

The Women Leadership in Discourse of the Indonesian *Wayang Golek*

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Abstract. *Puppets are not only entertainment but also reflect philosophical values. Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu, an Indonesian rod puppet, is full of wise advice, moral teachings, and philosophical phrases about politics and power. In emphasizing gender and leadership, women occupy roles defined in their specific positions within the hierarchy and simultaneously function within the constraints of their gender roles. This study uses the Gadamer hermeneutic for interpretation; the method is based on experience, history, and tradition from a cultural feminism perspective. Research findings show the role and position of women as mothers who nurture and educate their children to be good leaders. Women have complementary roles and positions in their families, but they must be able to be independent. Women also have the right to assemble, rehearse, lead an organization, and have the freedom to make their own choices. Women also have the same abilities as men to become political leaders and have equal opportunities to compete for power. Leadership roles for women are achieved by fighting in the realm of patriarchal norms. Reframing the image of women's political leadership from a gender viewpoint that considers keeping values and principles an operation of feminism seems proper.*

Keywords: *cultural studies, feminism, hermeneutics, wayang golek (rod puppet), women leadership*

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of women leaders is a constant debate. In Indonesia, women's leadership remains filled with pros and cons, in which a part of the Muslim population still disputes *halal* (legal) and views women leaders as committing *haram* (forbidden). In the emphasis on gender roles and the role of leaders, the role of social theory argues that leaders occupy a defined role in their specific positions within the hierarchy and, at the same time, function under the constraints of their gender roles. Gender roles are consensual beliefs about the attributes of women and men.

Men and women are biologically and naturally different based on sex as men and women. Based on psychological and social cultures, however, men and women are distinguished by gender

characteristics: masculine and feminine. The concept of gender is established by society and is revealed by each person in their interactions with others and the local media (Roper, 2019). Gender is more psychological than sex since gender perception is a social and cultural construct, whereas sex just refers to biology or sexual reproduction (Begeny et al., 2020).

Just as feminism was born in the West, Indonesia has had female leaders who had a powerful influence in their time. Regarding a Chinese chapter titled 'Ch'iu-T Ang Shu,' Hsin T'ang Shu was mentioned around 674 when the Javanese people crowned a woman as Queen Hsi-Mo or Sima. Similarly, Queen Kalinyamat or Ratna Kencana is described as a mighty woman of the port of Jepara, and many other female leaders were very influential

in her time.

Journals and publications that present studies on women in various topics still depict highly problematic situations. Liu (2019) focuses on presuppositions and common-sense assumptions because these are claims that text creators consider to be predetermined or given knowledge concerning women; these discuss the dominant ideas about gender relations, femininity, and masculinity that are present in this text as well as the types of discourses that shape and inform it. Arvate et al. (2018) discovered that women are rarely in leadership positions, and if they are, it's often only in the assembly or other auxiliary leadership institutions.

A study in Sauky & Bukhori (2021) highlights the roles played by the *dalang* (a puppeteer) and *wayang golek* (a rod puppet) in power plays, particularly those involving the state and wayang golek audiences. It challenges conventional perceptions of such gender role transitions in women in the shadows by drawing on her experience training as a *dalang* (puppeteer) and conversations with pioneering dalang and prominent artists. It touches on the obstacles these women have faced and continue to face, such as their perceived physicality, training opportunities, family duties, and social responsibilities that affect their power and place in the structures of society as *dalang*.

The word "leadership" describes a powerful and charismatic persona who effectively guides the armed forces, a business at the pinnacle of its prosperity, or the nation. (Pascua et al., 2019). The process of guiding a group and persuading them to accomplish their objectives is known as leadership (Maheshwari, 2023; Epperson et al., 2020). Early theories of leadership concentrated on the behavior of leaders in groups/behavioral theory and the nature of leaders/nature theory (Smith et al., 2024; Pierli et al., 2022; Srivastava

& Nalawade, 2023). From a decisive standpoint, influence, legitimacy, and purpose are the three critical elements of leadership. Influence is the process by which leadership arises, and leadership is an influence. Legitimacy, in the context of leadership, refers to both a formal position of power and the acknowledgment or validation of a leader's position. The purpose of leadership is to address goals (Aaldering & Pas, 2020).

