the family needs to be managed.

My husband's income depends on the number of guests (tourists). I could not account for it (the exact amount of income) because he just gives me money for our children's needs. (Ibu Umi, cattle farmer, Gunungkidul District)

### ***Equal relationship in the financial arrangements in the family***

Ibu Umi and her husband are farmers in Gunungkidul. This couple works together to support their family, as well share in the division of household chores. Since they work together as farmers, family financial arrangements also adhere to the principle of cooperation; neither person is more dominant in regulating family income and expenses. Umi's and her husband's money is collected together by them and the purchase of goods must be based on their agreement.

We work together, we collect money together as well as paying our expenses based on cooperation. (Ibu Umi, farmer, Gunungkidul District)

If some of the previous informants did not separate the income of the wife and husband, this is not the case with Ibu Ita in Sleman. Ita works as a dairy farmer, while her husband is a service provider in a villa. Ita separates her income from her husband's. Her income is allocated for daily needs while the husband's income is allocated for purchasing the large necessities for the household. However, they would discuss in advance regarding decisions to ask about loans and the purchase of goods.

### ***Where the woman is dominant in the financial arrangements in the family***

Javanese women in some families have more power to manage their family income. For these women, financial management in the family is not a matter of gender. Both husband and wife can be responsible for financial management in the family. Paradoxically, in the patriarchal Indonesian society, particularly Javanese ethnic society, women tend to be considered more suitable as financial managers of the household because they are considered to be more thorough and careful with finances than men. As the controller of family financial arrangements, women are usually more dominant in financial decisions.

I interviewed informants whose husbands earn more than them, but they had the power to hold and manage household finances; for example, informants Rima and Matari in Gunungkidul District, and Otty in Sleman District. Rima stated that she has full authority to manage the family income. Matari also has the autonomy to hold and manage both her income and the total household income.

I manage my husband's salary. (Ibu Matari, nurse, Gunungkidul District)

Rima and Matari said that their income entirely belongs to them, since the husband's income is utilised to fulfil family needs due to man's primary contribution to the family as breadwinner (Lein, 1979). They consider that it is not compulsory for women to earn an income just to help their husbands to provide an income for the family. Therefore, women's income is presumed to be a secondary income to support the wife's personal needs.

Ibu Tyas is a kindergarten teacher in Sleman District. Her husband's income is greater than hers so her position is only as a "supporter" of the husband's income. In this case, the wife has the authority to manage her finances because both of them have an understanding that the wife's income is the wife's money.

My husband has never known how much my income is. He just asks whether I have money or not. We have already come to an understanding about how to spend the money in the family. Sometimes they (the wife's personal needs) are bought by the husband, sometimes when I have the money I would spend it on some of the household's needs, and make a community donation. If I do not have any money, I would ask my husband. (Ibu Tyas, kindergarten teacher, Sleman District)

Ibu Otty is a babysitter in Sleman District and the main breadwinner is her husband. However, she holds the power to manage their family's finances. Likewise, Ibu Mira, who works as a domestic worker, is the main breadwinner in the family because her husband's work produces limited income. This situation makes Mira more dominant in managing the household income. However, she still respects her husband and always discusses financial expenditure for both shared and personal needs with him.

I use my money for our household expenditure. His money is used for loan instalments. It is easier to ask for a loan first, then we pay loan instalments, rather than collecting the money first to purchase something. I have to discuss it with my husband first. I am not brave enough (to do something without discussing it with my husband first). (Ibu Mira, domestic worker, Gunungkidul District)

Women's dominance in family financial arrangements often applies in families where a wife's income is greater than the husband's income. Some informants in Sleman who have more income than their husbands hold control over the family finances. For example, Ibu Martha is a domestic worker while her husband works as

a casual worker. As a domestic worker, she works for several families per day, therefore, she has a higher income than her husband. Working for years has allowed Martha to collect up to 100 million rupiah. She has decided to allocate her savings for purchasing a house. In other words, Martha makes major financial arrangements and purchasing decisions. She considers her husband to be slow in making decisions.

My husband thought that we can stay in a rental house rather than purchase a house. In my opinion, by living in a rental house, we could not save our money. Then, I am eager to build a house with my money that has already been collected. I monitored by myself the processes of building a house, and I buy the materials for house construction by myself. I am confident enough to build the house since my child is still two years old. This means not too much education fee is needed. The slowness of my husband's decision making leads me to take over the final choice. (Ibu Martha, domestic worker, Sleman District)

The ability of women to play a role as income earners increases women's agency to set their goals for the future. Martha's experience suggests that individuals who have strong autonomy in economic decision making are also likely to be highly motivated toward making resources investment and have the ability to exercise control over their returns. Furthermore, Martha's participation in the labour market as a paid worker increases her capacity to dream about her goals for the future. In a different situation a study by Kagotho and Vaughn (2018) utilises Kenya's context to examine women's autonomy in economic decision making (Kagotho & Vaughn, 2018). Martha's strong power to control her family income leads her to gather her courage to invest her salary. As a corollary, Kagotho and Vaughn's study found the lack of autonomy of women in economic decision making is likely to discourage them from making resources investment due to the lack of capacity to control their returns.

Almost similar in achieving financial independence, Ibu Tiara is an aged-care worker in Gunungkidul and the main breadwinner in the family. She has been married twice. Her first husband was initially unemployed. With her assistance, he obtained employment. However he engaged in extramarital affairs and became physically violent towards her. In her second marriage, her relationship has improved, however her earnings are more than her spouse's, leading to her working more to cover their family's needs. Furthermore, Tiara also has the responsibility to cover her father's medical fees. She has tried hard to manage financially by taking several side jobs to increase her income and then she allocates it towards several

expenditures. Just the same, she does not feel satisfied with their economic situation which is still insecure.

Currently (the second marriage life) ... it is fine, but economically my husband's income is less than mine, so I have to work hard ... it is imbalanced (unfair) because I still have to work hard. He (her husband) is likely to work less intensively. I have also to pay greater attention to my father who has diabetic and kidney problems. (Ibu Tiara, aged-care worker, Gunungkidul District)

For several women with a higher income than their husbands', labour force participation means they hold more power to control their financial arrangements. Whilst Martha is confident enough to invest her salary to build her house, Tiara is concerned about dividing her income to support her father's health service fees as well as the family's daily expenditure.

The opportunity for women to gain more income not only results in increasing women's control over the family's property and resources but also strengthens women's agency to make other household decisions such as decisions about children's education.

### **6.2.2.3 Family Decision Making in Children's Education**

Ibu Mega who is a farmer as well as a massage therapist in Gunungkidul revealed that her children only completed elementary school due to economic reasons. Also, her husband did not want their children to continue their education. In her case, man's power to make decisions is dominant in determining her children's education.

My husband has not allowed my children to continue their higher education.  
(Ibu Mega, traditional massage therapist, Gunungkidul District)

This is different to some couples who tend to entrust the children's education, both formal and informal, to women. Ibu Umi, a farmer, stated clearly that she made the decisions regarding the children's education. However, because she was not able to financially, she could not send her children to tertiary institutions.

Tiara, a domestic worker who is the main breadwinner in her family, claimed that she holds the autonomy in deciding on their children's education because her husband does not pay much attention to it.

I do it (directing her children's education) by myself. I cannot expect too much from my husband. Just imagine, if the children were sick ... when (my husband) responds late, the effect will be worse. So, I'm not concerned whether he could earn income or not ... the more important factor for me is a good personality. I do not depend on a man, because I am trapped anyway ... (try to accept). (Ibu Tiara, aged-care worker, Gunungkidul District)

Rita encourages discussion between parents and children when deciding the children's education at an early stage. As a kindergarten teacher, Rita with her autonomy, applies her knowledge that encourages their children to take part in family decision making.

We discuss (my children's further education). After our child has finished kindergarten, we discuss which elementary school we should choose. Then we prepare the requirements for enrolment. The point is cooperation (among us as family members). (Ibu Rita, kindergarten teacher, Gunungkidul District)

Ibu Icha who is a PAUD teacher in Sleman, thinks even further about family decision making, particularly in regards to the children's education. She argues that the children should have the authority to decide about their own education. However, she adds that before making a decision, it should be discussed with the parents.

It's up to the children to decide what kind of school they want attend to study. (As parents, we) just support what they want. If they are forced, it wouldn't be suitable (for their sustained education), or they might (potentially) drop out in the middle of the education process. Basically, please give the children the freedom to choose as far as it is on the right track (pattern). (Ibu Icha, kindergarten teacher, Sleman District)

### **6.2.3 External Support in Shaping Women's Collective Agency**

Based on prior literature, this study seeks to understand better how women's collective action helps to increase subjective and collective women's empowerment. Notably, this study investigates how women's engagement in local groups assists women in solving women's economic empowerment issues such as in helping women to access public facilities and to improve their livelihoods and gender relations in society.

Three participants, Martha, Mira, and Tiara, had the opportunity to join Jaringan Nasional Advokasi Pekerja Rumah Tangga (JALA PRT) and receive leadership training. JALA PRT is a national network for domestic workers' advocacy in Indonesia (Sisters for Change, 2018). It provides not only leadership



capacity building, but also offers legal advice, advocacy and networking for girls and rural women domestic workers across the archipelago of Indonesia. The advantages were experienced by Mira who stated:

I learned a lot of things from JALA PRT. We learnt what our rights are as domestic workers. For instance, with the long working hours they must give us a break time. JALA PRT taught us how to ask employers about salary increases, and to negotiate on working loads, salary and health insurance. (Ibu Mira, domestic worker, Gunungkidul)

The similarities in the responses of Martha, Mira and Tiara made an impression on me as a researcher. They explained much more than I asked. Sometimes they actively initiated sharing their experiences without me asking first. They were open about their experiences, even though they shared sensitive stories. Tiara's voice was trembling with emotion when she recounted her bitter experiences of the domestic violence of her ex-husband; Mira was disappointed with her husband's unstable income that often has been a source of conflict between this couple. Martha, with her soft tones, told her story of violence in the workplace. However, at the end of the conversations, I saw similar gestures such as a turned-up lip, a small smile, and increasing volume in their voices that might indicate their capacity to negotiate and tackle their difficult problems. For the women I interviewed, confidence and optimism were very important traits to handle their serious problems in both their families and workplaces.

Leadership training as part of non-cognitive skills training is significant in improving women's agency (Debebe, 2009; Yumarni & Amaratunga, 2015). Leadership skills, also known as soft skills, have many dimensions that could impact the employability of workers, especially in the service sector where both personal.

Several informants are involved in community activities related to their work. For example, Mira and Martha, who work as domestic workers, have actively joined the *Serikat Pembantu Rumah Tangga/Serikat PRT* (the Domestic Workers Union). Thus, both Mira and Martha often encourage the old members and recruit new members to come to their routine meetings.

I am involved in PKK<sup>6</sup> and Domestic Workers Union meetings. Different from the Domestic Workers Union meeting, the PKK does not have savings and loan programs. Many members would like the opportunity to save and borrow money. But, now it's hard to arrange meetings due to their tight schedules. (Ibu Mira, domestic worker, Gunungkidul District)

According to Ibu Mira, meetings and activities of the association of Domestic Workers Union are rarely held. Members are currently more active on social media, namely through the WhatsApp group. In the WhatsApp group, members of the Domestic Workers Union can hold discussions and exchange ideas about their work as domestic workers.

In the past, we met and had (a fruitful) discussion. To date, we are discussing through the WhatsApp group. (Ibu Mira, domestic worker, Gunungkidul District).

Social media is an alternative media for supporting community activities. When face-to-face meetings cannot be conducted, social media becomes an instrument for the Union of Domestic Workers' members to have discussions. They use the WhatsApp group to share information about their work as domestic workers. It also provides a collective voice where none previously existed.

Martha engages in similar activities to Mira, besides working as a domestic worker, and she can manage her time well. She is involved in PKK and the Union of Domestic Workers' activities in Sleman District. She holds the position of vice head of the Domestic Workers Union in the Sleman District. She fights for the rights of domestic workers. She admitted that she has gained a lot of knowledge from the training which was conducted by the Domestic Workers Union.

Yes, I have felt empowered, unlike before I joined, I couldn't speak ... I now dare to negotiate with my employers and I am more confident in taking a job. This was shown when I worked in Japan. At first, I was not confident, but then they (Martha's colleagues) encouraged me and my employer taught the Japanese language to me. I finally worked, using Japanese, as a babysitter there for a year. (Ibu Martha, aged-care worker, Sleman District)

Martha began her career as a domestic worker and she has had work experience over a long time that has sharpened her skills. In her early work, she experienced violence in the workplace. She is willing to join in any type of training to prevent such forms

<sup>6</sup> PKK: *Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* is a Family Welfare Movement

of exploitation happening. One such training is leadership training conducted by JALA PRT (a local NGO that focuses on domestic workers' empowerment). She is proud of her achievement to be able to work in Japan and join an association of domestic workers. She has gained knowledge from joining this association. She is also proud of herself for having a greater capacity to speak in public and becoming a role model for her colleagues. Furthermore, by attending leadership training she feels more courageous in negotiating with her employers and has a greater capacity to make decisions.

Yes, I feel lucky to be able to join the (JALA PRT) organisation, because in general, workers don't know that they have some rights that their employer must fulfil. For example, prohibitions to leave the house. We have to go to the shop then get back home directly. When we go outside for more than 15 minutes, the employer would look for us ... I invite my colleagues to join the organisation's meetings. I tell them this organisation has a loan and savings program, so we don't need to go anywhere else if we need loan services. I invite others by spreading written invitations from home to home. But only one or two of them can come and participate. This is because their employers prohibit them from doing so. (Ibu Martha, domestic worker, Sleman District)

Tiara's attempts to encourage her colleagues also face similar challenges in that there are still many domestic workers who are afraid to ask permission from their employers to participate in community activities. In this case, what Martha and Tiara are doing reflects their desire as citizens and as human beings together to try to transform their unjust and unequal relations and conditions to enable an environment that supports their right to decent work.

In the past, I invited my friends to join a meeting when a local NGO conducted data collection. We used a mosque as a meeting point to camouflage (leadership training) attendance of this meeting, and it was easier for my friends to ask permission of their employers to attend religious recitations. We have collected 500 members of the domestic worker association in Yogyakarta province. (Ibu Tiara, aged-care service worker, Gunungkidul District)

Martha as a committee member of the Domestic Workers Union plays a significant role in arranging training such as courses for domestic workers and influencing members to be aware of their rights as domestic workers. According to Martha's explanation, many activities are conducted in the Domestic Workers Union. For instance, one is about reproductive health training for domestic workers. Besides, the committee also facilitates sharing ideas between domestic workers members.

The domestic worker school has curricula, for example, gender and health, and professional skills training for domestic workers. Raising awareness of their rights is also provided. There are various training skills offered to enrich rural women's insight. (Ibu Tiara, aged-care worker, Gunungkidul District)

As participants in community activities, people are often required to be active in sharing ideas in the decision-making process. However, from the evidence in the field, some women who are members of the community do not actively take community well-being as a common goal. Although they often join in community activities such as PKK and religious recitation meetings, they do not significantly influence the traditional structure. They rarely create significant differences such as sharing input and criticism. The majority of women who take part in community activities such as PKK, *arisan* (a kind of turn-taking), or religious recitation just passively participate. They just attend the meetings, and listen in on the discussion and decision making without giving an opinion (Agarwal, 2001). If they feel bored and tired, they no longer actively participate in these activities. Therefore, in the long run, there are fewer members and in the end the activities do not achieve the goals expected.

