

# PRESENTING WOMEN IN POST-INDEPENDENCE HISTORIOGRAPHY: BUILDING THE CHARACTER OF STATE DEFENSE THROUGH THE HISTORY

Ayu Wulandari<sup>1</sup>

Department of History, Gadjah Mada University  
(ayuwulandari99@mail.ugm.ac.id)

**Abstract** – This paper discusses the importance of historical narrative in an effort to grow the character of the defense of the country. This is motivated by the problem of mindset about defending the country, that defending the country is the duty of the Indonesian National Army and Police, and defending the country is only appropriate for men. In this issue, historical studies play an important role in deconstructing people's mindsets. Therefore, this paper offers a solution to build the character of state defense, namely through efforts to present women in post-independence historiography. This paper aims to encourage the dismantling of the exclusion of women's roles in post-independence historiography, because in reality, Indonesian women are involved in the defense of the state after 1945. The results of the research in this paper show that after Indonesia's independence, many women had a role important in politics, the arts, to the health sector. By introducing a narrative about how important the role of women in the history of post-independence, the younger generation will have an awareness that defending the country can also be done by women. Thus, presenting women in post-independence historiography will greatly help the Indonesian people to grow the character of state defense.

**Keywords:** Exclusion, Historical Awareness, Historiography, State Defense, Women.

## Introduction

**T**oday, people all over the world lives dynamically. Military, economic, political, and even biological threats can possibly attack Indonesia at any time. Lately, the world community, including Indonesia, is surprised by the emergence of Covid-19 which spread massively in almost all over the world. Limited health facilities to the absence of proper preparation to address the Covid-19 pandemic are the challenges Indonesia currently faces. Moreover, the number of confirmed positive patients has increased from time to time. In such circumstances, Indonesia certainly needs

the concerns of its citizens. Defending the country, however, is something that must be done during this pandemic. This is in accordance with the Government's statement, that every citizen must play a role to save the country from the spread of Covid-19, in accordance with Article 27 paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution that "Every citizen has the right and obligation to participate in efforts to defend the country".<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, the current dynamics in other fields also require the public to uphold the state defense character. For example, the current trade war between the United States and China has certainly

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<sup>1</sup> History Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University.

<sup>2</sup> Kristomei Sianturi, "Bersatu, Bela Negara Lawan Covid-19", in <https://mediaindonesia.com/read/detail/305145-bersatu-bela-negara-lawan-covid-19>, 18 April 2020, accessed on 6 June 2020.

demanded the Indonesian people to save their country's economy. In fact, internal threats may directly and indirectly endanger the country. The emergence of a fictitious empire in early 2020, for example, tested the community's commitment to defending the country. The reason is, if the phenomenon is left unchecked, there can be cultural fraud, threats to the legality of the Republic of Indonesia, and other threats.

Although various phenomena and events test the commitment of the state defense among Indonesian people, it needs to be underlined that there is still a misunderstanding within the community itself regarding the concept of state defense. In general, there are two major problems regarding misconceptions about the concept of state defense. State defense so far has only been understood as an effort to defend the country through the military by the Indonesian Military Army (TNI) or through the security sector by the Indonesian National Police (Polri). This kind of understanding is reasonable considering that the Government established State Defender Day on December 19, based on the events of December 19, 1948.<sup>3</sup> In fact, December 19, 1948 was the day when the Dutch launched a second military aggression and succeeded in occupying Yogyakarta, which was the capital of the Republic of Indonesia at the time.

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<sup>3</sup> Susanto Zuhdi, "Bela Negara Dalam Perspektif Sejarah Perjuangan Bangsa Indonesia", *Wira*, 2017, pp. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Suryanto Suryokusuma, ed., *Bunga Rampai Konsep Sistem Pertahanan Non Militer: Suatu Sistem Pertahanan Militer dalam Pertahanan*

Establishment of December 19th as National Defense Day makes the public think that state defense is always related to defense and security forces.