Leadership means power, which has always been synonymous with men. Because women are only the second sex—also often referred to as 'second class citizens' whose existence is not so much considered the social construction that has described two areas of power, namely public and domestic. These domains form a dominating and subordinate picture. Domination is male and subordinate is female. This view makes it difficult for women to appear as leaders. Management and leadership will not be very different from men. We noted several female leaders who became leaders, such as Margaret Thatcher in England, Indira Gandhi in India, Cory Aquino in the Philippines, Megawati in Indonesia, and other female figures.

Gender is the distinction between men and women in terms of conduct and values (Liu, 2019). Terminologically speaking, cultural expectations for men and women might be characterized as gender (Aaldering & Pas, 2020). Feminism proposed an alternative definition of gender: the distinction between men and women based on societal constructs (Ifadhah & Irwansyah, 2022).

Gender theory is applied to examine this matter and is derived from ideas created by specialists in domains connected to gender issues, particularly the social and psychological domains. As a result, many different theories have been applied to this topic. Gender is not explicitly studied using

one theory. Gender theories originate from theories created by specialists in domains connected to gender issues, mainly sociological and psychological theories (Epperson et al., 2020). The theories are Liberal Feminism, cultural feminism, Marxist-Socialist Feminism, Radical Feminism, Eco-feminism, and Psychoanalysis Feminism. One of the feminist thoughts is cultural feminism, which focuses on the differences between men and women. This school of thought aims to give recognition equivalent to the moral sounds of women in caring and communal values.

Regarding feminism, women's physical characteristics—particularly their thought processes—are the primary source of explanation for why they behave the way they do. Feminism frequently makes the case that there might be biological, psychological, or cultural distinctions between male and female masculinity (Maseda et al., 2022). Feminists contend that boys and girls develop unique gender values and virtues as they mature, reflecting the significance of attachment in the lives of women and separation in the lives of men, and serving to marginalize women and strengthen males in the patriarchal society (Roper, 2019).

Bankert (2020) contends that being compelled to care for someone on an economic, social, or psychological level prevents one from genuinely caring about them. Women's oppression is caused by a value system that is given a specific cultural meaning. Indeed, this objective understanding does not apply to the whole community because there are also people who placed the status and position of women respectfully long before gender equality issues were widely raised. We can find it in classical Sundanese culture.

The word Wayang comes from the word "Ma Hyang" which means going to the spiritual spirit and gods. Wayang

golek (rod puppet) is in the wayang, each character is a reflection or representation of human attitudes, characteristics, and character in general. There is kindness, compassion, love, hate, dispute, greed, and other things including good and evil (Sauky & Bukhori, 2021). Thus, wayang is a communication medium used to convey significant messages, such as religious teachings, political views, moral messages, or other messages, including the role of women.

Currently, journals and papers demonstrating research on women in various issues still show quite problematic conditions. Based on this background, the focus of this paper is to discuss the construction of the meaning of the wayang golek performance of Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu by interpreting women's leadership in the wayang plot. It will analyze the construction of women's positions in families, public spaces, and politics. The presuppositions and common-sense assumptions are propositions that producers of texts take as already established or "given" knowledge concerning women; they address which prevailing notions of femininity, masculinity, and gender relations abound in this text and which kinds of discourses help reshape and inform it. Women infrequently occupy leadership positions, possibly only in the assembly or auxiliary institution of leadership.

METHOD

This study uses hermeneutics to evaluate the content review process and the intention that emerges from a book to reveal its most profound and hidden meaning. (Prakoso, 2020). The primary tenet of Gadamer's hermeneutics, which is applied in this research, is that experience is always understood in light of estimates and presumptions (Gillo, 2021). This paper synthesizes the literature on hermeneutics as a theoretical framework

for qualitative research. Thought, comprehension, and observation are all influenced by our experiences and are not always objective.

The hermeneutic method was chosen because the researcher wanted to interpret the role and position of women in the leadership discourse contained in the story of Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu. The text will not be separated from the events that occurred during the play on Sundanese and Islamic traditions that influenced the text. The unit of analysis of this study is the Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu in the form of storylines, dialogues, monologues, and other related components that can be presented such as puppet plat itself, cultural and political conceptualization, and women leadership in the Sundanese community.