The situation is similar with Ibu Hesti an elementary school teacher and the wife of the head of the neighbourhood association. She actively involves herself in village activities and offers ideas. There are only a few women who can choose to be opinion leaders in the community who influence the members of their community. Hesti represents a regional Javanese woman who can be a driver of people in her community. Her profession as a teacher means she is considered smarter than other people, which leads many people to feel comfortable sharing their problems and asking her for advice. With economic empowerment outside the home, women can also extend their social network to increase their social status both in their household and community (Torri, 2012).

As a woman, I have to be able to implement what women have to do. Even though I work as a civil servant, I (as a local citizen of the neighbourhood association of Posmalang) cannot ignore ... I have to blend myself with their activities as much as I can. So, I can contribute to the advancement of my village and also my family. (Ibu Hesti, elementary school teacher, Gunungkidul District)

Likewise, two other informants from Sleman, namely Ibu Risti and Ibu Palupi, work as teachers and also join in community activities. Although they are working to earn

an income, that does not prevent them from being active in their community. Risti holds a position as a PKK administrator and becomes the “driver or motor” for other women in her village to join in skills training. In other words, Risti can raise women’s awareness in her community to be involved in empowerment training programs. A similar service is also performed by Risti who would invite and persuade women to take part in these activities, therefore she was appointed as one of the administrators in the Family Welfare Movement organisation.

I hold an administrator position in Working Group 2 that is *Usaha Peningkatan Pendapatan Keluarga/UP2K* (a program to increase family income). I design this program by conducting skills training and sending women to join many competitions such as handicrafts, batik (the traditional art of decorating cloth), shoe crafts, and agricultural “products”. (Ibu Risti, teacher, Sleman District)

Based on the information from informants, the study suggests that the majority of women in Sleman who have a leadership spirit and are active as opinion leaders in the community have formal education qualifications and formal jobs. They have the capacity to mobilise people to contribute to the development process to achieve individual and community well-being. However, the empirical facts in this research also find that a few low-income women workers with lower formal education attainment have the capability to mobilise their colleagues to act together to solve injustices or exploitative work only after they have completed empowerment training. This evidence suggests that external support systems such as Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), neighbourhood associations, community support groups, religious institutions, local enterprises, youth community groups and family welfare organisations can improve women’s capacity to become involved as active agents and on equal terms with men in reshaping the society in which they reside in ways that contribute to society’s greater well-being.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The findings of this investigation indicate the opportunity to earn more income affects women’s agency which can be articulated into various levels: the individual, family and community levels. First, authority at the individual level is reflected in the factors that influence women’s decision to enter paid work. Firstly, are external (family) reasons such as family income pressures (poverty) and hereditary family businesses. Secondly are internal (personal) reasons such as dream achievement

(future goals), self-existence and satisfaction (personal well-being). Internal factors cover both women's decisions with their husband's/parents' permission, and women's decisions made independently.

Secondly, at the family level the opportunity for women to earn greater income improves their status in the family structure. This means that earning more income results in increasing women's control over the family's property and resources and strengthens women's agency to participate in other household decision making, such as family planning, family financial arrangements, and deciding on the children's education.

Thirdly, at the community level, an external support system in various forms of social community groups plays an essential role in improving women's capacity to participate as active agents and on equal terms with men in reshaping the society in which they reside in ways that also contribute to society's greater well-being.

This study reveals that evidence at the grassroots level is not aligned with the national and regional development goals. The findings from the field suggest that transition from informal to formal employment has had a minor impact on women's employment and continues to place women as an underutilised human resource in the regional development context, thus contributing to a loss in potential personal, family and community income and well-being. The next chapter will explore how local government policies, regulations and programs are designed to promote people's agency, especially focusing on women's subjective and collective empowerment.

# **Chapter Seven**

## **Supporting Increased Women's Formal Sector Employment in Regional Indonesia**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Chapters Five and Six reported on the challenges to and opportunities for Javanese regional women to expand their agency, as well as on economic empowerment and the interplay of women's agency in Indonesia. This chapter addresses Research questions 3 and 4; namely, "*How has regional developments policy supported women's work transition?*" and "*How has regional development policy impacted women's agency as workforce citizens in the society?*" respectively. To answer these questions, a feminist policy analysis framework is applied to examine and understand the complexities in pursuing the new level of women's employment in regional Indonesia and the impact of public policy on human resources, particularly on women worker development in Sleman and Gunungkidul districts, Central Java.

This chapter is structured in four sections. The first section explores the adoption of a gender perspective (GP) in formulating policies. The second section investigates the translation of a GP into developed programs and activities. The third section examines the actuality of integrating and implementing a GP into programs and activities, and the last section evaluates the results of GP adoption.

Regional development in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts has applied a gender perspective as a framework to formally value women's participation. The gender perspective has been translated, integrated, and implemented in the design and activation of particular programs that concern women, but this continues to be problematic and complicated. Thus, results of development show only a minor effect on women's employment and continue to place women as an impotent human resource and citizen in the local development context. The results even demonstrate a loss in personal potential, family and community income, and in the well-being of the women.

## **7.2 The Regional Development Policy in Supporting Women's Transition from Informal to Formal and Decent Work**

Regional policy makers in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts have adopted, translated, and integrated a gender perspective into regional development planning documents and into the implementation or activation of field programs that concern women. However, the implementation of these programs continues to be problematic and complicated.

To obtain thorough information on the policy to support women's employment transition in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts, Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, I conducted in-depth interviews with research participants, namely the regional policy makers and the marginalised group (informal women workers) separately/simultaneously in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts in November 2019. The questions I asked in the interviews included their roles, responsibilities and experiences in Appendix D. The interviews were conducted fully in Bahasa Indonesia and recorded using a recorder.

Table 7.1 provides a compilation of the concepts or values used by the policy makers, the progress of the adopted gender perspective initiated by policy makers, and the actual problems faced in the policy process as well as in the narratives of regional policy makers and informal women workers in rural areas interviewed in this study. It provides a description of how the terms and concepts of a feminist policy framework have been adopted, translated, integrated and implemented into policy and how the programs have been working so far. The following discussion illustrates that a gender perspective is well adopted into regional policies, but there are vague results in the field.

Table 7.1 is based on interview data from research participation that included regional policy makers as well as informal women workers as a marginalised group in two rural locations: Gunungkidul and Sleman districts.



**Table 7.1 Regional Development Framework in Supporting Women’s Transition from Informal to Formal Work and Decent Work**

<b>First-order Concepts</b>	<b>Second-order Themes</b>	<b>Aggregate Dimension</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women’s Empowerment Concept</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying Gender Perspective in Formulation and Adoption Policies in a mid-term Development Planning 2016–2021 Document</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women’s Access</li> <li>• Women’s Participation</li> <li>• Women’s Control</li> <li>• Women’s Advantage</li> <li>• The Utilisation of Gender-based Data</li> <li>• The Utilisation of the GEM Index</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translating and Transforming Gender Perspective into Programs and Activities Designed in the Development Process</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in Planning Regional Development</li> <li>• Bottom-up Planning and Financing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serving Women as Active Agents of Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Programs and Activities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Un Attendance in Training</li> <li>• Top-down Planning and Financing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serving Women as Passive Object/Beneficiaries of Development</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignoring Women’s Contribution</li> <li>• Ignoring Care Work and Workers</li> <li>• Ignoring Women’s Needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignoring Women’s Existence and Rights</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited Finance (poverty)</li> <li>• Unemployment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty Feminisation or Economic Marginalisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and Evaluation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Inequity</li> </ul>	

Source: Original compilation of the author’s research, 2019.

First-order themes are the extracts of descriptive interpretations that adhere faithfully to the informants' explanations. There are 17 themes emerging from the interviews that reflect the informants/stakeholders acknowledgment of gender perspectives when they are implementing the economic development processes.

Second-order themes involve conceptualised descriptions of the data which evolved from analysis in the axial coding stage based on the first-order themes. I connected and merged categories into seven bigger themes (O'Connor, 2012). These seven themes exist because of the phenomena in each category. For example, Women's Empowerment Concept in the first order has given birth to the consideration of implementing equal treatment to women's rights as Indonesian citizens.

The third-order themes/aggregate describes the application of gender-responsive policy-making process as a central phenomenon that includes four stages of development process, namely Applying Gender Perspective in Formulation and Adoption Policies in the mid-term Development Planning 2016–2021 Document; Translating and Transforming Gender Perspective into Programs and Activities Designed in the Development Process; Implementation of Programs and Activities; and lastly Monitoring and Evaluation. Each stage addresses specific themes in the first and second-order based on the urgency and awareness of improving national human resources, particularly women's empowerment in the economic and social settings. For instance, the first row of the third-order themes implies that women's participation in planning regional development is an embodiment of the government's action to encourage women to participate as active agents for Development Planning 2016–2021.

### **7.2.1 Applying a Gender Perspective in Formulating Policies in a Development Planning Document**

The documents of the middle term of regional development planning 2016–2021 in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts identified achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls as one of the missions and objectives of development. This study found that the problems and strategies, as well as the targets of gender equality and women's empowerment policies, are identified in these documents.

The fifth of the missions of the regent of Sleman District is women's empowerment which is related to gender. At the current time, the development planning document includes an indicator as our benchmark to measure empowering women as part of gender development. So we have included it as one of the indicators in our RPJMD. So, we developed programs as a means to achieve our target. (FGD notes, women's empowerment and child protection officer, Sleman District)

As mentioned by women's empowerment and child protection officers of Sleman District, the fifth mission of the district government is to improve the quality of community culture and proportional gender equality. According to the regional development planning document, this mission intends that the people of Sleman advance in their cultural and educational behaviour, while continuing to uphold the local culture. The Sleman government has a political will that women's empowerment is not just limited to increasing the number of women in various roles, but also pays attention to equality while promoting the protection of women and children (Sleman District, 2016).

Empowerment can be seen from the aspect of fulfilling our basic services, especially in the education sector, then in the health sector. This means that a greater number of children's school attendance, and a smaller number of children dropouts, lead to an increase in the role of women in these various sectors. It also relates to health as well as to longer life expectancy, linked to social circumstances that explain to what extent we empower marginalised groups (people with social welfare problems). (FGD notes, regional development planning agency officer, Sleman District)

This explanation of a regional development planner in Sleman District signifies that there is the intention to pay more attention to the rights of every citizen. This applies to human rights-based development principles, which provide people access to education, health and earning income as a result of development (Siscawati et al., 2020). Thus far, the regional governments measure their performance through three basic dimensions of the Human Development Index (HDI) 1) knowledge; 2) longevity and healthy living; and 3) a decent standard of living (Siscawati et al., 2020).

There are similarities in the way the two districts, Gunungkidul and Sleman, design and implement their policies. Gunungkidul government adds another mission: to enhance the quality of human resources. To carry out this sixth goal of strategic study, in regional medium-term development planning, the Gunungkidul government

operates gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in developing and fulfilling children's rights in the formulation of policy and development programs.

The concept of empowerment that we are doing in Gunungkidul started from the terms of gender equality and equity. In other words, women in both the family or community have an opportunity of time and space to earn income, convey an opinion, and gain knowledge. Thus, women's rights will be heard and included in the villages', sub-districts' and districts' development programs. (Women's empowerment and child protection officer, Gunungkidul District)

By giving attention to the four elements, such as women's access, participation, control, and benefits, will provide time and space for women to convey their opinions. Besides, women are also being involved in the control or monitoring of the regional development process. (Women's empowerment and child protection officer, Gunungkidul District)

In line with Kabeer's research (1999), as the promoter of the concept of women's empowerment, the government officer in Gunungkidul District explained that they must provide an opportunity for women to enhance their capacity, to control resources, and to make decisions in the development process. Women's access, participation, control and advantage from development have been promised and facilitated by the regional government of Gunungkidul through their development planning documents that aim to enhance women's power over their lives.

The commitment to achieve gender equality is also evidenced by the formulation of current problems in the development planning documents. It can be seen from the development planning document of Sleman District, several development issues have been identified such as a) Respect, protection and fulfilment of women's basic rights in social, economic, cultural and political life are not sufficient; b) Limited gender mainstreaming in the formulation of laws and regulations, institutions and budget policies exists; and c) The trafficking cases in women and children and acts of violence against women and children.

A similar commitment is also included in Gunungkidul's development planning document that formulates some problems before proposing some solutions. They indicate some gender issues such as a) The cases of violence against children

and girls remain; and b) Gender mainstreaming<sup>7</sup> has not been optimally implemented. According to the development planning documents, one example of less optimal gender mainstreaming implementation is where a limited number of women work in jobs that need thoroughness and persistence, such as service workers, sales workers and agricultural labourers.

This formulation issue, to a particular extent, provides a good space for enhancing the socio-economic status of low-income regional women. This opportunity is a particularly potential solution provided for women who work in the informal sector in Sleman, to increase their capability to make choices, as well as to make decisions to pursue better welfare in the family and community.

### **7.2.2 Translating and Transforming a Gender Perspective into Programs and Activities**

The regional government in the Sleman District translates and integrates a gender perspective through developing four programs (Sleman District, 2016c). These programs include the: 1) Synchronisation of policies to improve the quality of life of children and women program; 2) Strengthening of gender and child mainstreaming institutional program; 3) Improving the quality of life and women protection program; and 4) Enhancing participation and gender equality in development program. Moreover, through these four programs, the Sleman government district sets the percentage of decreasing cases of violence against women and children as their performance indicator (Sleman District, 2016).

Similar to Sleman district, the regional government in Gunungkidul adopts women's values as well as a gender perspective by designing one program only, that is women and children's protection and gender mainstreaming. The government of Gunungkidul has also applied strategies in enhancing and strengthening gender mainstreaming into formulating development policy. They take the percentage of

<sup>7</sup> Gender mainstreaming is "the process of assessing the implication for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political economic and societal sphere so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is gender equality." (UN Economic and Social Council, 1997, p. 2)

women and children who receive rehabilitation treatment as their performance indicator (Gunungkidul District, 2016).

I apply a feminist policy analysis framework to examine how regional policy makers held and applied the gender (equality) perspective. From the findings of this study, it appears that policy makers and practitioners in Sleman and Gunungkidul districts apply a gender perspective through practicing an integrationist approach rather than through a gender mainstreaming approach. The integrationist approach brings to existing policy paradigms a gender perspective, which has been associated with technocratic applications of mainstreaming (Verloo 2005) and the inclusion of gender experts in policy machineries (Donaghy 2004; Rees 2005).

