# Indonesian Women's Struggle Towards Transformation: A Case from 'Rusunawa' Community

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#### Abstract

This article discusses roles of women in struggling transformation within their community. As one of governmental policies in 2015 about eradication of slum areas under BasukiTjahajaPurnama ('Ahok') as previous governor of Jakarta, many flats were built and provided to those who became the target of that program. It's called 'Rusunawa'—low cost simple flat. Researchers choose 'Rusunawa' Pulogebang (the first flat located on East Jakarta) as the locus of research. Unfortunately, there are new social problems emerge. One of them is adaptation matter: changing habits from previous location to new situation. Crashed by new system—such as paying room regularly every month meanwhile having no permanent job/work yet—occurs seriously impact until now. Besides that, losing home also keep them traumatic. In such situation, not all people can change their way of life rapidly till some women—driven by awareness—striving for changing the community decisively by various sustainable efforts. Therefore, this qualitative research will analyze the three main ideas in Feminist Standpoint Theory: knowledge, experience and power relation. Intrinsic case study is used to get in-depth inquiry. Also, researchers conduct as participant observers and in-depth interviewers towards key informants and community itself. Finally, based on critical paradigm, the results show that those women succeed to lead the community towards social transformation in health, education, economic, and leadership fields.

Keywords: female actor, flat, empowerment, Feminist Standpoint theory

## 1. Introduction

The government's efforts in regulating of urban settlements must again 'get rid of' marginal society. On 2015, provincial government of DKI Jakarta had to evict slum areas (such as: *KampungPulo, Bukit Duri, Kalijodo, PasarIkan, Bidaracina, Pinangsia, Kemayoran, WadukPuit, Menteng Dalam* and many else). That policy results rejection among many people living under those poverty lines. Even, till the society had been moved to new location—vertical settlement called 'Rusunawa'—still becomes more complicated social reality.

'Rusunawa'—low cost simple flat with different payment from Rp 150.000 until Rp 250.000/month (equals to US\$18 up)—is a new phenomenon for those societies. A new social-world order has been created that gives impact on changing people's perspective. Lifestyle, the way of thinking, habit, behaviour and social interaction that lasted for long time ago collided due to adjustments to the prevailing system. Most of them worked in informal sector whereas having low economic and education level. Meanwhile, 'Rusunawa' (five floor building) is a new odered-system environment. Completed by public facilities, there are heterogenous background of people lived at 'Rusunawa' Pulogebang. Each has different characteristic which can be potential conflict. Also, one of the social issues (till now) is individual's obligation in paying unit routinely. In fact, most of them have no permanent job yet since relocated from slum areas. Even, there are some members of community cannot pay the room since 2016.Ironic, like a circle: 'from poor back to be poor again'. This is still a big problem for the community and government, too.

Wrapped by such situation, women still become part of community who were oppressed and marginalized. They could not fight against the rules. Besides that, the characteristic of community of 'Rusunawa' accommodates people (mostly Javaneese) lives individualistic and less motivated people (includes men's participation).

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Supported by the idea that women are also eligible for having different worldview than men (whereas the worldview is still dominated by masculine forces), women should be able to behave in their social world. They also gain knowledge and maximize their capacity to build power relation among stakeholder, too. Women have their own (specific) experience to solve their problems. The experience which had been formed from the social world ultimately leads to knowledge.

Nowadays, the feminism perspective continues to grow and encourage activists/observers of feminism to actively fight for equal rights of women who also have the same ability with the masculine. Thus, that social reality that these actors face is a part of picture of the social world that cannot be separated from the layers of structure that shelter it. Neuman asserts that the structures are not permanent, but can be developed even can be modified. The mutually negating structures can also compress or complicate the surface appearance of other structures. This perpetual contradiction needs to be regulated through a certain mechanism. The mechanism may contain opposing or contradictory forces or processes; but actually become part of a larger single process (2013: 124-125).

If we look further from the communication side, the picture of above social world underlies the researchers to examine the role of female actors (as communicator). The actors have to fight for themselves in advance in order to prove to the society and the apparatus (government). Although persuasive efforts have not produced the results as expected by the actor yet, long struggle certainly succeeded in incising some achievement to lift the 'degree' of society up at 'Rusunawa' to the next (better) level.