Data analysis includes reduction, display, and conclusion drawing/verification. In the data reduction stage, researchers will reduce the text based

on the research focus, namely the role and position of women in the family, the role and position of women in the public sphere, and the role and position of women in politics. Meanwhile, secondary data focus is used as a reference when concluding. In the conclusion stage of drawing/verification, we use the hermeneutic method to find the meaning of this text. We will continue the dialogue by focusing on three aspects to reveal the meaning of the text to be studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural and Political Contextualization of Rod Puppet Shows

FIGURE 1 shows the actors in the Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu storytelling. The Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu is a *wayang golek* play that tells the story behind the elevation of Arimbi as a queen in the Pringgandani Kingdom. This play is a *wayang carangan* performed by *Dalang* Asep Sunandar Sunarya and a fragment



Source: Research results
FIGURE 1. The Actors in the Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu Story

of the Mahabharata story. A *carangan* is a *wayang* play out of the standard of Mahabharata or Ramayana. The setting of the story is after the attempted assassination of Pandawa by the Kurawa, long before the Great War of Baratayudha. The puppet play is divided into two parts in *wayang* performance, the *galur* and the *carangan*.

Puppet shows are often performed at any event and on any occasion by the community or government agencies. During the Wali Songo period, *wayang* was used as a medium of *dakwah* (missionary endeavor) by the propagators of Islam. Sunan Kalijaga used the art of *wayang* to attract people to embrace in Islam. By that time *wayang* became a communicative medium to accelerate Islamic *dakwah*, especially in the Javanese community.

The *wayang golek* in the Babad Java occurred in approximately 1548 when Sunan Kudus introduced a wooden puppet culture, which came to be called a puppet show. The development of *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet) resulted in *wayang golek* (rod puppet). Sunan Kudus made *wayang* from wood material and then staged the shows in the afternoon. This is believed to be the beginning of the emergence of wooden puppet art that was born and developed in the northern coastal area of Java Island at the beginning of the 17th century, where the oldest Islamic empire in Java grew, Demak Sultanate. According to a growing legend, this is where Sultan Kudus used *wayang* with Javanese dialogue as a medium to spread Islam in the community.

Wayang Golek has functions that are relevant to the community environment, both entertainment and spiritual needs. This can be seen from several activities in the community accompanied by the performance of the *Wayang Golek*, for example, celebrations, weddings, festivals, harvests, grateful events, circumcisions, and others. One of the functions of *wayang* in Sundanese

society is to “*ngaruat*”, which is to cleanse everything, both people and the village environment from all disasters. The *wayang golek* show does not only act as a means of entertainment, but also contains values that can be learned for life that not only for spiritual or religious matters, but is also concerned with personal ethics of life, even politics.

There are several factors why *wayang* is used as an effective political propaganda media. First, *wayang* is a folk theatre to entertain the audience, especially the lower middle class. Secondly, the puppet shows absorb a lot from the lower middle class as a potential voter base in the upcoming elections. Third, the puppet show displays the knights choose a match that is the pride of the audience; it is very possible that the candidate identifies with the knight in the puppet show which the characters well known.

Wayang lovers come from the lower middle class. In the beginning puppets were purely folk-art entertainment. *Wayang* was performed by the *prijajis* (aristocratic) in the palace or regency environment for personal or public purposes. Recently *wayang* performances have some varieties of purposes, ranging from the nature of ritual, or in the context of spectacle or mere entertainment. *Wayang* is *sidir jeung siloka*. It means that the *wayang* plays using indirect language in the delivery of its message and uses parables that are symbolized of audience storyline.

During the New Order era (popular as *Orde Baru* is a government model that came to power under President Suharto after the end of the Old Order/*Orde Lama* in 1965.), former President Suharto used the services of the *dalang* for government propaganda. The government’s intervention in *wayang* shows was very clear during the 1987 elections. In New Orde, the Pancasila, the ideology people from Republic of Indonesia were disseminated in various educational media, both formal and informal.