Verloo (2005) and Squires (1999) suggest that these approaches are not mutually exclusive. Integrationist and agenda-setting approaches are associated in practice and, thus, policy makers are encouraged to adopt both approaches: the integrationist approach, and the agenda-setting approach. The inclusion strategy is essentially an integrationist approach, whereas the agenda-setting approach might be transformative. When regional policy makers employ an agenda-setting approach, they have to understand and take into account the needs and issues of women's rights at the very beginning of the integration of the gender perspective into the public policy process from the problem identification and agenda setting phase (Jahan & Mumtaz, 1996). Only then can policy makers obtain an essential understanding of the source of unequal power relations and act accordingly. Jahan and Mumtaz (1996) described that to combine an integrationist and an agenda-setting approach would involve necessary changes in decision-making processes and structures, in prioritisation of strategies, in articulating objectives, in the positioning of gender issues amidst competing concerns that may emerge, and in the need to improve communication to build a support base of men and women. In detail, the agenda-setting approach does not only encourage woman to play a proactive role, but requires greater attention to be paid to the essential objectives of the women's movement, namely gender equality and women's empowerment. It also encourages policy makers to grant primacy to groups and organisations that strengthen women's agency and, in the bigger picture, encourages building institutional capacities that enable aid recipients to recognise, set and implement their own agendas.

The research shows that the regional governments in Sleman and Gunungkidul districts have translated and integrated a gender perspective into development programs in various ways. For instance, the regional governments have developed some programs to ensure women's access to finance, women's participation in decision making, and to increase women's control of personal and family decision making. Yet, limitations in the regional government's approach occurred when they executed and integrated gender perspectives into the programs. This limitation can be found from the lack of understanding of the definition and goals of gender mainstreaming as a strategy in development planning, the limited availability and utilisation of gender-based data, the limited utilisation of GEM index, and the mis conception of the gender mainstreaming concept when integrating it into development programs.

#### **7.2.2.1 Women's Access to Finance**

From the regional officers' descriptions below, access, in this research context, refers to development policies or programs that provide equal opportunities to women and men (Hasan & Azis, 2013). Providing women's access to financial resources, such as through savings and loans, is where regional policy makers and practitioners can design a smart economy with gender equality aimed to provide the basis for a wider economic as well as social impact (Chant & Sweetman, 2012). This intervention is expected to achieve greater wealth for women, their families and societies. However, in some evaluations of policies and projects, this kind of smart economic intervention is struggling to change the complex inequality of power relation structures which form the personal realities of women living in poverty in developing countries (Sweetman, 2015). As stated in the interview excerpt as follows:

Savings and loans for women through the previous program, that was called the National Program for Community Empowerment (PNPM)<sup>8</sup>, is now directed through village-owned enterprises BUMDES<sup>9</sup>. Especially for Gunungkidul District, we are also collaborating with stakeholders who join women's organisations with economic concerns; for example, the association of women entrepreneurs (IWAPI) in Gunungkidul District, and the association of processed-food entrepreneurs ASPEMAKO in Gunungkidul

<sup>8</sup> PNPM is a program utilising the community-driven development (CDD) approach to accelerate poverty reduction (Voss, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Bumdes is a village-owned enterprise (Hidayah, Mulatsih & Purnamadewi, 2020).

District. (Women's empowerment and child protection officer, Gunungkidul District)

### **7.2.2.2 Women's Participation in Decision Making**

At the village level, we collaborate with various institutions such as the Family Welfare Movement (PKK) and Islamic Women Organisations (Aisyiah and Nahdatul Ulama) to prevent infectious diseases (tuberculosis and diarrhoea). We also collaborate with the State Islamic University (UIN Sunan Kalijaga) as well as Non-Government Organisations (NGO) to advocate for women's rights (particularly as a head of household) as well as to monitor the implementation of social welfare security programs at the grassroots level. (Regional development planning board officer, Gunungkidul District)

We train women to take part in regional development planning and we also train the candidates of the village development assistants, the village consultative board (BPD), about how to create proposals utilising gender-based data. (Women's empowerment officer, Sleman District)

The women's empowerment officer uses the term "participation" to reflect development of policies/programs that include both women and men in the decision-making process; allowing them to speak and accommodating their needs and problems. Government officers in both the Gunungkidul and Sleman districts have explained that they provide some interventions as opportunities to encourage women's participation in the village decision-making process as well as women's contribution to enhancing the communities' social welfare. To eliminate discrimination based on specific needs, regional governments also give space for vulnerable groups to attend, participate, and fulfil their citizenship rights in the village development planning and budgeting meetings. So, it is expected the programs or projects proposed will accommodate their access to basic services such as education, health, occupations, and other livelihood support.

### **7.2.2.3 Women's Control of Personal and Family Decision Making**

Regional planners and practitioners interpret control as providing equal space for women and men to manage development resources (Hasan & Azis, 2013). The regional officer in Sleman discussed her efforts to increase women's capacity to participate in making decisions in the personal, family and public spheres. Regional officers collaborate with NGOs and women's organisations to strengthen women's access to social services as well as to legal protection (Lockley et al., 2019). These instances can be seen from the following statements.



To encourage women to be able to make decisions, personal and in the family, we collaborate with women's organisations such as Wives' Bureaucrat Organisation (Dharma Wanita), and the Family Welfare Movement (PKK). We invite a professional psychologist and communication expert to train about family resilience. The number of divorce cases in Sleman is relatively high. To prevent and solve the increasing number of divorces, we also collaborate with The Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) and The Integrated Services Unit for the Center for Child and Women's Empowerment (UPT P2TP2A). This meeting also explained the law of domestic violence against women. (FGD notes, women's empowerment officer, Sleman District)

They employ women's collective action to encourage women's empowerment in all aspects of life. However, based on the findings in the prior chapter, only the middle to upper income groups of regional women are able to work as formal workers. They can exercise their civil right to participate in and contribute to the monitoring of the development process.

#### **7.2.2.4 Limited Advantages for Women from Economic Development**

According to the stakeholder's explanation, the regional government applies a gender mainstreaming strategy; they guarantee women and men will equally receive the benefit of development results.

Women receive benefits from development results. (FGD notes, women's empowerment officer in Sleman District)

The following discussion examines how regional governments provide gender-based data to formulate various development programs.

#### **7.2.2.5 Utilisation of Gender-Based Data**

The *Unit Perangkat Daerah/UPD* (Regional Apparatus Unit) develops programs based on strategic issues in each UPD. Then they construct the Gender Budget Statement (GBS) document. Therefore, the gender database must be strong, such as by including the number of elderly and disabled people. For example, in Wukirsari village, they already have data on infant mortality, pregnant women, giving birth, and the stunting rate. We also train women to take part in regional development planning and we also train candidates of the village development assistants, the village consultative board (BPD) about how to create proposals by utilising gender-based data. (Women's empowerment officer, Sleman District)

According to information from the regional officers in Sleman, program planning in some villages has been based on gender issues because these villages do have gender-disaggregated data for various aspects of community development in the

village. Thus, the values developed in the community have started to encourage women's participation in development planning and to solve women's issues in the village.

We do not have data from the informal workers who do not join in the skills training we conducted. Besides, our weakness is that we have not covered all the labour data. We did not record the number of informal care workers who work in our community. (FGD notes, manpower regional officer, Sleman District)

Regional policy makers and practitioners put a lot of effort into enhancing the quality of human resources in Sleman District, as well as in eliminating cases of poverty. For instance, the Office of Communication and Information has conducted an update and analysis of data on the poor (Sleman District, 2016). Furthermore, the regional office has conducted skills, entrepreneurship and institutional management training for prospective workers through the Regional Office of Cooperatives and Small Management Enterprises, the Regional Office of Manpower, the Office of Industry and Trade, the Office of Agriculture, and other stakeholders in related areas, which is expected to reduce the number of unemployed (Sleman District, 2016). However, lacking specific data complementary to the gender-based informal worker leads to ineffective interventions and the gender gaps are still widened.

#### **7.2.2.6 Utilisation of the GEM Index**

The Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM)<sup>10</sup> is the index for women's empowerment. We have not utilised GEM as our indicator or benchmark. We get GEM from the province every year. The last GEM was given in 2017. As I mentioned before, GEM reflects what was the position of women in the realm of decision making relating to the placement of officials, structural officials, members of the legislation board, and then from the professional group, such as judges, prosecutors, and so on. Women's empowerment includes the contribution of women in the family economic sector. To be honest, we feel it is difficult to determine at the macro level what is different between empowerment for women and men. Whether it is the conversion of their labour contribution to society into a nominal money amount, which institution will calculate it? This should be done with a survey. In terms of GEM, it is calculated by the Centre of Statistic Bureau. (FGD notes, Sleman District)

According to information given by regional officers, the Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM) of Sleman District in 2017 was 79.51. This index was the

<sup>10</sup> The Gender Empowerment Measurement assesses women's representation in parliament, the number of professional women, and women's income generation.

highest in the Special Region of Yogyakarta province which includes four districts and one city. GEM measures women's representation in parliament, the number of professional women, and women's income generation (UNDP, 2014). The percentage of components respectively was 26%, 44.31%, and 38.43%. However, they cannot utilise this index to determine the success of development programs.

From the evidence, to understand gender equality in a certain location, local governments utilised the statistical data on the Gender Development Index without complete information about paid informal employment, unequal payment for men and women, and the level of violence against women in the workplace, as backgrounds to reducing the gender gap. In the context of a specific study, the availability of statistics on women's unemployment and the number of women informal workers who are seeking employment and transforming to formal work can be used to measure women's empowerment at the grassroots level. So, reducing the percentage of informal employment among the less economically advantaged can be utilised as part of a gender empowerment measurement in the local context. Moreover, this alternative measurement could potentially be an inspiration to gain gendered-based data and formulate various concrete intervention programs at the grassroots level. The compilation of local regulatory instruments that encourage women's empowerment could also be used as an indicator of a local government's performance.

#### **7.2.2.7 Interpreting Gender Mainstreaming when Integrating it into Development Programs**

I have advised the manpower office to encourage labour organisations as their counterparts about the importance of having a breastfeeding room in their building. (FGD notes, women's empowerment and child protection officer, Sleman District)

Regarding workforce protection, we advise every company to provide a lactation room in their building and maternity leave for the women labour force. (FGD notes, manpower officer, Sleman District)

Regional officers in Sleman District have integrated a gender perspective into their public works and manpower sectors by suggesting government and private sectors provide a nursery room in their buildings. This intervention is important for women at the reproductive age to maintain their roles as a mother as well as an income

earner. This integration of a gender perspective is very meaningful for the productivity of middle-class women who are highly educated and formal workers.

According to one manpower officer, there is no discrimination in the treatment of labourers. They provide similar opportunities for access to skills training and placement, as well as protection of the rights of both men and women as development beneficiaries.

Our target work is labour. About employment, our focus is on placement, training and protection of workforces. Particularly for job seekers, workers who want to upscale their competence, and workers who are laid off. We do not differentiate between men and women who have the same access to our services. And, we also do not provide programs and training that are specifically for women. Equity in access to training exists since, previously, women dominated access to sewing and embroidery training, but now men also have access to this training. So, access to training is indeed open to men and women as well as placements, training and protection. (FGD notes, manpower officer, Sleman District)

However, this gender-neutral approach is highly detrimental to women since unemployment and poverty are gendered issues. Unemployment and poverty cannot be eradicated as stand-alone issues.

The misconceptions and poor comprehension of the goals of gender mainstreaming among local government officials in translating the concept of gender mainstreaming policy into regional developmental programs have led to even poorer implementation of programs.

### **7.2.3 Implementing Programs and Activities**

#### **7.2.3.1 Women as Active Agents with Bottom-up Planning and Financing**

For bottom-up planning, we try to achieve what our intervention targets are in line with the needs of the grassroots community. We have a budget allocation of 10 percent of our total regional expenditure budget for financing community project proposals. We ensure that the community project proposal is in line with our performance indicators. Every year our performance indicators are changed, matching (updated issues) especially community empowerment and welfare. For example, the number of unemployed, the number of disabilities, and the level of poverty. (FGD notes, regional development planner, Sleman District)

There are several advantages for regional governments to implement bottom-up planning and financing systems. Given this opportunity, the community creates

proposals for various skills training that support their needs to enhance their income. This strategy gives space for community participation in expressing their ideas and problems, as well as their needs. Moreover, this system also allows women and other marginal groups to be included in the local development decision-making process. This system not only encourages people to become more responsible but also independent (Roitman, 2016). The people-centred policy serves as a tool to reduce people's vulnerability in terms of financial or economic matters and to increase humans' capabilities and competencies across spaces.

### **7.2.3.2 Women as Passive Objects and Beneficiaries of Development**

We are overwhelmed with the large number of training proposals which were sent by the community villages. We provide several types of training that are not specifically for women. For instance, while the Office of Industry and Trade offers the technology of fabric and food production, the cooperative office offers entrepreneurship and management training. This training has many female participants. The manpower office has a target to improve the skills of the unemployed or people who are looking for jobs, so those people can get a job or develop their current business. Training has been arranged, such as embroidery, welding and cooking. (FGD notes, regional development planning agency, Sleman District)

This approach is in contrast to the spirit of bottom-up planning where the village community is given space to pursue various skills training. The manpower office provides only a limited list of skills training courses, such as embroidery, welding and cooking. A lack of resources (human and financial resources) becomes one factor that leads to limiting employment opportunities. Moreover, policy makers seem to prefer to provide skills training that fulfils people's "practical gender needs" rather than "strategic gender needs" which would promptly handle the fundamental, underlying factors that lead to female subordination (Moser, 1989).

Limited choices in this matter forces citizens to accept the limited options in skills training. Thus, in some situations, in this way regional governments continue to treat their people as passive objects rather than as active citizen subjects in a democratisation and decentralisation period.

Our classical reason is the limited budget, since Gunungkidul only has a small amount of revenue to finance our programs. As a consequence, the national government subsidises our development programs with the adoption of training types from the national design. We have to follow the national utilisation's guidelines (Women's empowerment and child protection officer, Gunungkidul District)

The regional financial resources are also limited. I know, regular skills training, like sewing and a welding course is already saturated, isn't it? (Manpower officer, Gunungkidul District)

The comments above of the two officers in Gunungkidul District reflect the limited financial support leading to ineffective participatory planning and budgeting in the era of decentralisation and democratisation. The regional government of Gunungkidul espouses people's participation in planning and budgeting to accelerate local people's welfare by practising top-down and bottom-up planning (Hasan et al., 2019). However, the implementation processes are still predominantly top-down rather than bottom-up systems (Brodjonegoro, 2005). They have to follow the national guidelines of technical instruction which sometimes do not match the regional people's actual needs. Thus, the improvisation of programs and activities cannot be as flexible as the local context requires.

The participants in milk cow cultivation are mostly male. We join with the village apparatus to conduct this training. Some training is attended by a small number of participants. Sometimes, the training is attended by elderly people rather than productive-age people who are between 30–40 years old. (FGD notes, regional development planning boards officer, Sleman District)

The regional development planner notes that the training was attended by a limited number of participants, predominantly men and a small number of elderly people. It can be imagined how effective this training would be. In this case, the problem of how regional planners implement or arrange the skills training techniques and mechanisms could be resolved by referring to people's activity proposals by consulting the village people, especially the women, as development beneficiaries to increase people's prosperity. How well did regional planners understand the limitations of their beneficiaries to attend the skills training, such as time, language and content constraints?

### **7.2.3.3 The Invisibility of Informal Women and their Rights**

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratified by 184 member countries including Indonesia, states that the state should take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women and to ensure women's (economic) rights to, among other things, equal pay for equal work and the right to social security. CEDAW also confirms that it is the state's

responsibility to guarantee that no public authority should discriminate against women.