In addition, there is also a stereotype that defending the country is only feasible and must be done by men. In fact, basically defending the country is an effort to defend and save the nation and the country from various threats, both military and non-military. These efforts obviously can be done by all groups, including women.

Unfortunately, the character of state defense in the Indonesian people actually declined along with technological advancements and globalization. In fact, the strength of the nation, including the character of state defense, is part of the nonmilitary power of a country.<sup>4</sup> These non-military forces include the people, both men and women. The decline is basically caused by several factors, such as the limited educational curriculum containing state defense materials and the suboptimal actualization of efforts to defend the country.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, the decline is also caused by gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is a stereotype that state defense activities are only suitable for men. Meanwhile, women are considered unable to do much in the realm of nation and state affairs. In fact, the constitution of Indonesia has accommodated gender

Rakyat Semesta, (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2016) pp. 113.

<sup>5</sup> I nengah Suriata, "Aktualisasi Kesadaran Bela Negara Bagi Generasi Muda Dalam Meningkatkan Ketahanan Nasional", *Public Inspiration: Jurnal Administrasi Publik*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2019, pp. 49-50.

equality in daily life. Gender equality so far has only been viewed and positioned in the access to education, employment, economic opportunities, and health, while rarely in the concept of national defense. In fact, in the perspective of national resilience, women actually have a very important role.

Recognizing the gender inequality in state defense, the question would be why does this inequality occur? The answer to this question can certainly be studied from various sides. However, there is one fundamental thing that is of great importance in this issue, namely the historiography or writing of Indonesian history. Indonesian historiography so far is dominated by the role of men, including in the narratives at the times of Indonesian independence which have become a crucial part in efforts to foster the character of state defense. In an effort to maintain sovereignty during the 1945-1950s, narratives about the involvement of women, for example, are rarely presented. In diplomacy, for example, referring to the History of Diplomacy of the Republic of Indonesia from time to time published by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the narration only presents the struggles of male figures such as Ali Sastroamidjojo, Hatta, and other figures who played a role in Indonesia's diplomatic struggle.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, the role of women is only presented in the narrative of social

history, so that women are only considered as extras in the state defense efforts. As a result, there is an idea embedded that state defense can only and must be done by men.

Based on this background, this paper discusses the importance of presenting women in the post-independence historiography of Indonesia, so that the public understands that the character of state defense must not only be fostered in men, but in women as well. Therefore, this paper will describe the role of women in defending the country from time to time.

This research is important because so far there is no study on the urgency of the presence of women in historiography as a solution in instilling the character of state defense. The majority of studies produced by academics are studies that explain the defense of the country from various sides, including nationalism. Meanwhile, the study of women in history is placed separately from the concept of state defense.

As for some studies related to this research, for example, a study by Rachel Rinaldo entitled *Envisioning the Nation: Women Activists, Religion and the Public Sphere in Indonesia*<sup>7</sup>. The study by Rachel Rinaldo discusses the feminization of public space in Indonesia, so that women can work and foster their nationalism through many fields, especially for Muslim women. Then, in *Indonesia and*

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<sup>6</sup> Panitia Penulisan Sejarah Diplomasi Republik Indonesia, *Sejarah Diplomasi Republik Indonesia Dari Masa Ke Masa*, vol. 4, (Jakarta: Indonesian MoFA, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> Rachel Rinaldo, "Envisioning the Nation: Women Activists, Religion and the Public Sphere in Indonesia", *Social Forces*, Vol. 86, No. 4, 2008, pp. 1781-1804.

*Globalization*<sup>8</sup>, Ann Murphy has analyzed the dynamics of Indonesian nationalism in the midst of globalization. The study is assuredly very useful for mapping the state defense efforts carried out by the Indonesian people, including women, from time to time. Furthermore, the concept of state defense which is closely related with nationalism, can be understood through the study of Kramer, that efforts to realize nationalism between one country and another may be different.<sup>9</sup> Kramer gives an example of the French state, which emphasizes nationalism on rationality and freedom. Thus, Indonesia naturally has its own form of nationalism and state defense efforts, according to the applicable law, that every citizen has the right to defend the country. It can be implied that Indonesia recognizes gender equality and the involvement of citizens from various backgrounds in state defense. Regarding other existing studies, the discussion is not much different from the two studies, namely discussing nationalism and discussing the role of women in history separately.