Therefore, this research stands on the science of social critical (critical social science). According to Fay (1987), critical social researchers aim to criticize and change social relations by revealing the sources underlying social control, power relations and inequality. By revealing conditions, critical social research seeks to empower people, especially those in marginal, defenseless societies. Critical social science is also aimed at exposing myths; uncovering hidden truths and helping people improve their lives. So the purpose of the study is to explain the social order in such a way as to be a catalyst for itself that leads to the transformation of the social order (in Neuman, 2013: 124). In other words, the arena is considered as 'struggle' in which human strategy is associated with the affirmation or upgrading of their positions.

In this context, this article will expose woman's standpoint in adapting within new situation ('Rusunawa'). Before, there're many literatures refer to this feminist perspective. In short, standpoint is a place from which to critically view the world around us. Whatever our vantage point its location tends to focus our attention on some features of the natural and social landscape while obscuring others. Standpoint can be called by other synonyms: viewpoint, perspective, outlook, position (Griffin, 2012: 447). The objective of this study is to explore knowledge, experience, and power relation belongs to women while they're struggling transformation within community at 'Rusunawa'.

Introduced by Harding & Wood, Feminist Standpoint Theory is developed vary by some scientists such as Collins (1986), Haraway (1988), Hartsock (1983), Rose (1983) & Smith (1987). Also in some previous study, there were several researches emphasizing the concepts from Feminist Standpoint Theory, namely Changfoot (https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453704044024); Ardill (https://doi.org/10.1080/10383441.2013.10854778); Sandford (https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276415594238); Flatschart (https://doi.org/10.1080/14767430.2017.1313650); Potter (https://doi.org/10.1080/07907184.2012.727399); Mosedale (https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3050); Naidu (https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2010.9676289); Weisman (https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731516668037).

From references before, however, there is none stressing the role of female actor in local society. Thus, this article is important to be known as a part of platform for designing settlement public policy.

# 2. Theoretical Framework

## 2.1 Feminist Standpoint Theory

As stated previously, three main concepts derived from Feminist Standpoint Theory namely: knowledge, experience, and power relation. Here are some definitions given. Harstock (1983) defines: "...the attempt to develop, on the methodological base provided by Marxian theory, an important epistemological tool for understanding and opposing all forms of domination-a feminist standpoint." Hennessey (1995) clarifes: "Marxism's usefulness to feminism is that it understands the social ensemble of economic, political, and ideological arrangements. A feminist standpoint therefore is essential to examining the systemic oppressions in society that devalue women's knowledge". Meanwhile, Hennessey (1995) states as: "Most significantly, in attending to the complex material forces that structure the relations between social positioning and ways of knowing, feminist standpoint theories have challenged the assumption that simply to be a woman guarantees a

feminist understanding of the world" (https://search.proquest.com/docview/198271779/fulltext/51628E60F02B4 EEFPQ/2?accountid=38628).

## 2.2 Opinion Leader

Other concept used to describe the actor is opinion leader. In a community, there will be influencing people. At least, there are two types of opinion leader:

- a) Formal opinion leader (having function in society based on official instruction)
- b) Informal opinion leader (famous/leading person within society or non-official appointed but influencing within society).

These opinion leaders—in this context of research—have so big volume of information that many they know various matters. Also added six criteria to be opinion leader:

- a) Actively participating in some society's problem
- b) Showing dependence from society and having need for society itself
- c) Having firmness
- d) Fluent in speaking
- e) Having self-confidence
- f) Being popular in group and society (Arifin, 2010: 111-112).

### 2.3 Gender in Leadership

This study is also enriched by gender in leadership. Nowadays, there is high tendency in academic interest/ research in demonstrating women's role as leaders. Actually, women have been already spread in various fields of activity such as showed by Vinnicombe, Burke, Blake-Beard, & Moore (2013), Eagly & Karau (2002); Heilman, (1983, 2012), Pew Research Center (2015), Heilman (1983, 2012) and Kumra, Simpson, & Burke (2014) (https://sci-hub.tw/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1999.tb00175.x).