Wayang is a traditional art media that has a function to disseminate the values of the Pancasila. On January 21, 1995, the *dalang*, through the management of *Persatuan Pedalangan Indonesia* (Indonesian's Puppeteer Association) and *Sekretariat Nasional Perwayangan Indonesia* (National Secretariat of Indonesian Puppetry) were asked to compile a puppet that could describe the identity of the nation which is rooted in the value of self-control.

Soeharto also gave instructions that the *dalang* could present the puppet play whose main role was Semar. As a clerk and servant of the Amarta Kingdom, Semar represents the ordinary people with power and intelligence, representing the lower class. He is constantly focused on virtue, truth, and justice. Semar gives advice to knights who are in danger; if a knight exhibits excessive aggression or emotion, Semar braces him and prevents him from taking careless actions (Sauky & Bukhori, 2021).

Each puppet has its own character which is generally grouped into 2 large groups, good and bad characters. In each puppet show, these two groups of characters with different characters are always confronted with each other. There are two seminary puppet stories, those taking from the Mahabharata war, which confront figures from the Amarta Kingdom with figures of the Astina Kingdom who are confronted as two opposing groups. The Amarta Kingdom figures with their Pandawa figures are grouped in the protagonist group, while the figures of the Astina Kingdom with their Kurawa figures are classified as an antagonist group. A good character (protagonist) always appears from the right side, while the opponent (antagonist) from left.

Puppet characters are one of the tools used by *dalang* to express criticism. The use of puppet figures is a symbolism of the social and political realities that existed at that time. The state is

symbolized by conditions in the Amarta or Astina kingdom. The protagonist of a puppet play was also linked to the dynamics of the prevailing social and political environments (Prihatini, 2019). For example, how a complicated journey must be passed when Megawati Soekarnoputri became the fifth president of Republic Indonesia.

Megawati Soekarnoputri became history as the first female president in Indonesia. Megawati served as Chair of PDIP (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan/Indonesian Democracy Party of Struggle) for several periods. Although PDIP won the highest vote in the 1999 general elections, Megawati did not automatically become president. At that time, Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) was elected by the MPR (*Majelis Permusyawarata Rakyat/ People's Consultative Assembly*) as president, and Megawati as vice president. The riot that occurred during Gus Dur's leadership made some people angry. In a special session of the MPR on July 23, 2001, was by acclamation Megawati replacing Gus Dur.

The most logical explanation for why the story of Arimbi makes its similarity with the events that occurred at the beginning of the reform because the PDIP, led by Megawati Sukarnoputri who won the 1999 election, was unable to become president because of losing the presidential election due to the coalition in the presidential election in the MPR (White & Aspinall, 2019). Therefore, Arimbi's story becomes inspired by what makes a woman's requirements to be a leader is in the support of the people. Gender differences do not make the position of women and men in politics different rights but are considered equal and have opportunities to achieve power (Bayo, 2021).

It is our collective responsibility to guarantee that women have equal opportunity to progress in life and that female candidates effectively represent

the views of women. Many feminists believe that female-style leadership has the capacity to be more perceptive and useful in identifying systemic problems that impact women (Smith et al., 2024). Compromise, empathy, and other feminist ideals must rule the political and public arenas. Nonetheless, it is a common observation in the field that many campaigns run by female politicians or candidates are gender-neutral and do not openly and confrontationally address women's issues due to fears that if they are elected, the exclusive labeling of these issues will result in prejudice and discrimination (Srivastava & Nalawade, 2023). Political agendas are frequently formulated quickly, with women's issues brought forward primarily for electoral purposes. One crucial point that has to be addressed is if putting women in elite leadership roles will assist the general female population as well (Pierli et al., 2022).

Women Leadership in Sundanese Community

The majority of Sundanese are Muslims in the atmosphere of everyday life, education, and culture is full of Islamic values. Strong family ties and the role of the Islamic religion greatly influenced their customs throughout their life. The kinship structure in Sundanese communities is founded on parental or bilateral foundations (Yuliawati & Ekawati, 2023). Small families consist of fathers, mothers, and children. The father acts as the head of the family and the wife supports the husband's role. But the position of the mother is higher than the father. Sundanese customs attribute all models to man and regard (honor) them over women (Nurlimah et al., 2020).