The purpose of this research is to explain the importance of presenting women in the narrative of the history of state defense. Furthermore, this study also analyzes the contribution of women throughout Indonesian history, so that the public understands the importance of women in state defense. In addition, the results of this study are also expected to

encourage policy makers at both the local and national levels to rise women's enthusiasm to participate in state defense efforts through various program activities. It refers to the concept of state defense emphasized in this study, that state defense can be carried out by anyone and is not limited to the military field, but can cover other fields such as economic, social, cultural, health, and political fields.

### **Research Methodology**

This research uses historical research method, namely a research that examines, analyzes, and criticizes records and relics of the past.<sup>10</sup> This research begins with the collection of sources (heuristics), both primary and secondary sources. As for the sources of this research are newspapers, magazines, articles and books that are relevant to research studies. To obtain such sources, the research was carried out by visiting official libraries and sites that can be accessed online. The source was then verified by comparing the contents of one source to other sources in order to obtain credible and trustworthy sources.

After the verification process, the sources go through the interpretation phase. In this stage, each source would be interpreted to extract facts from these sources. After extracting the facts, the final stage of this research is writing the facts into a chronological and reliable article.

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<sup>8</sup> Ann Murphy, "Indonesia and Globalization", *Asian Perspective*, Vol. 23, No.4, 1999, pp. 229-259.

<sup>9</sup> Llyod Kramer, "Historical Narratives and the Meaning of Nationalism", *Journal of the*

*History of Ideas*, Vol. 58, No. 3, 1997, pp. 525-545.

<sup>10</sup> Helius Syamsuddin, *Metodologi Sejarah*, (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak, 2007), pp. 17.

## **Results and Discussion**

State defense efforts have been carried out since the beginning of Indonesia's independence. During the revolutionary period, the efforts became a priority for the Indonesian Government, which at the time was defending the country's sovereignty. These efforts were carried out through various means, namely through military, diplomacy, and social, political, economic, and cultural activities. However, the writing of Indonesian history, especially regarding state defense so far has only focused on efforts through the military field. On the other hand, the narrative of Indonesia's history is also largely focused solely on efforts to state defense carried out by men. As a result, there is discrimination against women in developing the character of state defense. The understanding and development of the character of the state defense by the majority of the community is considered only a duty of men, while women are only responsible for domestic affairs, such as household affairs. In fact, women also played pivotal roles in state defense. In addition, the character of state defense is not only focused on the military field, because through politics, economics, social, diplomacy, and culture, women can also foster the character of state defense.

### **Women and Their Roles in Indonesian Post-Independence Era**

As mentioned earlier, women are excluded in Indonesian historiography, especially those that emphasize the narrative of state defense. This is because the writing of women in historiography is

still influenced by the colonial perspective, where women are important to write when they are involved in the movement against colonialism. While in the historical narrative from independence to reform, the role of women is domesticated. As a result, the role of women in state defense efforts is still excluded. The role of women in various movements, congresses, or through other groups is merely considered as an ordinary social activity and has no significance in state defense. In fact, writing about the role of women as a whole in historiography can reveal the concept of state defense as something that can be and must be done by all groups, including women.

Since the independence revolution, state defense efforts through the military have indeed been carried out by the army and warriors. However, it does not mean that women did not take part in efforts to maintain the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. Women even had a pivotal role in the Indonesian independence revolution, especially in matters of public kitchens and treatment for wounded fighters. Indonesian women during the revolution who were members of Laskar Wanita (Indonesian Women Warriors) also sacrificed a lot during this period. They, for example, had to move to Yogyakarta following the Siliwangi Division's decision after the Renville negotiations, and were forced to leave their homes in areas occupied by the

Dutch.<sup>11</sup> Many of the women afterwards chose to work in public kitchens, the red cross, or carried out other tasks such as being couriers, so that the military struggle could be carried out smoothly. This was conducted solely because of the awareness of defending the existence of the Republic of Indonesia. However, the struggles of these women are often absent in the narratives of Indonesia's national history. Historical narratives have so far tended to glorify the role of men, so that the role of women in the nation's history tends to be marginalized.