Based on concepts built, we design a simple model to be simplified as a conceptual framework.

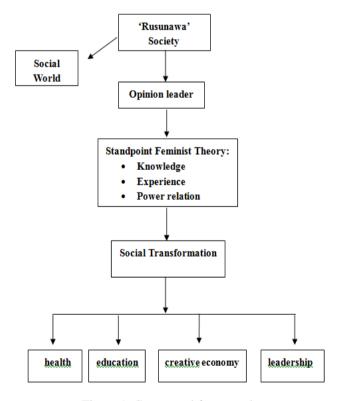


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

# 3. Method

This qualitative research uses critical paradigm—which refers to Marxist. Qualitative research is an inquiry

process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, report detailed views of information, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, pp. 244-245).

Researchers use intrinsic case study as the method. By using exploratory type to develop initial idea to the research problem, researchers rely on participant observation and in-depth interview over two main actors and a group of people in community.

Here are brief descriptions related to the informants. First actor—Mestikasari—has lived at 'Rusunawa' since 2015; secondly, Nurkhasanah has lived since 2016. Both of them come from non-relocation program. Clearly, below are competencies of each:

Table 1. Actor's profiles

Actors	Descriptions	Competencies
		Skillful in health and informal education
A . 4 1	41 years old,	Active and participate in many society's matter
Actor 1	Javaneese	Fluent in speaking
		Have self-confidence
Actor 2	47 years old,	Skillful in creative economic
ACTOR 2	Javaneese	Famous in group and society
		Have firmness

Source: Researcher's observation and in-depth interview

#### 3. Results

In this part, followings are some findings involving actor's role in practice the knowledge, experience and power relation applied to serve the community.

## Actor 1

To improve the welfare of community, many efforts had done. Driven by high awareness about health, first actor—Mestikasari—initiates most of new programs. Since 2015 living at 'Rusunawa', the actor has concerned in health care. Having experience in health practice previously, actor begins to introduce healthy habits to community. Especially for children below 5 years old, actor actively educates hygiene habits such as: washing hand, taking a bath regularly, keeping things tidy, until having nutritious food for the growth. This actor also sustainably stresses the standard of health based on profound knowledge and long experience as a medical staff and nurse in KARTIKA clinic (North Jakarta) since1996. Without any medical background before, actor got training directly from experienced doctors and nurses to treat patients. Briefly, Table 2 shows the roles of actor in creating good standard of life within community.

Table 2. Roles of actor in health (1)

No	Types of activity	knowledge	experience	power relation
1.	Encourage awareness to live healthy	V	V	-
2.	Socialize campaign for "Stop Smoking"	V	V	-
3.	Do monitoring to adolescent lifestyle	V	V	-

Source: Researcher's observation and in-depth interview

As motivator in health sector, actor does a few of socialization through those activities. Lung disease and tuberculosis (examples of danger of smoking) becomes a component of her 'little campaign' to adults. However, in fact, that efforts lead actor to take risk being hostile within the community. But actor never gives up; keeps trying and giving time to cultivate good standard for living healthy. Finally, all of her struggles could be accepted after running within these last three years. Meanwhile, actor also involves herself to protect the lifestyle adapted by teenagers and adolescents. Keeping old perspective up, it is found that most of the community still has negative mindset and behavior; for example consuming drugs and free-lifestyle. Therefore, actor takes time to monitor routenly to avoid bad incident happened. After getting enough information, actor reports to the leader.

Next, supported by her skill, the actor also provides some treatments voluntarily. As seen at table below.

Table 3. Roles of actor in health (2)

No	Types of activity	Knowledge	experience	power relation
1	Support free medicine & consultancy	V	V	-
2	Serve people at home with pleasure	V	V	-
3	Do empowerment	V	V	V

Source: Researcher's observation and in-depth interview

Without hesitation, actor welcomes people in asking help for sickness. By giving free medicine and consultancy, actor sets the living room up to be a place to give treatment for those who need it. Not ending in health field, actor also contributes more in education sector as mentor. Firstly, the participation of students at 'PAUD' (an early childhood education program) can be seen below.