Refer to history; Sundanese women get a noble place as the following expression: "*indung tunggul rahayu, bapa tangkal kadarajatan*". That is, the mother is the key to safety; father is the carrier of prosperity. The purpose of

this understanding is no happiness and safety without a mother's prayer. This is reinforced by another phrase "*indung nu ngandung bapa nu ngayuga, nya munjung lain ka gunung tapi ka indung, muja lain ka sagara tapi ka bapa*". The significance of this expression implied there would be no child without a mother, if flattering should go to the mother, adore should go to the father. But here the word mother takes precedence over the father.

The concept of Sundanese expressions above is in line with Islamic values. In Islam, it is also mentioned that heaven is at the foot of the mother. The father's name was revealed in the holy Quran just once, whereas the mother's name was revealed three times, even as a sign of respect for women. The Islamic principles taught by the Prophet Muhammad are also present in the Sundanese ideals that have been taught for a very long time (Prihatini, 2020).

The living philosophy of the Sundanese people, known as *cageur*, *bageur*, *bener*, *pinter*, and *tur singer*, has been acknowledged as having profound significance (Nurlimah et al., 2020). *Cageur* means healthy physically and spiritually. *Bageur* behaved well, polite, friendly, and well manners. *Bener* is honest, trustworthy, merciful, and pious. *Pinter* is knowledgeable. *Singer* means creative and innovative. The Sundanese values raised from the characteristic of women are "*moher*". *Moher* is *demplon* or a picture of a good and beautiful woman. This characteristic of women is then interpreted broadly as something beautiful, pleasing and because of the creativity of each person in accordance with their personal characteristics.

The Sundanese leadership requires at least three basic things that must be owned, namely: *nyantri*, *nyakola*, and *nyunda* (Fajrussalam & Hasanah, 2018). The leader must be spiritually intelligent, which is described by the phrase *nyantri* (behaving like a *santri*)—spiritual mental maturity makes a

trustworthy leader. *Nyakola* is thinking like an educated human being becomes a representation of intellectual intelligence. A leader approaches every activity with a sound rationale and demonstrating the significance of a set of basic values that leaders and aspiring leaders need to possess (El Adawiyah et al., 2020; Setzler, 2018).

Effective leadership is increasingly linked to feminine traits including as motherly, sensitive, empathic, intuitive, compromising, cooperative, accommodating, and cooperative. Women who have the qualities of effective leaders suffer significant challenges and poor career mobility, despite the fact that these qualities are innate and extremely important. When women aspire to senior leadership positions, they must confront the challenges posed by sexism. Megawati is a prime illustration of the extent of the misogynistic backlash she faced throughout her presidential carrier.

Women reflect leaders who can unite with members sincerely (*ngumawula ka wayahna*), individuals who do not behave badly (*teu ningkah*), do not show an attitude of pride to others (*teu adigung kamagungan*), do not like to be enlivened with splendors (*teu paya diagreng-agreng*), wise and fair (*agung maklum sarta adil*), and impossible corruption (*cadu basilat*).

In particular, the ideal figure for leadership of Sundanese women includes being virtuous, kind, independent, and maintaining honor. Sundanese women leadership avoids from “*haripeut ku teuteureuyeun*”. That is staying away from greed, corruption, or collusion. In other cases, leaders must also undergo a decision-making process. The lavish Sundanese maintained philosophy has a virtue, which states that a leader shouldn't act hastily or quickly (Nurlimah et al., 2020). The key in Sundanese philosophy in term of women leadership can be found in phrase, “*nyalindung ka gelung*”. *Nyalindung* means protection

to take refuge, give up, entrust your life to something or to someone's wife. The widely meaning of the expression *nyalindung ka gelung*, does not want to try, rely on, self to the income of his wife, or mother-in-law.