In the history of politics, the majority of built narratives also explore the role of men. This happened both in writing the history of domestic politics, as well as on Indonesia's foreign policy. In fact, since the Soekarno era, women have been allowed to be involved in political activities. Women have the right to be involved in elections, as well as the right to represent the people in parliament.<sup>12</sup> Referring to the concept of state defense, women in the Soekarno era is considered to have the character and awareness of state defense. This is evidenced by the emergence of several women leaders who defended the interests of the nation through the political field. In the field of domestic politics, there were women

leaders who were quite dominating the country's defense efforts. The figure is Maria Ulfah, a woman born in Banten, August 18, 1911.<sup>13</sup> The woman who was nominated as a member of the Volksraad was appointed as Minister of Social Affairs at the Syahrir II Cabinet in 1946, as well as being the first woman minister in Indonesian history.<sup>14</sup> As Minister of Social Affairs, Maria Ulfah participated in state defense efforts, especially by fighting for the rights of Indonesian women and progress for women. For example, in 1948, when a big performance was held in Paris, Maria Ulfah invited Indonesian women to produce their works and send them to Paris.<sup>15</sup> Needless to say, what Maria Ulfah did was an attempt to defend the country to show the ability of Indonesian women in the international world, especially at that time when Indonesia was still in conflict with the Netherlands.

Then, in the context of foreign policy, there were also women who also participated in the state defense efforts. She was Supeni Pudjobuntoro, a woman born in Tuban, August 1917. Her name is probably not widely recorded in Indonesian historiography. However, people need to know this female figure so that they, women in particular, are

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<sup>11</sup> Anton Lucas, "Pengalaman Wanita Selama Zaman Pendudukan dan revolusi, 1942-1950", *Prisma*, Vol. XXV, No. 5, 1996, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> Muhadjir Darwin, "Gerakan Perempuan Di Indonesia Dari Masa Ke Masa", *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 2004, p. 287, accessed via [www.jurnal.ugm.ac.id](http://www.jurnal.ugm.ac.id) on June 6, 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Gadis Rasid, *Maria Ulfah Subadio: Pembela Kaumnya*, (Jakarta: Penerbit Bulan Bintang, 1982), p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Itama Citra Dewi Kurnia Wahyu, "Peran Maria Ulfah dalam Memperjuangkan Hak-Hak Perempuan Tahun 1935-1988", *Undergraduate Thesis*, Department of Historical Education, Yogyakarta State University, 2014, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> Yunita Maria Ndoi, "Pemberitaan Perempuan Dalam Koran Kedaulatan Rakyat Tahun 1945-1950", *Undergraduate Thesis*, History Department, Faculty of Literature, Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, 2018, p. 56.

motivated to have the character of state defense. Supeni Pudjobuntoro was initially an activist in the women's movement, just like Maria Ulfah and other female figures. After Indonesian independence, Supeni was active in the Indonesian National Party (PNI). As a PNI member, Supeni had a close relationship with Sukarno. Therefore, it was not uncommon for Supeni to be sent by Sukarno to help the implementation of the Indonesian government.

In the 1950s, Supeni played a pivotal role in Indonesian history. At that time, Supeni was sent by President Soekarno to study the general elections in India, so that Indonesia had a model for a holding election in 1955. Because of her services by visiting and conducting diplomacy in India, Indonesia succeeded in holding the 1955 general elections despite the lack of political knowledge of Indonesian people at that time. Then, Supeni was also one of the women involved in the mission of handover of West Irian, a diplomacy mission that was intensively carried out by Indonesia after the Round Table Conference was held. The persistence of Supeni in defending the country should be emulated by Indonesian women. The reason is, for the sake of successful liberation of West Irian from Netherlands, Supeni visited and met the leaders of Asian and African countries.<sup>16</sup> In fact, for

her services, Supeni earned the nickname *the Irian Lady*.