This study found when the local governments implemented the mission to enhance the competence quality of human resources, ignorance of women's existence and rights as income earners was demonstrated. Patriarchal social norms and officers' attitudes are reflected in local government discourse that then translates into a regional policies framework that maintains that women as daughter, wives and mothers should stay mainly and predominantly committed to taking care of their parents, husbands and children (Ford, 2018). Ignorance informs the limitations on women to express their desire to play dual productive and reproductive roles. This form of ignorance is manifested in various ways such as in limited protection of woman informal workers; ignorance of the interplay between gender, class and care work; and ignorance of women's needs.

#### **7.2.3.3.1 Limited Protection of Women Informal Workers**

Particularly, in the informal sector, we have paid attention to the household industry. We have offered productivity service activities. In other words, our program target is to focus on the informal home industry sector. We give various information to protect workers, such as health, accident and death insurances as mandated in The Regulation of Ministry of Manpower. There are people who are not registered as informal workers in our institution or our partner's institution; as a consequence we have not covered them. The inability to cover the protection of all informal workers is our weakness. (FGD notes, manpower officer, Sleman District)

These explanations are typical arguments of regional government representatives that do not recognise the existence and contribution of informal workers in the development of the region.

In this study, I have selected various working women in two regional places to investigate the condition of women in this regard. They are unskilled, unqualified, and have the low salaries of a domestic worker, a babysitter, an aged care worker, an early age educator and represent blue-collar workers compared to the relatively enhanced incomes, skills level and work conditions of elementary teachers and nurses as representatives of white-collar workers or the middle class.

### 7.2.3.3.2 Ignorance of the Interplay between Gender, Class, and Care Work

Care work involves the work of taking care of the physical, emotional, psychological and developmental demands of one or more other people (Daly, 2001). Another definition of care work is an activity that includes physical or mental effort and is costly in respect of time resources to provide for the demands of the health, welfare, maintenance and protection of someone (Ferrant, Pesando & Nowacka, 2014). According to the ILO (2018), care work is comprised of two types: unpaid and paid. Unpaid care work is considered as work but performed without pay or a monetary reward. In contrast, paid care work is provided for a monetary reward or pay or profit by care workers (ILO, 2018). Care work consists of a large range of personal service workers; for instance, domestic workers, teachers, nurses, midwives, doctors, and personal care workforces (ILO, 2018).

Our services have not yet handled the need for a loan for a care service worker who has financial problems. In addition, we do not have any programs or activities providing for the upscaling of the skills of care workers such as babysitters. Particularly, elevating the skills of day-care workers, that until now have been treated the same and classified as with the early age education worker program. In fact, we do not have public day care. Some day care and playgroups are managed by private foundations such as Muslimat NU<sup>11</sup> and Aisyiyah<sup>12</sup>. (Women's empowerment and child protection officer, Gunungkidul District)

We have not had a particular program for a care service worker. (FGD notes, manpower officer, Sleman District)

The demand for care work is growing due to trends such increased female participation in the paid workforce. Care work is demanding, low paid, and there is an unsustainable global care crisis (Daly, 2001; ILO, 2018). Paid care labour will stay a crucial occupation in the future, particularly for women (ILO, 2018). Since most care workers are women, this study especially investigates how gender differences in care work affect gender inequality at work.

Gender differences are not a problem when they do not result in gender inequality. Problems emerge when a gender gap exists in social reality. Gender

<sup>11</sup> Muslimat NU is the women's organisation and branch of Nahdatul Ulama (the traditionalist Muslim organisation) (Arnez, 2010; Robinson, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Aisyiyah is the women's organisation and branch of Muhammadiyah (the modernist Muslim organisation) (Qodariyah, 2016; Robinson, 2008).



relations of inequality are detrimental to one party. In the context of this study, women are victims of inequality in gender relations. In a patriarchal society, women are often disproportionately assigned to caring work for children and the elderly in the field of health care and education (Folbre, 2008). These social interactions reinforce disempowering gender norms that affect men as being superior and women as being subordinate (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

The local government's limited ability to provide loans and specific (soft and professional) skills training for low-income women care workers perpetuates gender and class inequalities in care work. In addition, the fact that the local government does not recognise or acknowledge the existence of interaction and classification of gender and class in care work would inhibit women's pay rises and a better image of care work in the eyes of the community. (Ravenswood & Harris, 2016). The final consequence of this disproportionate treatment by the local government is the exacerbated powerlessness of low-income women care workers in making choices and increasing their social status (Ravenswood & Harris, 2016).

#### **7.2.3.3 Ignorance of Women's Needs**

According to my experience, both I and my wife are workers. So, my child was finally taken over by someone (a nanny) though we have to be cautious and aware (about my child's security). It is good if a couple want to pursue (family) productive income. However, in my opinion, it is better that if women want to earn money, their place of work is at home. If not (women are forced to work outside) this will affect their children. Their children will potentially suffer. So, I think care work services must be professionally handled. It is clear, when women want to work in the formal sector, they can start to work from 18 to 30 years old. After 30 years old, they have to return home. If they want to continue to work as a formal worker (work outside the home), they have to take that into consideration first. (Pak Jojo, manpower officer, Gunungkidul District)

This study unpacks local governments' understanding of the existing human resources development policy towards care service provision. Pak Jojo's narration reflects his opinion that women must consider the consequences of being a productive income earner and a mother or care giver in their family. It can be seen from Jojo's explanation (in fact, in his subconsciousness) that he and his wife are a working couple and need to provide care support in his family to ensure the children's safety and welfare. He states that care work should be professional. His statement recognises that sufficient knowledge and skills are needed to shape a

professional job. However, when he acts as a local government official, as seen in the quote below, he merely thinks the need for care work services is more an issue for big cities rather than for the regions. The patriarchal social norm blends in his perception that care work is women's first responsibility to handle. So, he delegates care work to women rather than facilitating supporting women's productive work.

In this context, Jojo has not addressed the urgency of providing available and quality care services. The regional government could facilitate a care service talent management agency through the application of an information system, the agency could train their employees to improve their knowledge, skills, and quality of care service, record the long hours of experience of a formal care worker, and manage the transaction to enhance a new level of decent work for women with fair pay and social security protection. Finally, it might inevitably elevate the quality of women's status and improve gender relations.

So far, I have not seen the care service sector as a prospective job vacancy in the 4.0 (industry revolution) era. So, what we have done up to now, has not touched or linked with this issue. In my side view, the care sector will be developed well in a big city but not in a regional location like Gunungkidul. Since Gunungkidul is not a (finance) surplus area. So, care work (such as caring for the elderly) can be taken over by the community if the family cannot support it. (Pak Jojo, manpower officer, Gunungkidul District)

The answers from a male officer and a female officer below are slightly different when they are asked about their future predictions on care sector provision. The comments indicate that they consider women's needs and they have provided basic care services.

The variety of perspectives or ways of thinking between officers in regional areas demonstrate that the development of new areas in urban and regional places for leisure, lifestyle and hospitality, as well as the latest trend of businesses using digital applications, have provided limited space for regional women to participate in such service sectors. The lack of attention to elevating women's skills (both practical and soft skills) by regional officers reduces the opportunities for supply-demand employment that are potentially provided through this economic restructuring process.

We have a public facility that is almost similar to day care, it is called a smart house. The price is reasonable. However, the parents are only able to bring

their children to this day care for two to three hours. This day care is only for children who are two years and above. Mostly, day care is managed by private businesses with higher fees, such as the Khalifah day care. (Ibu Herda, women's empowerment and child protection officer, Gunungkidul District)

As a regional government, we provide these day-care centres through the participation of the Family Welfare Movement's members. In addition, the wives of bureaucrats in Sardjito public hospital also have a day-care centre with an affordable price. (FGD notes, women's empowerment and child protection officer, Sleman District)

The comments of regional officers in both Gunungkidul and Sleman districts indicate that regional government officers have provided affordable care services that are conducted through collaboration between government and women's organisations (non-profit organisations) with an affordable service. However, the care services are of limited duration, around two to three hours, and even in a limited number of day-care centres.

#### **7.2.4 Evaluating Policy Programs**

The method of our evaluation is to choose two villages in every district which have implemented gender mainstreaming in several sectors. Then we evaluate the benefits of several programs that deal with welfare achievement of their community. Several watch institutions such as IDEA, AKSARA and mentoring development institutions evaluated the effectiveness of the village funding and gender mainstreaming approach to affirm the welfare of vulnerable families. We collaborated with the Family Welfare Movement (PKK) activist team by conducting simulations on how to raise gender awareness at the village level between men and women. (FGD notes, women's empowerment officer, Sleman District)

The regional government officer indicated that Sleman District has evaluated gender mainstreaming implementation. Evaluation in this sense is a process to find out the extent to which the villages implement and include issues related to gender mainstreaming in the planning and budgeting at the grassroots level of the development process, especially to achieve their development mission. The national government has given the *Anugerah Parahita Ekapraya* (gender mainstreaming award) to the regional government in Sleman which has developed various innovations in gender mainstreaming implementation (Suprobo, 2019). Sleman became a best practice model district for other districts in Indonesia for implementing gender mainstreaming in the development process (Suprobo, 2019).

There are several evaluation indicators of gender mainstreaming implementation that include access, participation, control, and benefit of development for men and women. There are seven gender mainstreaming prerequisites that a region must fulfil, starting from the availability of the leaders' commitments, gender-responsive policies, a gender mainstreaming working group, human and budget resources, gender analysis tools, gender-disaggregated data, and community participation. During the evaluation process, the regional governments in both Gunungkidul and Sleman districts were mentored by non-government organisations such as AKSARA and IDEA to gain a transparent and accountable result. In the context of this study, I focus on their performance indicator as the number of incidents of violence against women in which the cases have been reported and proceeded/solved. Focusing on performance indicators of violence against women, the regional government of Sleman utilises two indicators: first, the number of women and children victims of violence whose complaint is handled by trained officers in the integrated service unit; and second, the number of women and children victims of violence who are given health services by trained health personnel at a health centre which is capable of handling violence against women as well as family, and is the centre of integrated services in the hospital. These indicators reflect the seriousness of the regional government's determination to protect women's right to be free from any form of violence.

According to the development planning document, the least optimal gender mainstreaming implementation is performed by a limited number of women who work in jobs that need thoroughness and persistence, such as service workers, sales workers, and agricultural labourers

#### **7.2.4.1 The Feminisation of Poverty and Vulnerability**

Feminisation of poverty not only means the lack of income in the households which are headed by a female, but also reflects a greater holistic conceptual logical framework to summarise gendered privatisation, involvement capacity, living subjectivities, and social and cultural exclusions (Chant, 2006).

The efforts of the regional governments through government policies, programs and budgets requires further planning and development (Kapal Perempuan, 2016). Improved performance in regional development is demonstrated by data that

indicates a decrease in poverty and the unemployment rate, and an increase in human development.

The regional government of the Sleman District claims that they have been able to decrease the poverty rate from 15.85 percent (2012) to 11.36 percent (2015) and the unemployment rate from 5.76 percent in 2018 to 3.69 percent in 2019 (Sleman Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The Human Development Index (HDI) of the government of Sleman District grew substantially from 80.73 (2014) to 83.42 (2018). The HDI Sleman District is the second highest in the Special Region of Yogyakarta province after Yogyakarta City. The HDI of the Sleman Regency is included in a very high category (HDI > 80) (Sleman Bureau of Statistics, 2019). As well, the regional government of Gunungkidul District claims that it has succeeded in reducing the percentage of the poverty rate to 16.1 percent and the percentage of the unemployment rate to 5.28 percent in 2019 (Gunungkidul Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The Human Development Index (HDI) of the government of Gunungkidul District grew slightly from 67.03 percent (2014) to 69.24 percent (2018) (Gunungkidul Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

#### **7.2.4.2 Gender Inequality**

The government of the Sleman District claims that they have been successful in decreasing by one percent the number of cases of violence against women and children, as their performance indicator reduced from 539 cases in 2015 to 499 cases in 2016 (Sleman District, 2016). The Sleman District government uses performance indicators to evaluate their four programs (as mentioned above) and three strategies such as the application of children-friendly villages and schools; the formation of an eliminating violence against women and children cadre; and socialisation of women and children protection laws (Sleman District, 2016).

This study is critical of the lack of grassroots qualitative information or bottom-up data to reflect the achievement in reducing the gender gap in a certain location. This study found evidence of the feminisation of poverty and gender-related violence at the grassroots level when the regional governments in both districts are committed to value a gender perspective in their design and implementation of the development process.

This study suggests that reducing the number does not solve the underlying challenges. The decrease in the poverty and unemployment rates still leaves serious and long-term problems, especially for people in rural, remote areas who are informal workers, women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. As mentioned in Chapter Five, hidden problems such as multiple burdens, wage inequality, exploitation, and violence against women in the family and public areas are difficult to expose since cultural and structural systems are neatly wrapped and maintained.

Borrowing from the UNDP report in 2014, the findings of this study reveal that insensitive stakeholders, poor governance, and a limited social and cultural cohesion approach leads to poor informal workers in rural areas remaining vulnerable. Regional policy makers have paid less attention to and shown less appreciation of informal women workers in rural areas in respect of helping them to attain human dignity as labourers and income earners. Thus, they have limited core capacity to achieve their full agency. In addition, they languish from deprivations of their human rights.

**Figure 7. 1 Gender-responsive policy process.**

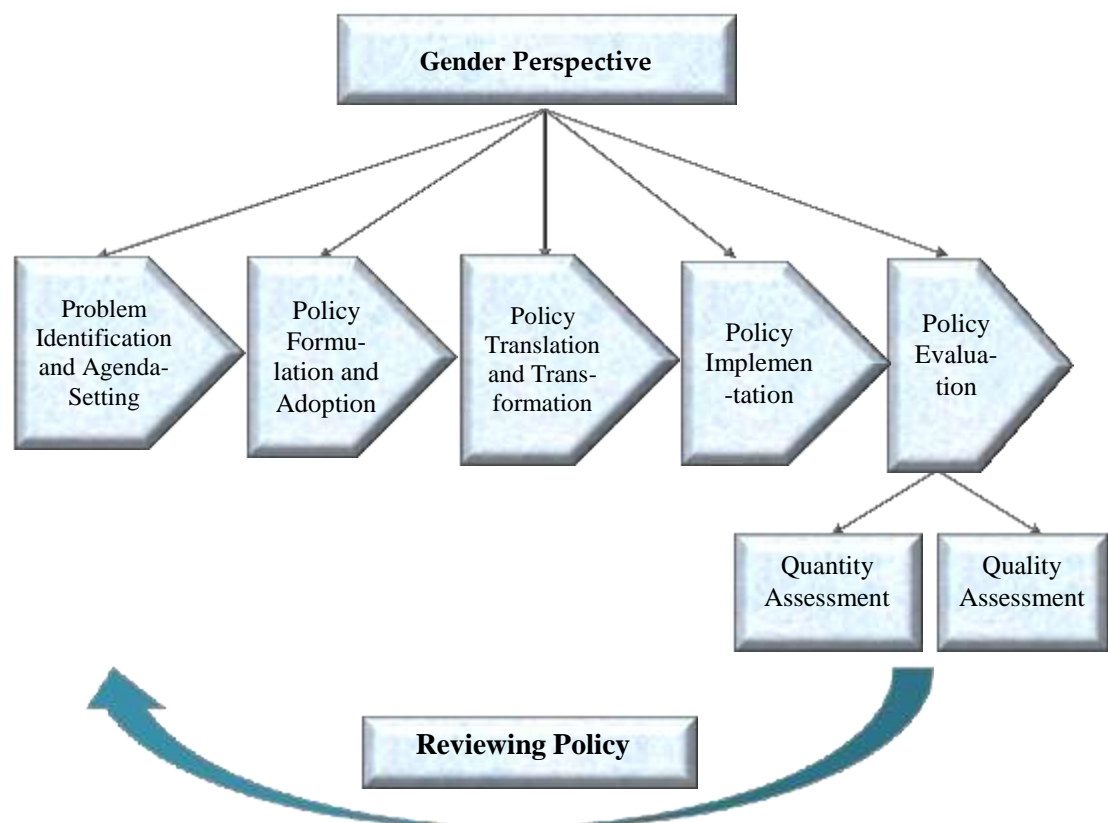


Figure 7.1 shows a process of how a gender perspective has been adopted, translated, integrated, and implemented into policy and how the programs have been working so far through the evaluation process. The study reveals that local policies in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts to some extent have considered the significance of a gendered perspective in regional development programs. However, the implementation has failed to encourage, either directly or indirectly, women's economic empowerment to increase the subject-position of the women and the community's well-being in general, particularly in the context of women's transition from informal work in the primary sector of agriculture to formal work in non-agricultural industries.