Table 4. Total of student's passing at 'PAUD'

Year	<b>Number of students</b>	Passing	
2016	26	8	_
2017	34	10	
2018	43	15	

Source: Researcher's in-depth interview

Table 4 shows the number of children involved for the last three years. There are many difficulties and constraints in process but cannot stop her way to struggle for the children's need in education. Besides mentor, actor develops many daily activities to encourage them to have willingness to get education. Some activities are listed below.

Table 5. Roles of actor in education

No	Kinds of activity	knowledge	experience	power relation
1.	Encouraging students at class	$\mathbf{v}$	$\mathbf{V}$	V
2.	Making creative activity	${f v}$	${f v}$	${f V}$
3.	Preparing administrative task	${f v}$	${f V}$	${f V}$
4.	Looking for sponsorship	V	${f v}$	V

Source: Researcher's observation and in-depth interview

Table 5 shows the actor's responsibility in running the program. Although completing formal education only until at senior high school level, but driven by higher vision to educate Rusunawa's people, actor initiates to extend the scope of education for other group of people. Supported by the leader of 'Rusunawa', actor develops 'PKBM' (Society Learning Center).

Table 6. Total of student's passing at 'PKBM'

Year	Member	Passing exam
2016	66	63
2017	68	42
2018	19	Still running

Source: Researcher's observation and in-depth interview

Table 6 shows the number of teenager and adult for the last three years. Due to so many drop-out students since most of residents at 'Rusunawa' did not have opportunity to complete education while government demolished their settlements, actor begins to facilitate education programs. "Packet A" (equals to senior high school level), "Packet B" (equals to junior high school level) and "Packet C" (equals to elementary school level) are opened freely. Her efforts impact positively finally. Most of the members can pass the examination and get transcript at the end. As known, that document is still being a part of obligation applied to gain a job. Siti Zulaiha—a jobless single parent feels satisfy for having new job to be a security staff in 'Rusunawa' after passing 'Packet C'. Continuously motivated by actor to complete the studying process at 'PKBM', Zulaiha is an example of woman who dares to gain her dream to get out from poverty by finishing education to have better job. This picture of reality cannot be released from the role of actor, of course. As a mentor, actor has many responsibilities to ensure

the process of studying runs well. As shown below:

Table 7. Roles of actor at 'PKBM'

No	Types of activity	knowledge	experience	power relation
1.	Conducting tutorial	V	V	V
2.	Facilitating student's equipment for studying	V	$\mathbf{V}$	${f v}$
3.	Preparing administration for studying & examination	V	$\mathbf{V}$	${f V}$
4.	Doing consultancy and empowerment	V	$\mathbf{V}$	${f v}$
5.	Giving moral support and solution	V	$\mathbf{V}$	${f V}$
6.	Conducting as supervisor at examination	V	${f V}$	${f V}$
7.	Looking for sponsorship	V	${f v}$	V

Source: Researcher's observation and in depth-interview

Table 7 shows various roles tied to actor. Including last activity inside the table, actor fights in looking for sponsorship to support operational needs. Finally in 2016 through long and fully administrative process—one of the Moeslem's charity agents in Jakarta (BAZIZ)—is ready to help to finance PKBM needs. By this funding, actor can prepare and manage the process of studying, including paying the tutors.

## Actor 2

Following female actor develops economic sector especially creative/home industry. The 2<sup>nd</sup> actor—Nurkhasanah—also practices her skill due to her passion. After living at 'Rusunawa', actor left her early profession as a private teacher. Actor interests to learn autodidactly and successfully produces home-made bags and other accessories (one of the creative industry products). In short, her capability was known by external stakeholders through printed media, television and also new media as seen from this table.