Supeni's success in her role in foreign policy realm actually gave a distinct impression to the history of the Indonesian people. Because, in the 1950s, many countries still prohibited women from occupying strategic positions in diplomatic efforts. This is because there was an assumption that women were not able to defend the interests of their country in the diplomacy track. In addition, women were also considered as destroyers of male masculinity who have long ruled the world of diplomacy, as Cindy Minoriva-banjac said by quoting ideas from Machiavelli.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, women who get the opportunity to defend the interests of their country through diplomacy, have become important milestones in the politics of the 20th century.

Apart from politics, women also had key roles in other fields during the Soekarno administration. For example, in the field of culture, women were heavily involved in international cultural events. This was because during the Soekarno era, there were ambitions in cultural diplomacy. For example, there was a figure named Sutanti, a woman who has studied classical and contemporary dance at the Tjitra Irama Arts Association.<sup>18</sup> In 1954, Sutanti and other dancers were sent

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<sup>16</sup> Indira Ardanareswari, "Supeni: "Irian Lady" di Balik Operasi Pengambilalihan Papua", in <https://tirto.id/supeni-irian-lady-di-balik-operasi-pengambilalihan-papua-ehsC>, 4 September 2019, on June 8, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Cindy Minarova-Banjac, "Gender Culture in Diplomacy: A Feminist Perspective", *Culture Mandala*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2018, pp. 20-44.

<sup>18</sup> Jennifer Lindsay, "Performing Indonesia Abroad", in Jennifer Lindsay, and Maya H. T. Liem (ed.), *Heirs to World Culture: Being Indonesian 1950-1965*, (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012), p. 191.

by the Government to present Indonesian dances in commemoration of Indonesian Independence Day in Beijing, China. Not only that, Sutanti and other dancers also toured major cities in China to hold Indonesian dance performances.<sup>19</sup> In fact, every event was always welcomed with great enthusiasm of the people in the visited countries. Basically, the role of Sutanti was very strategic to shape the state defense character of the young generation. But unfortunately, Indonesian historiography has not placed Sutanti as an important figure as with the male figures present in historiography.

Besides Sutanti, many Indonesian women indirectly undertook state defense efforts through the cultural field. In the 1950s, the majority of them did utilize cultural diplomacy supported by the Government. In 1955, for example, a Balinese traditional music and dance group was recorded which performed in Czechoslovakia. In the group, seven of them were female dancers.<sup>20</sup> Then in 1959, there was a group of dancers doing a cultural mission in Singapore, of which fifteen were women.<sup>21</sup> In fact, there was an eight-year-old girl, Tjin Yun, who was part of the cultural mission.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the role of Sutanti and cultural activists can also be categorized as state defense efforts. Moreover, the field of culture has certainly become one of the means for

every country to maintain and introduce its identity to the international world.

The Sukarno administration also involved the role of women in efforts to improve the quality of health services. Julie Sulianti Saroso, perhaps her name is familiar to Indonesian people. Her name became the name of a hospital, which even lately often appeared in various media in the context of the news related to the handling of Covid-19. However, Sulianti Saroso is more than just a name for a large hospital, even more than an ordinary female doctor. In the history of Indonesian health, Sulianti Saroso has a role that must be remembered. After the independence revolution, Sulianti, who was then working at the Ministry of Health, received a scholarship from the World Health Organization (WHO) to study maternal and child health governance in European countries.<sup>23</sup> Her achievement in obtaining a scholarship from WHO at the time, certainly impressed the international community. Especially at that time, there were few women who received scholarships from international institutions. In this case, Sulianti Saroso would have participated in defending the existence of Indonesia, which in the 1950s was recovering from the political and economic downturn due to the war.