The dialog depicts the reluctance of Bima as a husband to depend on a wife by deciding to leave Pringgondani: “*Emung cicing di tempat awewe, bari jeung diparaban ku awewe. Bari aing teu usaha, bisi disebut nyalindung ka gelung. Nya kapaksa we init nyangsara apruk-aprukan, sabab lamun cicing wae di nagara Pringgandani bari jeung eweuh gawe bari jeung barang hakan ladang hasil kesang awewe, hukumna nu kitu dayus.*” (Do not want to stay in this place and be supported by women. I do not work, later called life pass. I am forced to go through difficult times because if you stay silent in the State of Pringgondani without work and only eat because of your wife, the law is dishonorable). This conversation suggests that there are situations in which a spouse or man's leadership does not function at its best. In these situations, women are remarkably skilled in preserving the continuity of men's leadership. Because of their aptitude for leadership, women have excellent chances to make significant contributions in both the public and home spheres (Perdana & Hillman, 2020).

Politics is a strategic vehicle for improving the quality of women's resources. Women leaders certainly know more about what their people need. Women's leadership is worth delay in the political field has been exemplified by the predecessors who became proud. It is also indisputable that a woman in politics may lead with determination. Female leaders have traits that are typical of women who are firmly ordinary and humorous when raising children in the home (Takyar, 2019). Naturally, women leaders have two roles to play: housewives and working women with the ability to make important decisions (Oskooii, 2020). Arimbi can be

a role model for women leaders; she can manage her family and the state with the minimum support. Her experience should be an inspiration for women leaders in the future.

Women's leadership will be an alternative model of leadership based on the superiority of local culture to face globalization. Women's leadership in politics is something that must be achieved, not gifts, or distributed. Women's leadership emerges and can align itself with men when the female leader has a high competence. Women leadership is recognized just if their achievement is shown by bringing the organization goals. Reflecting on Sundanese women leadership which is seen from the characteristics of women is "*moher*", which is a picture of good and beautiful but can also be relied upon as partners of men. These characteristics of women are then interpreted broadly to something beautiful, pleasant, and cool for various parties because of their creativity because of them to manage competences.

Discussion

Wayang golek reflects human life in historical context by the development of its stories and supporting elements of production, including setting, characterization, music, and dramaturgy; it must always be topical (Sauky & Bukhori, 2021). The puppet is a *sidir jeung siloka*; this is a phrase or a saying with a beautifully worded word with a broad meaning. The origin of the *siloka* was delivered so that the message is not understood directly by ordinary people. What is illustrated in the *wayang golek* tale Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu reflects the Indonesian people, especially the Sundanese culture, in which the role of women is taken seriously, and their position is equal to men.

Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu is one of the plays in *wayang golek* staging that is the most suitable for use in interpreting the

events of leadership in Indonesia at the beginning of the reform period in 1998. As the *Wayang Carangan* play, the story plot of this play takes the setting of a story like during the election of the fourth president of Indonesia in the early of reformation (Abdurrahman Wahid—Gus Dur, who later was replaced by Megawati Soekarnoputri). The discourse about *wayang* language and dialog embodied the shift between the New Order and Reform model. In this era of reform, it has a chance for *dalang* to narrate the nation's conflicts by debating problems openly and transparently.

The significant task a *dalang* actualized the *wayang* plot is through tropicalizing political issues by telling stories that reflected actual figures and events. *Dalang* maintains that all plots can be made topical to the time, refers to how they shape *wayang* performances. Some plots are naturally more political issues, such as the topic of Indonesia's presidents in the post-Soeharto era. Gus Dur was impeached in July 2001 and replaced by Megawati Soekarnoputri, Indonesian's first president. The plot of Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu could not possibly miss the links between *wayang* characters and Megawati's political figures.

Because the *dalang* prefers to perform the plot *carangan*, a *wayang golek* puppet created by the puppeteer, the plot is rarely produced. The government, one of its main backers, employs the *dalang* as "information officers," but "their popularity and appeal"—which they require to gain success as *dalang*—"largely depends on their ability to represent the voices of ordinary people" (Sauky & Bukhori, 2021).

Affirmations and the validity of Arimbi's leadership are also recognized and implemented by everyone, whether by state, family, and society. Purbakesa declares that all decisions now are in the hands of Arimbi as queen. Ability and punishment can be done only by Queen Arimbi. With this, government, law, and

state regulations do not see gender at all but are concerned only with the legitimacy of government. This means that both men and women can become leaders, and the decision is considered equal.