### **7.3 Conclusion**

Variable gender frameworks among regional stakeholders have produced a variety of policies and framed regulations that create development programs that do not promote the support of informal workers transitioning into formal decent work. Regional governments have found it difficult to develop derivative programs that offer opportunity support services (such as skills and leadership training), and access to legal and social protections (Williams & Lansky, 2013). Regional policies and regulatory frameworks which are not gender sensitive play a role in creating structures of economic, social and political power in regional society.

In the Regional Development Planning Mid Term 2016–2021, both Gunungkidul and Sleman districts acknowledged problems and challenges of gender equality and supported increased women's participation through gender equality. These plans have implicitly accommodated gender issues as a manifestation of the local governments' commitment to implement gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. A regional commitment to adopt a gender perspective and address gender issues is an entry point to realising gender equality. Policy should go beyond the formality of women's attendance in public spaces, and consider women's attitudes, judgments, opinions and preferences in both domestic and public spaces.

However, this study found that such translation, integration and implementation does not necessarily result in effective governance of distributed benefits for men and women. Policy makers in both Gunungkidul and Sleman

districts do not apply sufficient social cohesion, responsive institutions, and effective governance to support vulnerable women when they implement policies and programs in the field.

Gender mainstreaming implementation in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts encounters conceptual and technical constraints. Misconceptions and a lack of understanding regarding the meaning and purpose of gender mainstreaming in the development planning documents have led to ineffective implementation for women in the economic sector.

The practical implications of this study for the policy process suggest some prospective benefits that could be attained, if regional policy makers pay more attention to informal women workers and their needs: firstly, by reducing women's vulnerability and expanding women's choices; secondly, by supporting an increase in women who enter paid work with a decent work situation; thirdly, by assigning additional expenditure towards gender policy and fourthly, by targeting and supporting economic growth in rural regions. Rural women have not yet experienced a shift towards equal gender relations in terms of economic/financial benefits and future career development.



# **Chapter Eight**

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter reflects on the overall study, revisiting the findings of this research and its contribution to the understanding of regional women workers in their transition from informal work in the primary sector of agriculture to formal employment in non-agricultural industries. It captures women's agency and economic empowerment in accessing formal work in the care sector in Indonesia.

In light of the limitations in prior research on examining women's participation and transition into formal employment, this research offers critical insights and makes a contribution to women's work transition, agency, economic empowerment, authority, and regional policy in contemporary Indonesia. This study's discussion and analyses provide a more relevant and contextualised framework of thinking about women's work and employment challenges faced by women in a developing country such as Indonesia. This research also offers critiques and recommendations to address women's segregation and labour market exclusion. Thus, this could also potentially challenge gender theories that are often used by policy makers and feminists to solve women's issues in rural/regional Indonesia.

Chapter Eight is divided into five sections. Firstly, a discussion of the key findings of the study is put forward. Secondly, contributions to knowledge in the area studied are highlighted. Thirdly, the rigour and originality of this study are presented. Fourthly, the significance of this study for practical policies and programs are outlined. Finally, this chapter discusses the research limitations and identifies areas for future studies.

As stated in Chapter Two, there has been extensive research and policy analyses on the challenges facing the transition of women in rural Indonesia from informal to formal employment. Reports, statistics, and published research have shown that rural women's transition from informal to formal work has become a significant challenge in developing their potential as income earners and citizens. Researchers have demonstrated that regional women continue to face multiple

barriers in accessing employment (Cameron et al., 2018; Schaner & Das, 2016). However, little attention has been devoted to understanding women workers' situation during their transition from working in the agricultural sector to working in the service sector. In addressing human resource development and women's empowerment, this study seeks to understand the different processes that women follow in the transition into formal work, becoming "competitive" workers in the paid employment sector.

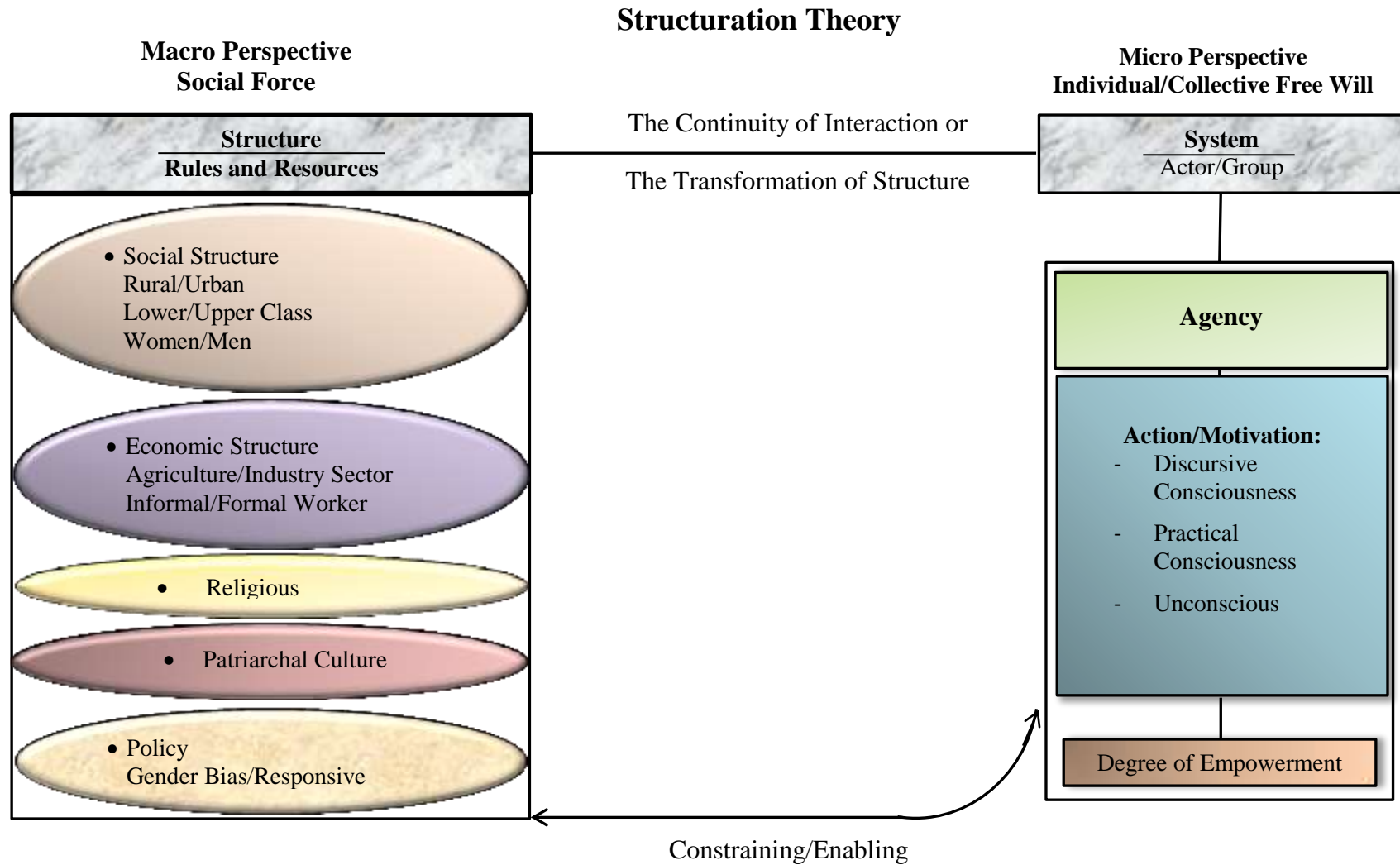
This thesis, as set out in Chapter One, addresses three issues: firstly, the challenges that rural/regional women in the Yogyakarta province face in recent years in accessing formal work in the care sector, and the degree of women's agency and their roles within their community. Secondly, this study observes women's involvement and struggles in achieving economic empowerment through labour participation, their contribution to the family income, as well as women's involvement and roles in family structures and gender relationships. Lastly, the present study examines whether regional policies have addressed issues regarding women's position, situation, representation, and articulation for development.

## **8.2 The Research Framework and Key Findings**

Structuration theory is employed and helps to explain socio-economic structure, patriarchal cultural values, and policy system that either triggered or inhibited women from exercising their agency. The theory captures the dynamic relationship between socio-economic and cultural structures and human agency. Structure and human agency continuously interact and co-produce with each other until social practices structurate as the points of mediation (Giddens, 1984). To reflect on Giddens' ideas and to illustrate the consistency and alignment of the theoretical framework in this research, Figure 8.1 explains the application of structuration theory in attributing macro and micro perspectives in this study. The visual diagram is derived from understanding women's awareness of the persistence of social structures, how social arrangements influence women's consciousness and behaviour, and also from individual women's awareness of the ways that they cope with daily life in creating and recreating their own social structures. This study supports Giddens' (1984) "stratification model" that human subjects comprise three levels of knowledge actions or motivations: discursive consciousness, practical

consciousness, and the unconsciousness, in terms of women's economic empowerment.

**Figure 8.1 Visual diagram of an applying structuration theory to bridge between macro and micro perspectives.**



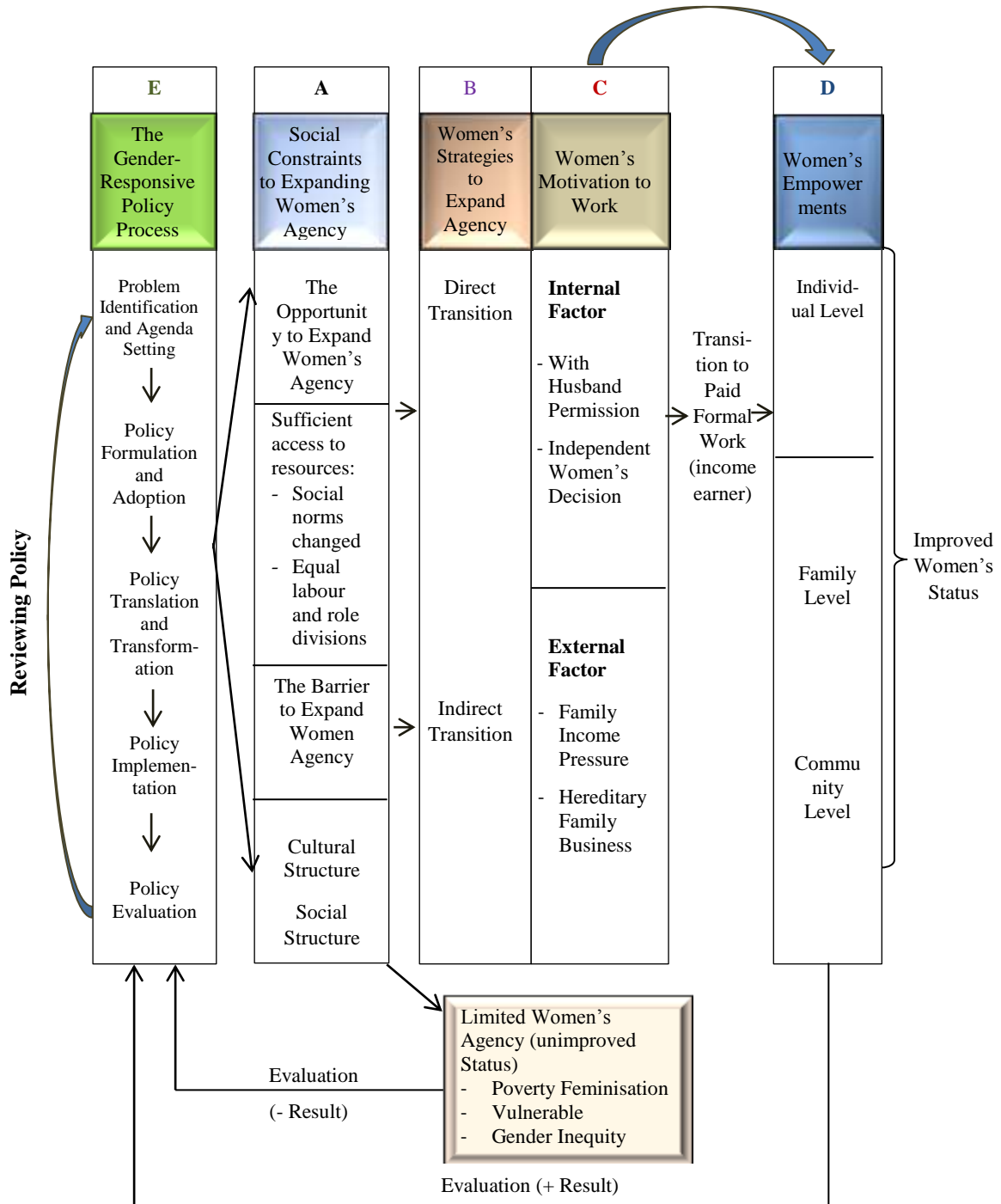
This research defines agency in women's transition as a capacity to make effective choices for women to negotiate and adapt to new economic structural change. This study found that in a broader context, regional Javanese women have reduced capacity to negotiate and adapt to the new stage of economic structure in transitioning from agriculture to the care service industry. Women's poignant experiences also reflect there has been little movement towards a decent work in the care service industrial atmosphere as a present phase of the changed economic structure.

Women's agency, economic empowerment, and employment are seen as complex social phenomena. This study presents exploratory case studies of two regional areas in Indonesia, namely, Gunungkidul and Sleman districts of the Yogyakarta Special Region Province. The two case studies provide an understanding of various and detailed features at the grassroots to critically examine government policies that impact on women's transition and agency. This study explains the complexity of transitioning both from agricultural to non-agricultural spheres, and from informal to formal labour, which has not had the desired impact on women's employment due to structural and cultural barriers which continue to place women in a disadvantaged position in the regional development context.