Her contribution was not only getting a scholarship from WHO. After

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>20</sup> *The Straits Times*, 1 Desember 1955, accessed via [www.https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/) on June 10, 2020

<sup>21</sup> *The Straits Times*, 15 Agustus 1959, accessed via [www.https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/) on June 10, 2020.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Jay Akbar, "Julie Sulianti Saroso bukan Dokter Biasa", in <https://historia.id/politik/articles/julie-sulianti-saroso-bukan-dokter-biasa-PdEk6>, tt., accessed on June 10, 2020.



returning from Europe in 1952, Sulianti Saroso applied her knowledge in maternal and child health in Indonesia. Sulianti Saroso's biggest idea was birth control through sex education and family planning policies. However, the idea was rejected by various parties. However, Sulianti Saroso's ideas in the 1950s however had become the root of the Family Planning program that was implemented later on. Although Sulianti Saroso's ideas were rejected during Soekarno's reign, Sulianti Saroso has endeavored to bring Indonesia's name to the international community to improve maternal and child health in Indonesia. These efforts, if analysed from the present perspective, would certainly be part of state defense.

During Soekarno's administration, generally there was room for women to participate in state defense efforts. A slightly different dynamic occurred during the next administration, namely the New Order under Suharto's leadership. If during the Sukarno administration women had the freedom to take part in politics, the Suharto government restricted women's involvement in politics. This was caused by efforts to purge leftist groups such as the PKI and Gerwani, who were judged to have been involved in the September 30, 1965 Movement. Therefore, the end of Soekarno's reign was also a sign of the end of women's freedom to take part in politics. In fact, the New Order period was considered a time when the domestication of women was intensified massively. As a result, at this time, women

were not much involved in political activities.

Despite experiencing domestication and marginalization from the political field, women in the New Order era still had a place to defend the country through other fields. This was proven by Sulianti Saroso, who was still active in the health sector until the New Order came to power. At the beginning of the New Order administration, Sulianti Saroso worked as Director General of Prevention, Elimination and Eradication of Communicable Diseases. During the New Order era, her role in state defense went very well. In 1967, when the smallpox epidemic hit many countries in the world, Sulianti Saroso succeeded in convincing WHO that Indonesia was free of the epidemic.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the idea of controlling birth rates was also successfully realized by Sulianti Saroso through the realization of the Family Planning (KB) program. For her dedication to the health sector, Sulianti Saroso was even later honored by WHO as President of the World Health Assembly in 1973.<sup>25</sup> Sulianti Saroso had even become one of two women who held this position in WHO's history. This achievement certainly boosted Indonesia position in the international community, as well as showing the world that Indonesian women can participate in efforts to improve the quality of health in their country.

Restrictions in the political field forced Indonesian women to gain achievement and defend the country through the field of culture. Moreover,

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

the Soeharto government since the 1970s sent dancers and traditional music experts to the offices of Indonesian embassies in other countries, especially in countries that have a high interest in Indonesian culture.<sup>26</sup> This is for example done by women who had talents and interests in the field of traditional dance. In fact, it was not uncommon for these cultural missions to be carried out by girls. For example, in 1980, there were Indonesian girls who received awards at cultural competitions in Singapore.<sup>27</sup> These children were under the auspices of the Widyarini Group, and had successfully displayed a good image and resilience of Indonesia in terms of culture.

Throughout the history of the establishment of the Republic of Indonesia until the fall of Soeharto in 1998, it showed that women had a significant role in upholding Indonesia's existence. Unfortunately, narratives about these women are rarely presented in Indonesia's national history. In fact, even in the history curriculum taught at school, narratives about women are rarely presented. Even if it is presented, the women who get the biggest place are those who struggle against Dutch colonialism such as Cut Nyak Din, Christina Martha Tiahahu, and other figures. Meanwhile, female leaders in post-independence era are excluded in Indonesian historiography. As a result, the general public, including the younger generation, only views the state defense efforts presented in the history of

Indonesia as a must for men. Meanwhile, women are only considered as those who only have the duty to take care of children and households.