Table 8. Roles of actor in economic sector

No	Type of activity	knowledge	experience	power relation
1.	Initiating, mentoring & evaluating program/event	V	V	V
2.	Making good cooperation with internal leader at 'Rusunawa'	V	V	V
3.	Managing good external relations with stakeholder (media, agent & customer)	V	V	V
4.	Empowering member by giving support, facility and incentive/reward	V	V	V
5.	Giving open opportunity to members for joining program/event	V	V	$\mathbf{v}$
6.	Recruiting women to be member of program/event	${f v}$	V	${f v}$

Source: researcher's observation and in depth interview

Table 8 shows the roles of the 2<sup>nd</sup> actor. Intensively producing things influences other women surrounding at 'Rusunawa'. Step by step, many women offer themselves to be mentored by actor. Without any payment, actor invites whoever to get lesson/practice related to skill of sewing and 'batik'—the last is one of the well-known Indonesian heritage. However, not all of those activities can be managed smoothly. There are some difficulties that inhibit the process of production. One of them is negative attitude/behavior matter preventing getting the success—such as boring and lazy. Most of members just need direct output: payment! In fact, the process of production needs more time—from preparing, finishing and selling to customer—as well as each capacity also must be upgraded to get the best quality. Thus, there are many gaps in knowledge and experience, sometimes make actor gives up. But her leadership mental pushes her to empower women patiently to raise their family economic up to a better condition.

Interest to the actor's competency, finally some agents offer cooperation. One of them is *Jakarta Creative Hub*—an agent founded by government—asks her to be a trainer, giving practice to employee in making creative product. Also, *Jakarta Creative Hub* (JCH) gives opportunity more to the actor to produce orders to be launched widely. Next, actor deals with some projects and surely gets benefit for that effort. The actor can encourage

women to be involved and finally able to produce their own product.

Her successful effort in creative economic side is also treated by Sampoerna Foundation—the largest tobacco company in Indonesia. Pointed out as the coordinator, actor plays her role to supervise events involving all women at 'Rusunawa'. A workshop in doing domestic business held for 4 months (January-May 2018)—conducted by Sampoerna Foundation—sharpens her ability to be opinion leader among the community, especially for women.

## 4. Discussion

The phenomenon explained advance indicates how a new world-order as a reality has begun. From the government, that policy becomes a solution to transform the urban settlement. A 'new face' of Jakarta grows up to be a humane city. Unfortunately—not like other developed countries—government neglects most of the human's capability to be adjusted into new system. Lack of certain skill and knowledge, again, women—in this case—are not ready to compete yet to the environment that still be dominated by masculinity perspective. Having no choice, women at 'Rusunawa' community are still powerless to determine their own fate. Various activities to empower them seem to take any longer time. Until now, they still fight for the fulfillment of their own daily needs. As stated earlier, 'Rusunawa' community is derived from heterogeneous level of society: Moslem is major among other religions; Javaneese is major among other tribes; women are major than men; and poor (because of jobless) are still dominant. From this location, the biggest challenge for actors is changing mindset. In the past, through emotional and tribe bounding as a (big) family, the society lived comfortably within their group for years. It has generally shaped the society less-motivated into new system. They tend to achieve the reality as a destiny without fighting for changing their life since regulated by the structure. In fact, the social location frames different insight to a group of women who care of their society. Unlike masculinity view, those actors strive for helping marginalized women up to interpret their own experience and ability. Those actors will not let the community as receiver of programs proposed by institution only. In contrast, the actors imbue them to make sense their own lives consciously. Hence, emerging actors are able to reach community by persuasive approach. Negotiated efforts on behalf of other (aimed to both internal and external parties) are done to foster the development progress of community itself. By addressing feminine instuition (empathy and patient, for instance), the actors also demonstrate their power in bargaining in a wide range of networking. Often, the actors have to take risk while against to the rulers. Perhaps in doing so, the actors give another woman an opportunity to seize their capacity to improve better life.

# 5. Conclusion

In sum, the communal behavior captured from this article is the practice of social interaction manifested by actors and women in 'Rusunawa' community. The ability to dialogue/persuade/influence the community is the power of feminist standpoint perspective in recognizing women in handling situation. Above all, researchers admit that there are still many flats in Jakarta which haven't been observed yet. This becomes the limitation of this research. We encourage other researches related to marginalized women in struggle for live in a new settlement.

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