This study also provides a conceptual model of women's labour transitioning in regional Indonesia (see Figure 8.2). The model is derived from the findings relating to the economic opportunities for and obstacles to increasing women's agency in accessing formal work in the care sector (Box A); women's strategies to transition to paid work (Box B); women's motivation to work (Box C); women's contribution to their family income through their labour market participation and the effect of their income contribution on family structure and relationships (Box D); and the gender-responsive policy implementation to assess women's position, situation, their representation, and the discursive constructs in regional policy for development (Box E).

**Figure 8.2 Conceptual model of women’s transition in regional Indonesia in accessing formal work in the care sector.**

The Effect of Women’s Economic Empowerment



As can be seen in Figure 8.2, this study investigated how sociocultural constraints (A), women's strategies (B), and women's motivation to work (C) are crucial issues for rural/regional women in accessing paid work in Yogyakarta Indonesia. These issues become critical when we look at the transition that women make from unpaid work to paid work. As mentioned in Chapter One, the transition is from informal work in agriculture to formal work in the care sector. The study then explores how these three issues relate to the concept of women's agency and authority (D), particularly for those transitioning women. Women's agency in this context refers to women's capacity to make alternative choices in gaining access to paid formal work. In addition, women's empowerment in this sense refers to women's sense of self-worth (Kabeer, 2008), as an implication of women's economic empowerment.

The role of policy in regional development is another factor that cannot be neglected. Thus, gender-responsive policy implementation or practices at the regional level of Yogyakarta (E) should also be assessed and analysed to examine the direct/indirect connections between the three main conditions influencing transition. Relating back to Chapter Two, as we can see in Figure 8.2, the study puts box E at the beginning instead of at the last section of the conceptual model to illustrate the role of regional policy as an external factor that influences women's agency. Regional policy contributes to the limited space for regional women to expand their agency in uncertain transitioning economic structures.

The gender bias in public policy and programs limits the ability of women to expand their agency. This barrier is manifested in cultural and structural barriers (Box A). Social constraints affect two conditions: firstly, women can still facilitate indirect transition to paid formal work through their children's education although, in some limited situations, they do have any limited capacity to exercise their agency.

In contrast, gender-responsive public policy creates the opportunity for women workers to expand their agency and examine their strategies to make alternative choices in undertaking direct transition to paid formal work (Box E). The existing regional development planning documents in Gunungkidul and Sleman pay attention to social justice and women's inherent dignity as human resources and as national citizens. This policy also accommodates multiple women's identities to

achieve gender equality. Regional development planning documents in both Gunungkidul and Sleman districts use a gender perspective as a framework to formally address the needs of various identities of women such as class, age, religion and other identity classifications. The gender perspective has been translated, integrated, and implemented in formulating and activating programs that are designed for women. However, in the translation and implementation stages of development programs, regional policy makers have not provided any protection, such as regulations, that address equal treatment for transitioning women workers.

In summary, regional policies in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts include gendered issues in the local development programs. However, in their implementation, these programs do not provide either direct or indirect support to women's economic empowerment to elevate the subject-position of women and the community's well-being, particularly in women's transitioning from informal work in the primary sector of agriculture to formal employment in non-agricultural industries.

Various strategies have been trialled by women to support their transition to paid formal work (Box B). One effective strategy attempted by middle-aged women farmers in negotiating their way from traditional work to paid formal work is by investing in the future generation's human resources. Investing in human resources in this context is a way to enhance knowledge and skills, which eventually will add to the family's economic value as a monetary unit (Mincer & Polachek, 1974). Some strategies to invest in future generations include, for instance, delayed marriage, extended participation in schooling, and undertaking formal and informal skills training. Low-income women presume that without a strategic employment focus (both in pay and sector transition) their family economic status would remain unchanged or even deteriorate. Investing in human resources means that rural women are willing to send their children to urban locations to pursue higher education. This effort as an indirect strategy initiated by rural women is to encourage and facilitate (provide financial support for) their children to attend higher education. Thus, their children will have a greater chance to obtain better work alternatives in the future. This strategy is particularly implemented by those young women from well-off families in the village who have greater financial access to precious resources; they



have the opportunity to smoothly transition to formal work, such as in the care service sector.

Relevant literatures (Chapter Three) suggests Indonesian women's access to education and skill training remains limited. From the findings presented in Chapter Five, this study found that local governments have not facilitated women's access to skills training that is compatible with women's practical and strategic needs. In other words, both central and regional governments need to provide greater access to education and other facilities to scale up rural women's skills and knowledge and enable them to create economic value and increase their economic prospects.

There are two motivations for women to work as paid workers; both internal and external factors direct the motivations (Box C). Firstly, the external (family) reasons include family income pressures (poverty) and inherited family businesses. Secondly, the internal (personal) reasons include dream achievement (future goals), self-existence, and satisfaction (personal well-being). Internal factors cover both women's decisions with their husband's/parents' permission and women's decisions made independently. In reality women's work motivation is not linear or a dichotomous matter that is strictly influenced by internal or external factors. The evidence indicates that interactions and combinations between internal and external factors produce women's motivation to seek paid work.

The various effects of women's economic empowerment on their authority can be seen in Box D. The opportunity to earn more income affects the improvement of women's empowerment that can be articulated into various levels: the individual, family, and community levels. Box D explains how women's empowerment has been articulated by the women either individually as the subject or in the family or community level. At the individual level, they make various choices and self-selection to choose their objectives. They know what they need, such as education or training to increase their knowledge or skills, so they can lift their socio-economic position.

Communities in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts have similar problematic stereotypical gender roles rooted in the culture and religion that place men as the household's head and women as the household's managers (Sullivan, 1994). Women's roles and responsibilities are segregated between managing care work in

the family and accessing formal care employment in the labour market. This stereotype highlights the noble role of wife and mother, a subordinate who is dependent upon her spouse (Sullivan, 1994).

Gunungkidul and Sleman districts have achieved significant economic growth and have been able to reduce their poverty levels. However, the participation rate of women in the labour force remains lower than men. By analysing secondary data (see Chapter Two) and combining these with the results from the fieldwork on women's involvement and transition into formal care work, this study finds that the proportion of rural/regional and unfortunate Javanese women remains low in the paid labour force and labour market when compared to men.

Chapter Six explains how the interplay of gender and class in a patriarchal cultural structure is a determinant of women's continued negotiation and process of struggle in the achievement of transition from unpaid informal, traditional sector work to the paid formal care service industry.

This study also shows in Chapter Seven that the regional development frameworks in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts have attempted to accommodate a gender perspective as a formality (or an effort) to value women's voices. However, although this gender perspective has been translated, integrated and implemented through various development programs and activities, there are still some problems with its implementation.

The developmental results of these programs have had a minor impact on women's employment as demonstrated in Chapter Seven. They continue to place women as underutilised human resources in the local development context, contributing to a loss in potential personal, family and community income and well-being. The regional development plans are also implemented in problematic ways and perpetuate unequal relations for informal paid care women workers. For instance, in the translation and implementation stage of development programs, regional policy makers have not provided strategies or regulations to seek equal treatment for transitioning women workers. They also establish some (neutral) policies that potentially camouflage the reality of gendered problems and solutions, inhibit women's access to resources, and prevent women's economic empowerment.

For instance, Department of Workforce and Employment gave equal opportunities for men and women to apply for a skilled training program to repair motor vehicle. However, the applicants who passed the selection criteria turned out to be all men. Another issue related to the problematic approaches of local development is that policy makers in both Gunungkidul and Sleman districts do not apply sufficient social cohesion, responsive institutions, and good governance for marginalised or vulnerable groups when they implement policies and programs in the field. This exclusion policy leads women who work in the care service sector to gender inequity and inequality. The data in this research depict that gender inequality appears in various forms, including stereotyping, discrimination, exploitation, and physical and sexual violence, which result in women's impoverishment.

### **8.2.1 RQ1: Women's Transition in the Context of Industry Structural Change**

Using Giddens' perspective, this study confirms that power, in terms of employment status, has shifted from the Javanese individual's ability to act voluntarily to the ability to change their job status from informal to formal worker, albeit under the influence of the Javanese rules and customs. According to Giddens, the influence of social factors can be linked to the persistence of power based on social relations that encompass social structure, and women's agency. Power in this sense is defined as the decision-making capacity of rural Javanese women in the economic, social and cultural spheres. In addition, among several subsystems of the society, rural Javanese women are able to make decisions regarding factors that affect their employment status such as economic class, stages of life cycle, ethnicity, and their access to education, resources, and the institutional support of public facilities.

Regional Javanese informal women workers have fewer opportunities to grow their capacity to negotiate in and adapt to the new economic structure, by moving from agriculture to a care service environment. This study demonstrates that the two regional governments have not supported women's capacity to adapt to the new economic structure. Regional policies have maintained regional women's vulnerability or social dependence and poverty. These phenomena locate cultural and structural matters as significant factors that inhibit women's agency and labour participation in the care service labour market.

Research on women's agency has not paid close attention to opportunities for and barriers to increasing women's agency, especially for those who transition from the agricultural sector to the service industries in regions. In previous chapters (chapters Five and Six), the results are outlined. Based on the findings of this analysis and interpretation, a conceptual framework was developed (see Figure 7.2) to depict the barriers to and opportunities for increasing women's agency in regional Indonesia in accessing formal work in the care sector.

The cultural challenges to participation include multiple burdens, acceptance attitudes, male domination, and gendered religious values. Structural factors include limited financial resources, limited educational attainment, limited skills transition, the rigidity of recruitment and selection processes, little flexibility in job opportunities, and inadequate infrastructural facilities. Limited valuable resources (such as material, human and social) enforce women's incapacity to practice control over critical factors in their lives and their involvement in the larger society.

This study, confirms the research findings of Cameron et al. (2018), Schaner and Das (2016), and Utomo (2012) that having care responsibilities forms a barrier to women's involvement in the labour market. The limitation of public infrastructure to support care responsibilities in Gunungkidul and Sleman is also one of the obstacles to women's agency to shift into formal work. Moreover, the lack of non-standard job arrangements, such as flexibility in scheduling working hours in paid and formal work, leads to career interruption that is harmful to their future.

Regional development still provides opportunities for a few Javanese rural women to expand their agency as the impact of development creates social and economic changes over time. Socio-economic change leads to increasing opportunities that take the form of access to valuable resources (finance, educational attainment, and high-level skills) and changing social norms that affect the labour and role divisions at the family level. This study finds that a small number of rural Muslim women, by exerting their agency, are able to challenge barriers and use their identity as Muslim women to adapt new social norms that are more appropriate to the contemporary condition in order to strive to improve their lives, especially in accessing formal work in care sectors. In addition, rural Muslim women also employ

strategies to cope with hegemonic patriarchy by negotiating with their parents, spouses and family members to get their permission to work outside the home.

Another implication of this study is that it signals that it is time to create more space that enables women to expand their ability to make practical choices in negotiation and adaption as the economic structure changes. Regional government should acknowledge that women are heterogeneous when providing public services. Another requirement is that cooperation among development stakeholders (local government, community leaders, NGO activists, and private sector actors) be promoted to understand and support women's needs (practical and strategic needs). People's agency is essential and should be enabled in the development process since agency is an instrumental and intrinsic reason to increase economic growth and improve people's well-being and achieve gender-balanced power relations.

A development process that encourages women's participation, empowerment and agency should be changing from a single top-down approach to a parallel process between top-down and bottom-up approaches (Prihatiningtyastuti, 2018).

### **8.2.2 RQ2: Women's Agency in the Context of Labour Market Transition**

This investigation utilises direct measurements of empowerment, such as agency, rather than indirect indicators of empowerment, such as employment, and property ownership. Using indirect measurements can impact on decisions assessing agency (Richardson, 2018). This study applies agency measurement through women's self-motivation to gain formal employment and a decent work situation, to have control over income and family decision making, and to become the community's agents of change. The conclusion might seem to be that there is no change in women's agency due to insufficient income earning (Richardson, 2018). This study suggests to utilising direct measurements of empowerment to generate sound recommendations for human resource development policy.

This study provides an illustration of Javanese regional working women in the dynamic relationship between traditional, cultural, and modern political-economic pressures. The diverging interaction among these aspects has produced more available space for regional women to expand or inhibit their agencies. As the

cases of women workers in the agricultural and non-agricultural care sectors in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts show, these women continue to negotiate the interval between tradition and modernity. This is what Giddens and Elliott term as "society-dominated account" (Elliott, 2014, p. 146). The changed status of these Javanese woman from informal to formal workers is attained by exercising their power in economic activities (e.g., employment in formal places, trading, etc.), social and cultural activisms (for example, membership of local women's groups, membership of local village administration) within the women's own environment. A woman as an individual has also actively involved and participated in economic activities outside home, gained access to education, received institutional support of public facilities, and so forth. This is what Giddens and Elliott dubbed as "individual-dominated account" (Elliott, 2014, 146).

Through the analysis of women's agency one can obtain a clear picture of the competing interaction between the traditional on the one hand and modernisation on the other hand. This study identifies the dimension of agency relevant in the context of Javanese culture, Indonesia, and developing countries. The study has contributed to a more specific definition of agency, which was previously referred to as the capacity of a woman to make choices in general, but now includes negotiating her position to adapt to current changes in socio-economic structures.

### **8.2.3 RQ 3 and 4: Developing and Applying Gender-Responsive Regional Policy and the Impact of Regional Development Policies on Women's Agency as Members of the Workforce and as Citizens**

This study applies Giddens' structuration theory to strengthen the argument that patriarchal culture and policy implementation are parallel antecedents in influencing women's social practices through investigating women's agency as an empirical fact in the field.

The interaction of patriarchal cultures and the problems of policy implementation affects a wider spectrum of the degrees of women's economic empowerment. There are four types of women's motivations to work that reflect the various levels of economic empowerment (power/control over to their movement).

This study portrays the diversity in women's situations, their level of economic empowerment, and their strategies in adapting to the new changes in economic structures. Regional development policies marginalise women in the provision of public services.

The goal of economic empowerment is not to provide women with financial reward for their work and secure employment in decent work, but rather to provide control to women to do their own deeds as individuals. Therefore, for future public policy making, this study suggests the need to acknowledge the diversity of women's needs and motivations, and to ensure that any individual is given access to play role as an agent that should have the opportunity to choose and to recognise what they want to do and why they do it.

Gender equality and women's empowerment agendas remain problematic in Indonesia's policy making and implementation and suggests that the concept of 'gender mainstreaming' in regional policy is failing to achieve its objectives.

This study utilises a feminist analysis policy framework to examine women in transition (from the unpaid agriculture sector to the paid formal care service sector) either inside or outside of Indonesian national and regional contexts. Public policy researchers have examined women's labour market transition (Burn & Oidov, 2001; Jenderedjian & Bellows, 2021; Pollert, 2003) and reported that although gender-responsive policy has been formulated in development plans, the practical implications have remained limited. Their investigations have not explored the reasons behind this downside. This study explores the stages of the policy process that affect limit women's transitioning to formal work.

In the Regional Development Planning documents this study finds that policy translation, integration, and implementation do not necessarily result in equitably distributed benefits between men and women. Gender-responsive regional policy should aim to achieve gender equality with specific guidance regulations at every development process stage to ensure that women are the heteronormative ideal. This means that real women at every layer of class, age, life cycle, religion, ethnicity and employment status would be in a balanced power relationship with men in contributing to creating a good society together. This study confirms Rönnblom's work (2005) that the discourse of gender-responsive regional policy should assign a

subject position for women to make effective choices to contribute to sustainable (economic) growth.