### **Why Women's Presence in Post-Independence Historiography is Important to Foster the Character of State Defense?**

Based on the previous explanation, women have a pivotal role in state defense efforts throughout the history of Indonesia. However, their role has become less known by the public due to their exclusion in Indonesian historiography. In fact, presenting the role of women in Indonesian historiography is part of the effort to develop the character of state defense.

So far, the role of women in state defense has gained a significant portion in the history of the Indonesian independence movement. Undeniably, women play a significant role throughout the period of the national movement. However, presenting a narrative about the role of women after independence is also very important. Introducing female leaders such as Supeni, Sutanti, Sulianti Saroso, or other women who contributed in upholding the existence of the country after the independence, also play a significant role in refreshing the public's memory of state defense. In fact, the narrative about the role of women after independence should be much easier to use to "indoctrinate" society that Indonesian women are empowered

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<sup>26</sup> Matthew Isaac Cohen, "Three Eras of Indonesian Arts Diplomacy", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 2019, p. 263.

<sup>27</sup> *New Nation*, 4 Januari 1980, accessed on [www.https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/) on Juny 9, 2020.

women who contribute much for their homeland and nation. Moreover, Indonesia is one of the countries that allows women in public sphere. In fact, Rachel Rinaldo in her study said that Indonesia was very open about the history of women's activism and its links to nationalism as a result of the feminization of public space.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, presenting women in historical narratives and placing them in the context of state defense can also balance the close relationship between state defense and militarism. Indeed, we all recognize that military force or TNI is the main force in national defense and security. However, military efforts can not be done by the wider community. Even the efforts to "reform" the historiography can encourage the public, especially women, to think smart in contributing to the country as a form of state defense, for example through product innovation to improve the national economy and prevent Indonesia from economic colonization. This is very useful to keep the Indonesian people away from the Westphalian World way of thinking, which considers all kinds of problems and threats must be resolved militarily.<sup>29</sup> This should be seen as an opportunity to educate the public about the urgency of women in state defense efforts.

Recognizing the urgency of introducing women and their role after Indonesian independence, it is important for academics to rewrite Indonesian

history and present post-independence women in it. When we, the Indonesian people, realize how important the "reform" of Indonesian historiography is, the problem will be what kind of narrative of the role of women should be presented? Therefore, there must be direction in writing women in post-independence historiography. Of course, it is important to note that the narrative of women that should be presented is placing women as people who have roles or as participants, not as a representation of a group. Thus, it is hoped that awareness that women also have a wide space in the history of the nation's journey and that they have a significant role in state defense will arise.

The narrative of women presented in historiography must also include women from all backgrounds. It is to prevent the domination of priyayi or upper middle-class women in historiography, so that historical narratives are not merely about the heroism of great figures. Because in reality, many middle- and lower-class women were involved in state defense. During the revolution for independence, for example, many women in the villages chose to give some of their food to the guerrillas who were in the middle of guerrilla warfare. Narratives about "ordinary women" like that, too, must be presented in historiography. This direction needs to be emphasized so that the writing of Indonesian history does not repeat the writing of colonial history,

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<sup>28</sup> Rachel Rinaldo, *op.cit.*, p. 1799.

<sup>29</sup> Barney Warf, "Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, And Geographical Imaginations", *Geographical Review*, Vol. 102, No. 3, 2012, p. 275.

where women are considered important only when they come from noble circles.

By presenting narratives about women in post-independence era, Indonesia's historical narratives will certainly become more diverse. Thus, historical narratives become more critical and analytical, because they present women who were previously excluded in historiography. This kind of historical narrative will encourage people, especially the younger generation, to have historical awareness. With this historical awareness, historiography which presents the role of women after independence can be useful in efforts to develop the character of state defense.

Sartono Kartodirdjo firmly spoke about the importance of historical awareness. According to him, a nation that does not know its history is a nation that has lost its identity. Therefore, awareness becomes important in nation building. With this historical awareness, moral and social responsibilities will arise towards the nation's development.<sup>30</sup> In line with Sartono Kartodirdjo, Soedjatmoko also emphasized that historical awareness is of interest to the entire Indonesian nation. Given how important historical awareness is, certainly writing history which includes the role of women after independence becomes critical.