As indicated in Chapter Seven it is necessary to design human resources development policies that include girls and women, and do not merely improve their education and health status, but also increase their access to income earning. Policy makers and other development stakeholders should consider human resource development's essential outcome in order to empower people (women). This means that development agents should be able to transfer power to the people, including women, so they will have space to expand their agency in challenging their difficult situation and achieving improved well-being.

This study criticises how the Gunungkidul and Sleman governments measure women's empowerment by using the Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM) index in local planning documents. Firstly, they cannot utilise the GEM in deriving and developing programs and activities to measure their accountability performance. Secondly, they cannot include policy and regulatory frameworks and current gender relative norms as a prerequisite condition to increase women's empowerment. Thirdly, they only focus on the number of seats held by women in the district parliament rather than on the percentage of a marginalised group whose seats are held in village governments. Fourthly, they do not include the measurement of women's decision-making power in the household and at the individual and community levels as part of the women's empowerment index. Sleman District officers only used the Gender-Related Development Index<sup>13</sup> (GDI) to measure the gap in human development between men and women. They believe that delivering basic services such as education, health and work opportunities will automatically elevate women's empowerment and reduce the gender gap. This study argues that enhancing women's empowerment is not necessarily the result of their access to precious resources, but it should be pursued by establishing strong social opportunities such as policies, regulations, and gender-related norms that are friendly to increasing women's agency.



Regional governments have the authority to decide which regional regulations are to be developed and implemented. To achieve effective performance and improve the effectiveness of regional policy changes, a local initiative and improvisation approach is suggested rather than total centralisation. In the regional context, referring to national policy means not only just adopting but also adapting to the local situation. From a national perspective, regional initiatives will enrich the national context particularly when the central government develops a grand design or master plan for women's development in the future.

Nevertheless, policy in this context does not signify as a strict regulation or law order; instead, this study attempts to emphasise that both the central and regional government policies regarding the position of women's employment in any area of occupation, especially in formal work, need to be addressed and imposed both in macro and micro levels of women's employment areas. By incorporating both macro and micro contexts, women's empowerment initiatives and gender mainstreaming agenda could be achieved.

By understanding micro and macro perspectives of power as integral social components and emphasising the functions performed by individuals in structuring the power system, this study provides innovative recommendations for regional government bodies and apparatuses to use when implementing a gender-responsive policy to support women's agency and employment choices. These innovative approaches, that include cultural, bottom-up planning and financing, put women as active subjects, visible informal workers, and with solid rights, and suggest developing regulations which support women's agency and employment choices.

Other recommendations are suggested to improve the effectiveness of regional policy. Firstly, the regional government should understand that adopting a gender perspective aims not just to offer women space to participate in public activities as well as enabling women to determine their choices and attitudes in daily life, but also to have equal rights to men, to be able to manage their needs, and to have wide access to the care labour market and decent work situations. Secondly, in regard to women as human resources, the regional governments in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts should fully consider the value of women's unpaid labour and caring work. Moreover, the regional policies must provide special protection for informal

workers where women are predominant. It is suggested that gender mainstreaming incorporated into regional policy will produce significant progress for improving women's quality of life and will lead to a significant transformation in gender relations.

The formulation of the third research question which also deals with policy has found associations between three inseparable and not ignorable elements: social structuration, patriarchal culture, and the government's policy in the Indonesian context. Lastly, this study applies Giddens' structuration theory to strengthen the argument that patriarchy and policy are parallel antecedents in influencing women's social practices. Particularly in this term, the evidence shows that both the patriarchal system and policies curb women's activity. The restraints lead to women's marginalisation. Based on the field's empirical findings, this study also concludes that some women do undertake various practices through their agency to reproduce/recreate the social structure.

### 8.3 The Key Research Contributions

**Table 8.1 Research Contributions**

No.	Research Question	Prior studies	Contribution of the present study
1.	RQ1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited studies have paid attention to issues surrounding women's transition from informal to formal work, especially women's ability and willingness to change their social identity and status</li> <li>• Lack of investigation for women's workers' examination of their agency whilst transitioning at the era of economic structural change, particularly in developing countries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It highlights women's transition during the change of economic structure, the knowledge of women's agency that occurs among women who transition from informal to formal labour market, and the challenges faced by these women when exercising their agency due to structural and cultural barriers.</li> <li>• Additional insights into human resource management practices in Indonesia and Southeast Asia where there are limited research on how women exercise their agency and empowerment.</li> <li>• This study provides more specific definition of agency. What was once referred to as the capacity of a woman to make choices in general, has now included the ability to negotiate her position to adapt to the</li> </ul>

			current changes in socio-economic structures.
2.	RQ2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of investigation into the agency and employment of low-income regional women, the consequences resulted from this employment, and how the consequences affect correlation between familial factors (income, structure, relationship) and women's status at family and community levels.</li> <li>• Lack explanation of women's role as an individual and a community agent in regional Indonesia.</li> <li>• Limited examination on different forms of women's collective action around gender issues that have led to change at macro-, meso-, and micro- levels.</li> </ul>	This study measures agency through women's self-motivation in order to gain formal employment and decent working condition, to have control over their income and family decision making, and to become the agents of change for the community.
3.	RQ3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited studies on processes and policies that address different ways to improve access and employment conditions, particularly in developing countries.</li> <li>• Limited findings on the way regional stakeholders produced various policies and framed regulations to promote informal workers transitioning into full-time employment in decent work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This study explains the complexities of public policy in human resource development surrounding the support for women employment, and the impact of problematic implementation of gender-responsive regional policies on women who are now placed in disadvantaged position in the regional development context.</li> <li>• This study reveals that while the new policies result in some minor changes in women's employment, regional women remain marginalized and hence reduced in their personal potential, family and community income, and well-being.</li> </ul>
4.	RQ4	Lack explanation in regional development policy which impacted women's agency as workforce citizens in the society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This study provides insights into women's economic role in regional areas in a developing country. The results of this study provide a relevant and contextualised framework for thinking about women's work and employment challenges.</li> </ul>

Drawing a correlation with women's economic empowerment and women's agency in Chapter 2, this study has reviewed extensive studies in the area of women's work transition, agency, economic empowerment, authority, and regional policy in contemporary Indonesia (see Table 8.1). This study also identifies some gaps or lack of systematic research in previous studies which include: 1) women's transition from informal to formal work, especially their ability and willingness to change their social identity and status; 2) self-examination by female workers in developing countries on their agency as they transition during times of economic structural change; 3) the consequences of low-income regional women's employment and the correlation between familial factors (income, structure, relationship) and women's status at family and community levels; 4) women's role as an individual and a community agent in regional Indonesia; 5) several forms of women's collective action around gender issues that have led to changes at the macro-, meso-, and micro levels; 6) processes and policies that address initiatives to improve access and employment conditions, particularly in developing countries; 7) how regional stakeholders have produced various policies and framed regulations to promote the transition of informal workers into full-time employment in decent work; 8) examination of regional development policy which impacted women's agency as workforce citizens in the society.

This study produces seven original research findings. Firstly, it highlights women's transition during the change of economic structure, the knowledge of women's agency that occurs among women who transition from informal to formal labour market, and the challenges faced by these women when exercising their agency due to structural and cultural barriers. Then, additional insights into human resource management practices in Indonesia and Southeast Asia where there has been limited research on how women exercise their agency and empowerment. Thirdly, study provides more specific definition of agency. What was once referred to as the capacity of a woman to make choices in general, has now included the ability to negotiate her position to adapt to the current changes in socio-economic structures. Fourth, we measure agency through women's self-motivation in order to gain formal employment and decent working condition, to have control over their income and family decision making, and to become the agents of change for the community. Next, this study explains the complexities of public policy in human

resource development surrounding the support for women employment, and the impact of problematic implementation of gender-responsive regional policies on women who are now placed in disadvantaged position in the regional development context. Sixth, we reveal that while the new policies result in some minor changes in women's employment, regional women remain marginalized and hence reduced in their personal potential, family and community income, and well-being. Lastly, this study provides insights into women's economic role in regional areas in a developing country. The results of this study provide a relevant and contextualised framework for thinking about women's work and employment challenges.

#### **8.4 Policy Implications from the Research**

Referring to the findings in chapters Three, Five and Six, this study develops several policy suggestions to support women's transition to formal employment, such as skills development. Designing skills development programs that operate using a bottom-up approach is needed by national as well as regional policy makers, and with an active and empowering study process. Policy makers should consider the potential of regional women as human resources, and the potential benefits that would be achieved when the needs of these women are fulfilled. It would be ideal to let women's voices be heard and represented in relevant policy to elevate their economic status.

Inadequate quantity and quality of training infrastructure retards accessibility to skills development for regional women. Training infrastructure which acknowledges the voice and choice of women on less income, women who are poorly educated, who speak only a minor language and who live in remote areas, must be provided, particularly for needy women to elevate their limited skills. Vulnerable women need schools or training centres which consider women's interests. Training providers should accommodate women's voices as end-users of skills development in regard to what kind of skills they want to study and how they will utilise their skills (Adams, 2012).

Local governments are urged to provide empowerment or leadership training especially dedicated to the women working in the care sector. This study argues that regional governments have an obligation to remove sociocultural barriers to

women's economic empowerment by facilitating and implementing leadership training and enforcing legal provisions to ensure gender equality in the family, community and workplace (Ford, 2018). Leadership and management skills training as part of non-cognitive skills training are considered fundamental to increasing women's agency (Debebe, 2009; Yumarni & Amaratunga, 2015). Leadership and management skills training encourages female learners to develop attributes such as confidence and authority (Debebe, 2009; Yumarni & Amaratunga, 2015).

There are various ways for women to improve their empowerment. In Gunungkidul regional women leave their homes to earn a wage, not only to increase family income but also to gain empowerment in their community. In Sleman women's empowerment is obtained by separating the family's finances. Some regional women claimed that their wage is considered as their own money, but other women decided to merge their salaries with their spouses'. The women thought that they have the right to contribute to family decision making in spending their money. A few women in regional Sleman, whose income is higher than that of their spouses, felt more dominant than their husbands in family decision making.

Most middle-aged women from the lower class, who live in the regional area, are full-time farmers. Their daily activities focus on farm fields with limited income. They presume themselves to be too old or being too late to change their occupation to earn higher pay and better work. They have decided to stay in the village and maintain their employment as farmers whatever happens.

However, their limited financial resources and education attainment do not stop these marginalised women from having the desire to change their disadvantaged condition. They work very hard to support their children to access higher education services and think that higher education will provide an opportunity for their children to enter formal work. The important point here is that these strategies also result in indirect effects where marginalised women in regional areas pass their work status to their next generation.

Similar phenomena observed in Gunungkidul and Sleman districts are strongly influenced by the Javanese values among regional Javanese women. Javanese women believe in producing and maintaining harmony in life. Thus, they

have to accept and surrender to the social norms by not complaining, even under hardship and painful conditions. By interacting directly with my informants and reflecting on my deep understanding, as a Javanese woman, of the construct of Javanese culture, I derived the analysis from the NVivo Pro result of the informants' interview transcripts. The subjects being investigated were Javanese women who are submissive and have limited space to articulate their feelings and thoughts. They prefer to speak in a soft tone or be quiet to hide their ideas and feelings. NVivo Pro processed the transcripts and could not accommodate the non-verbal meanings of those words, nor capture the expressions or the emphasis and the pauses.

For instance, the underprivileged Javanese regional women often said that they do not really care who the family's income earner is (either man or woman) or who does the work to earn money. In other words, the position between breadwinner and second income earner is not a problem as long as their money is used for family spending. As a result, women continue to have double burdens in income earning and domestic work at home. Yet, most women think that doing dual roles is normal; women see it as their responsibility rather than their burden. Javanese women predominantly think that they need to accept their condition without complaint to maintain harmony in the family.

This research offers important practical implications for human resource development in the family, community, market and state. There are advantages if local government supports and develops policies and concrete programs that effectively strengthen women's socio-economic status and reduce gendered power relations. Firstly, in terms of women's empowerment, capacity building for women to make that transition requires them to be empowered with resources. Resources in this context refers to being involved in how policy is formulated, implemented and policy evaluated. Secondly, maintaining women's power will reduce the local government's burden in coping with any social problems, such as violence against women and child protection. Thirdly, the addition of revenue because of the payment of taxes and social contributions is beneficial to support broader society's welfare. Fourthly, the potential expansion of the regional government's revenue means additional financial resources available to support needed training skills services. Fifthly, increasing women's agency will boost economic growth and the social welfare of the nation.

This study's implications give space to an early discussion on the emerging of the meaning of the "clean" concept in the transition from unpaid farmer worker to formal work as a care service worker. This concept means that there is a transition from outdoor labour work in the agricultural sector, where women are used to working in the mud and dust, to relatively cleaner work in the care service sector. Another interpretation is that by increasing the hard and soft skills of regional care workers, it will create supply and demand for care workers in their own country, which can minimise their need to migrate abroad. Providing integrated vocational training arranged by the local manpower office, especially for domestic workers, will improve the healthy lifestyle of the community and shift the assumption that an overseas lifestyle is cleaner for Indonesians. Moreover, this innovation would shift the interpretation that working as a care worker in the home country has a less "clean" (prestigious) image than working as a care worker in a developed country.

Solid modification of skills is needed when the social mindset cannot be changed instantly, when women still undertake the majority of domestic chores and child care. Additional skills would benefit women and lead them to be taken into account as professional care workers. Furthermore, this skills training would give them the tools when they want to shift from their lower skilled work to middle to upper skilled work.

## **8.5 Limitations and Future Research**

The weaknesses of the qualitative research approach are related to its specificity to the phenomena being researched, lack of generalisability, and randomised power (Gable, 1994). Since this study employed qualitative research methods within specific contexts, its generalisability might be confined to similar regional contexts. However, the study's findings propose a model that might be applicable to other similar contexts.

Future research may investigate the conceptual model to gain a greater understanding of the relationship between varying components across different areas (hill, coastal, mountain, border); settlements (town, city, hamlet); geographic locations (eastern, middle, and western Indonesia); and areas of labour absorption in



the non-services sectors, and non-service employment sectors (mining, technology information, construction, manufacturing).

The limitation of time and resources caused the current study to only focus on one regional area in the central part of Indonesia, where the majority of the population are Muslims. Future research could include Indonesia's eastern parts where there is a large population of Christians. Moreover, considering that Indonesia is a multi-ethnic country with more than 600 ethnic groups (Ananta et al., 2015), there is a vast space to explore the Acehnese, Balinese, Sundanese and other ethnic groups, besides the ethnic Javanese. This study was also limited to two districts; thus, a larger geographic sampling would more greatly reflect Indonesia's profile, which in total includes 416 districts and 98 cities.

I did not investigate the agency of women care workers agency in influencing national and regional policies, nor did I examine how regional policies define care work and measure the gendered care responsibility that affects women's agency in their transition. This study suggests that conducting research with quantitative methods or a mixed-method design of qualitative and quantitative approaches on the same research topic could reduce the limitations and biases of a study (Choy, 2014).

This present study defines women's agency as corresponding to women's capacity in utilising creative means to compromise, negotiate and adapt to structural economic change to achieve their goals. To extend the theory, it may be applied to other transition contexts, such as how women negotiate their transition from living at home in developing countries to living in host cultures in developed countries and their experience adjusting to their new environment. Additionally, by investigating the barriers to and opportunities for extending women's agency in detail, this research also opens opportunities for future research to understand a dynamic concept of empowerment, such as how to empower regional women or how regional women's agency can be developed (Choudhry et al., 2019; Jali & Islam, 2017).

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# Appendices

Appendix A. Consent Form

Appendix B. Participant's Information Sheet

Appendix C. Ethics Approval Certificate

Appendix D. Research Questions

Appendix E. Research Data Management Plan

**CONSENT FORM**

<b>HREC Project Number:</b>	HREC 2019-0761
<b>Project Title:</b>	Exploring women’s participation and transition into formal employment: Case studies in regional Indonesia.
<b>Chief Investigator:</b>	A/Prof Kantha Dayaram, Senior Lecturer, School of Management, Curtin University, Australia
<b>Student researcher:</b>	Endah Prihatiningtyastuti, Ph.D. Student, School of Management, Curtin University, Australia
<b>Version Number:</b>	2
<b>Version Date:</b>	5/October/2019

- I have read or had read to me in my first language, the information statement version listed above, and I understand its contents.
- I believe I understand the purpose, extent, and possible risks of my involvement in this project.
- I voluntarily consent to take part in this research project.
- I have agreed this interview will be voice recorded.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.
- I understand that this project has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
- I understand I will receive a copy of this Information Statement and Consent Form.

<input type="checkbox"/> I do	<input type="checkbox"/> I do not	consent to you using any data I provided before withdrawing from the study, if relevant
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Participant Name	
Participant Signature	
Date	

Declaration by the researcher: I have supplied an Information Letter and Consent Form to the participant who has signed above, and believes that they understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of their involvement in this project.

Researcher Name	Endah Prihatiningtyastuti
Researcher Signature	
Date	

**INFORMATION SHEET**

We wish to invite you to participate in my research project, describe below.

My name is Endah Prihatiningtyastuti. I am conducting this research as part of my Ph.D. degree in the Faculty of Business and Law, Curtin University.

**RESEARCH PROJECT**

Exploring women’s participation and transition into formal employment: Case studies in regional Indonesia.

**AIM OF THE RESEARCH**

The research aims to:

- Explore the challenges and opportunities in women’s agency (capacity to make a decision) as they transition from informal work in the primary sector of agriculture to formal employment in non-agricultural industries, that is, care work in Indonesia.
- Investigate women’s economic empowerment through labour participation that contributes to their family income, family structure, and relationships.
- Examine how the existing gender empowerment index utilised by policy makers reflects women’s agency (capacity to make a decision) and economic empowerment.

**SHORT NARRATIVE**

To examine regional women’s empowerment as they transition from informal work in agriculture to formal work in non-agricultural industries in Indonesia. This study explores three aspects: 1. Women’s agency (capacity to make a decision) as they make the transition from informal to formal work, 2. Women’s economic empowerment as they contribute to their family income, and 3. The existing gender empowerment index, which is used for policy-making.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study will remain confidential. No individual will be identified by name in any publication of the results. Names will be replaced by pseudonyms to ensure that individuals are not identifiable.

**PARTICIPANT IS VOLUNTARY**

Please understand that your involvement in this study is voluntary and we respect your right to withdraw from the study at any time. You may discontinue participation at any time without consequence and you do not need to provide any explanation if you decide not to participate or withdraw at any time.

The interview will be approximately 40 minutes long. It will



	<p>be audio recorded.</p> <p>Add the consent sheet which the participant will be signing. participant will provide written consent as well as their participation is voluntary, and by participating in the interview they are providing consent.</p> <p>The participant will be given a voucher of \$10 for their time in participating in the research.</p>
<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<p>We will ask you to reflect on your experiences relating to women's economic empowerment policies</p>
<b>USE OF INFORMATION</b>	<p>Information, including quotes, may use in journal articles and conference presentations. We will safeguard your identity by presenting the information in a way that will not allow you to be identified.</p>
<b>UPSETTING ISSUES</b>	<p>It is unlikely research will raise any personal or upsetting issues, but if it does, you may wish to contact Curtin's Counselling Services. You may also contact the local Women Crisis Centre RIFKA ANNISA phone number 0857990577.</p>
<b>STORAGE OF INFORMATION</b>	<p>Hardcopy recording and notes will be kept in a locked cabinet in Endah's office in the School of Management of Curtin University. Any electronic data will be kept on the University's research drive in accordance with University Policy. Only the researcher will have access to the data</p>
<b>DISPOSAL OF INFORMATION</b>	<p>The information we collect in this study will be kept under secure conditions at Curtin University for 7 years after the research is published and then it will be destroyed.</p>
<b>APPROVAL</b>	<p>This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Curtin University. The HREC number is .....</p>
<b>CONTACT DETAILS</b>	<p>Feel Free to contact me with any questions about this research by email at <a href="mailto:Endah.prihatin@postgrad.curtin.edu.au">Endah.prihatin@postgrad.curtin.edu.au</a></p> <p>Alternatively, you may also contact the Chief Investigator, A/Professor Kantha Dayaram (+61 92661368) and email address: <a href="mailto:K.Dayaram@curtin.edu.au">K.Dayaram@curtin.edu.au</a></p>
<b>COMPLAINTS</b>	<p>Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number .....). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics officer on (08) 92669223 or the Manager, Research</p>

Integrity on (08) 92667093 or email [hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au).

Thank you for considering this request and we look forward to your participation in this research project

Regards,

Endah Prihatiningtyastuti

### In-depth Interview for Working Women

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1. Setting Goals (women's work motivation)  
Why do you work?
2. Views of working women
  - a. What are your opinions of women working outside the home?
  - b. How does the above (question) align with your religious views?
  - c. Prompt – if there are alternate views: how do you think you would address these?
  - d. (following from question 3c) who do you think should be responsible for addressing these differences?
3. Capacity to make choices or decisions
  - 3.1 For women who have not changed their current jobs:
    - a. How long have you worked in your current job?
    - b. Why have you continued working in your current job?
    - c. In your opinion, do you think the job is suitable for you? Why?
    - d. Do you plan to change your occupation? If so, what profession would you consider and why?
    - e. Do you have any challenges with your current job?
    - f. Who do you see as being the right person to assist/support you with your work challenges/or make the transition to another job?
  - 3.2 For women who have changed their previous occupations to care work:
    - a. Why did you change your profession?
    - b. How did you change your previous job to this current job?
    - c. What barriers did you experience with changing your occupation?
    - d. How did you overcome these problems?
    - e. What opportunities did you experience as a result of changing your occupation?
    - f. After you changed your occupation, who is responsible for child care (if you children)?
    - g. How has having a new job impacted your family life?
    - h. How has having a new job impacted your personal life, such as your health and well-being?
    - i. Did the new job meet your expectations, and how did it meet/not meet your expectations?
4. Access to decent work
  - a. What are your current conditions of work – such as:
    - i. pay,
    - ii. leave,
    - iii. hours of work,
    - iv. workplace safety

- v. job security
    - vi. other benefits
    - vii. workplace conduct such as fairness/harassment/bullying
  - b. If the above are challenges – how do you think they can be addressed?
5. Access to occupational skill training (capacity building):
- a. Have you been provided with training and development?
  - b. Who is the training provider?
  - c. What are your views regarding the training content/time/delivery techniques?
  - d. Has the training been relevant to your needs, and how have you benefitted from it?
  - e. What aspects of the training have been useful or not useful?
6. Decision making
- 6.1 Individual level
- a. How do you manage your work and life balance?
  - b. Did you need permission from someone to start working, or was this your own choice?
  - c. Do you have access to your health care?
  - d. Who is the decision-maker relating to family planning matters such as contraception, the number of children you will have?
  - e. Do you have control over managing your own money/finances?
  - f. Do you have any experience with domestic violence
- 6.2 Family Level
- a. Who makes the decisions regarding your children’s education?
  - b. Who makes the decisions regarding your children’s healthcare?
  - c. Who is the decision-maker regarding the purchase of assets such as land/house/car/motorcycle/cattle/jewelry?
- 6.3 Community Level
- a. What community activities are you currently involved in?
  - b. What is your role in these activities?
  - c. Are there any opportunities for you to achieve your community aspirations?  
How?

## **In-depth Interview for Stake Holders (10 people)**

Respondents:

- Head of Village
- A cadre of Community/women Empowerment in village level
- Head of a man-power office (district level)
- Head of Community and Women Empowerment office (district level)
- Head of Regional Development Planning Board (district level)
- Non-Government Organisation staff who concern to women right (women activist)

Roles, Responsibilities, Experience

1. What are the opportunities and potential barriers relating to developing human capital (skills and knowledge) in this village?
2. Who are the primary stakeholders/decision-makers for regional development planning in this village?
3. Is the gender data available for designing of the regional development policies?
4. (If yes) How do you use gender -based data for regional development?
5. How do you view women's participation in regional development processes?
6. Are there opportunities for women to be involved in community development or planning?
7. What are your views on women as active contributors to the region's economic development?
8. What employment constraints do women in this village experience?
9. Is it different for men as compared to women to access employment in this village/district?
10. Are there policies that address/support gender equality in employment? What types of policies are there?
11. Are there opportunities for women to develop their leadership abilities and access networking opportunities?
12. What kind of program/activities do you think could accelerate women's economic participation at the village and district level?
13. Are there specific programs/activities that support low-income earners in this village?
14. (If yes) How are these programs communicated to low-income stakeholders?
15. Do they participate in the design and implementation of these programs? How?
16. How do you monitor/evaluate those programs/activities?

17. What are performance indicators used to measure the success of these programs?
18. What indicators are used to measure women's access to employment?
19. What internal and external constraints exist in implementing programs to improve women's access to employment?

**Demographic Questions**

Tick the appropriate box:

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1. General Information

- a. Participant No: .....
- b. Insert the village, sub-district, district):.....

- c. Age:
  - Below 21 years
  - 22 to 35 years
  - 36 to 50 years
  - 50 to 60 years
  - Above 60 years

- d. Education attainment:
  - Primary Schooling
  - Secondary Schooling
  - Post schooling certificate/ undergraduate degree
  - Other (state) .....

- e. Marital Status:
  - Married
  - Single
  - Widowed
  - Divorced
  - Other

- f. Husband's Employment Sector
  - Agriculture
  - Mining
  - Processing/Industry
  - Large trading/retail
  - Service other than trade
  - Unemployment

- g. Husband's work status:

- Full time work
- Part time work
- Casual
- Contract
- Self-employed
- Unemployment
- h. Number of Children
  - None
  - 1-2
  - 3-4
  - More than 4
- i. Age children
  - 0 - 5 years
  - 5 -10 years
  - 11-15 years
  - +15 years
- j. Number of dependents:
  - Less than 4
  - 4-6 people
  - 6-8 people
  - More than 8 people
- k. Women's occupation:
  - Farmer
  - Care service worker
  - Other (state) .....
- l. Distance of home to work location
  - 0 – 500 m
  - 500 m – 2km
  - 2 km – 10 km
  - More than 10 km
- 2. Role and Status



- a. What are your daily activities?
- Domestic/reproductive work
    - Less than 4 hours
    - 4-8 hours
    - 9-12 hours
    - 12-16 hours
    - More than 16 hours
  - Productive work (state total hours/per day)
    - Less than 4 hours
    - 4-8 hours
    - 9-12hours
    - 12-16 hours
    - More than 16 hours
- b. Who is the breadwinner/ principal income earner of this family?
- Husband
  - Wife
  - Other
- c. What is your current (average/approximate) weekly family income:
- Less than \$ 50/week
  - \$50 – 99/week
  - \$100 – 200/week
  - More than \$200/week
- d. What percentage is your contribution to the total of your family income?
- 0-25%
  - 26-50%
  - 51-75%
  - 76-100%
- e. Do you engage in any community activity?
- No
  - Yes:
    - Less than 4 hours/week
    - 4-8 hours/week
    - 9-12 hours/week

12-16 hours/week



More than 16 hours/week



## Research Data Management Plan

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### Exploring women's participation and transition into formal employment: Case studies in regional Indonesia.

Supervisor	Kantha Dayaram
Data Management Plan Edited by	Endah Prihatiningtyastuti
Modified Date	24/05/2019
Data Management Plan ID	DAYARK-VC06487
Faculty	Curtin Business School

#### 1 Research Project Details

##### 1.1 Research project title

Exploring women's participation and transition into formal employment: Case studies in regional Indonesia.

##### 1.2 Research project summary

There has been considerable amount of research of women in the working sphere and in terms of gender equality in society. However, yet literature on the topic women's economic empowerment in transition of economic structure in Indonesia is sparse. In addressing human resource development and women's empowerment, this study seeks to understand the different facets associated with transitioning into formal work and becoming "competitive" workers.

##### 1.3 Keywords

Women labour participation, regional women, Indonesia, structural transition in the economy.

#### 2 Research Project Data Details

##### 2.1 Research project data summary

Data is produced from content analysis of interviews. Content includes information related to women's experience of formal and informal work, stakeholder's interpretation of women's economic empowerment. A set of semi-structured discussion prompts (attached with the Application for Ethical Approval) will be used. Interview will be coded and anonymised. No identifying data or information is coded or used

##### 2.2 Will the data be identifiable

- Non-identifiable — data which has never been labelled with individual identifiers

##### 2.3 Will data, including biospecimens, be sent overseas?

No

##### 2.4 Data organisation and structure

Folder structure: Folders are ordered in a hierarchical manner. Data, data analysis and procedural are classified and each of these has its own set of sub-folders including relevant documents.

Each Folders will be named indicating source and type. File naming formats: Discussion2019-11-2.mp3  
Discussion2019-11-2-transcription.docx Discussion 2019-11-2-transcription.docx.

The logical naming format will be applied all files included.

The obtain data information will likely be managed in a various way depending on the source of data. The organisation methods will not be known until the data received from the differ providers.

### 3 Research Project Data Storage, Retention and Dissemination Details

#### 3.1 Storage arrangements

The data storage provisions are outlined in the attached Research Data Management Plan and meet the Curtin University Research Data and Primary Materials Policy.

The Data management plan will involve the plans for collection, storage and security of the data collected as part of the study. To ensure the safety of the data, access to the Curtin University's research R drive will be provided with electronic storage of the data and will include all physical documentation in a digitised format or if recorded on the recording device.

The purchase data information will be stored in the same password protected drive and folder. All hard copy data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the PI's office at Curtin Bussiness School, Bentley.

#### 3.2 Estimated data storage volume

Approx 45GB

#### 3.3 Safeguarding measures

The data will also be save on two offline storage such as encrypted external hard drive.

#### 3.4 Retention requirements

7 years (All other research with outcomes that are classed as Minor)

#### 3.5 Collaboration

It is not anticipated that anybody will need access to any data until the final analysis is completed.

#### 3.6 Data dissemination

The data will be used in PhD's project by the student. An academic journal, conferences, the project website, and any relevant media outlets will be targeted.

#### 3.7 Embargo period

The data will be embargoed from open sharing until the final publication of all academic journal associated with this study project, or 18 months after the conclusion of the research project, whichever come sooner.

Request for data sharing that come before the end of the embargo period will be considered on the case by case basis by the main investigator.