Presenting women into post-independence historiography will not

change anything that has happened, except changes in writing androcentric history towards writing androgynous history.<sup>31</sup> In fact, it can be said that the historiography "reform" also did not provide anything for the Government of Indonesia. However, narratives about women will help instill the character of the state defense in the younger generation, especially in women who have so far been excluded from state defense. By getting to know female leaders such as Supeni Pudjobuntoro, Sutanti, or other female figures, Indonesian women have a role model in efforts to defend the country. Indirectly, these efforts certainly encourage young people to have patriotism, nationalism, and the belief that women can participate in state defense efforts. In fact, presenting a narrative about women will also encourage young people to believe in their own nation, namely the Indonesian people. This is because they will understand and "get to know" Supeni with her diplomatic struggle which was not easy, but had succeeded in convincing Asian and African countries to support the liberation of West Irian, or narratives about other female figures as well. In other words, the construction of narratives about the role of women after 1945 will inspire young people to have the character of state defense.

For the indoctrination to make the narrative of the role of women in state

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<sup>30</sup> Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Pendekatan Ilmu Sosial dalam Metodologi Sejarah*, (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2017), pp. 296-297.

<sup>31</sup> Androcentric history writing is writing historical narratives that accentuate the role of men. Meanwhile, writing androgynous

history places men and women in the equal position in historiography. See more at: Reni Nuryanti and Bachtiar Akob, *Perempuan Dalam Historiografi Indonesia*, (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Deepublish, 2019), p. 8.

defense reach the younger generation and encourage them to have a historical awareness of it, one of which is through historical education. Historical education has so far been one of the effective ways to foster historical awareness from an early age. This historical education can be conducted in many ways. The most formal way is certainly through teaching history in school. To introduce women involved in defending the country after its independence, it indeed requires the cooperation of many parties, ranging from historians, education experts, and the Government as policy holders. Another way, it can be through the stories told by parents to their children. However, it should be understood that the story is not just a tale for children alone. The values presented from every woman described must also be instilled in children. With these simple steps, the actual character of state defense can continue to develop in young generation. Women who have been excluded in state defense activities will also realize that women also have an important role in maintaining the sovereignty of the nation and state. Moreover, in modern times, forms of threat to the state are not only limited to the military. War in modern times can be in the form of economic, cultural, ideological, and other forms of wars.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the role of women in state defense through various fields must be increased.

## **Conclusions Recommendations and Restrictions**

The lack of awareness of the importance of the character of state defense is actually a serious issue for the Indonesian people. To address this problem, the use of historical perspective is critical. However, it must be recognized that history is an effective educational tool to instill the values of nationalism and patriotism in society, especially in the younger generation. Therefore, historiography needs to be presented by including the role of women in efforts to maintain the existence of Indonesia after its independence in various fields. In fact, there were indeed many women who contributed to Indonesia, such as Supeni, Sutanti, and other figures.

Eventually, historical writings containing the role of women in upholding the existence of Indonesia, which indirectly also includes state defense efforts, can be included in the national education curriculum. This actually will have a positive impact on learning history in school, because the narration presented will be no longer monotonous, and the younger generation will also be aware of gender equality through historical education.

Thus, it is our important duty, especially academics, to present a narrative about the role of women in the post-independence era in Indonesian history. This narrative will indirectly raise the historical awareness of the young generation, and the female figures presented can inspire them in the state

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<sup>32</sup> Sri Indrayani Umra, "Penerapan Konsep Bela Negara, Nasionalisme Atau Militerisasi Warga

Negara", *Lex Renaissance*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2019, p. 175.

defense. However, this duty is undoubtedly not only borne by historians. Other elements such as educators, governments, and historical activists in communities must also contribute according to their respective capacities. Thus, the historical narrative will be able to foster a sense of nationalism, so that history can also be a reference for the nation to move to protect and defend Indonesia from any types of threats.

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