Recognition of the role and position of women in politics is seen in the depiction of the *wayang* story, as Cepot, as the people, invites other fellow societies to support the government and support the policies that will be issued by Queen Arimbi. An affirmation by the people is a compliment and affirms the legality and equality of women in politics. The story of *wayang golek* Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu does not specify gender differences in political affairs.

In the story of Mahabharata, dominated by patriarchal culture, Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu's plot breaks the patriarchal culture with the figure of Arimbi. None of the female characters in the Mahabharata story who have a significant role can obtain a position as a queen who has independence in her power. Although Kunti and Drupadi are queens, their rule was obtained only because of their husbands' positions as kings.

Dewi Kunti is a tragic character who has a heroic nature. Dewi Kunti emerged from the time of the explosion of the ancient history of Mahabharata. Kunti is the wife of Maharaja Pandu and the mother of five famous sons, named Pandawa. Dewi Kunti is one of the important figures in a complicated political dispute. Political fights culminated in the Kuruksetra war fifty centuries ago, a fierce war of power that changed the course of world history. Although the suffering is much heavier than what can be withheld by ordinary people, Kunti does not ask for relief. Instead, Dewi Kunti prayed that she could suffer more, for she considered her suffering would increase her devotion to Krsna, who eventually granted her release.

Dewi Drupadi is the symbol of a faithful and resilient woman against all kinds of suffering, even though she

is the king's daughter. There was no complaining after marriage to Puntadewa. Dewi Drupadi had time to live as a traveler outside the jungle. In Indian mythology, Drupadi became the wife of the five Pandavas. Even then, it was not unusual for a woman to marry five husbands, but they share a wife on behalf of the promise of knights of the Pandawa.

Dewi Arimbi is a figure known as a beautiful princess who has an honest, faithful, and caring character. The figure of goddess Arimbi is described as a manifest giant female. Arimbi is a person who teaches that sincerity is more beautiful than physical manifestations of beauty, and perhaps a virtue that women have forgotten in the modern era today. The Arimbi figure that became a story of folklore and growth in this homeland would need to serve as an example for women to refine further attitude and character, rather than simply highlight the physical advantages and be grateful for them.

The original Indonesian sees the role and position of women in politics (Aspinall et al., 2021). The female characters in the Mahabharata epic only gain authority *de facto*, and spouses and children are merely tools to achieve objectives, clarifies in his book about Mahabharata women. In contrast to them, Arimbi is able to acquire both *de jure* and *de facto* power thanks to this plot.

The era's development has been demonstrated, acknowledging the equality and aptitude in politics (Prihatini, 2020). She explained that *ulama* (religious leaders) in classical times viewed the position of women as second-class citizens and that they were not entitled to be appointed leaders. However, in changing times, women have been able to show this ability as equivalent to men. Therefore, there is no reason for scholars to view women as part of a marginalized society. This is influenced by the condition of society so that perceptions about women experience changes by receiving female

leadership. That cannot be separated from influential changes and patterns of life for the community on the development of thought scholars in Islamic law, especially regarding leadership. In order to compete with males on an equal basis in today's economic sectors, women need to be confident, assertive, independent, and maybe individualistic, prioritizing their own needs over those of the community (Sobari, 2016).

The evident shifts that define the contemporary social landscape have led to a reexamination of political leadership models, which prioritize power over community needs. Presently, the community's survival depends on the new and critical awareness that public have assumed about the impacts created by public activity in the surrounding context, making the exclusive political communication orientation dangerous and inadequate. Thus, paying attention to the relationships with various social actors becomes crucial to success and necessitates incorporating social needs into political communication strategies in order to achieve a lasting effect. Thus, the focus on relationships with various social actors becomes a crucial success factor that necessitates the inclusion of social needs in political communication strategies in order to achieve a lasting and growing attention. This attention has become the center of a significant and defensible competitive advantage in politics, academia, and gender debate.

CONCLUSION

Although *wayang golek* is a small part of a larger social process, these micro-social struggles can help us understand what occurs in cultural practice. The production of meaning in *wayang golek* through language, discourse, and music are intersected by social struggles over culture and power. These injustices indicate that women's position in social life is still weak. The position of men is still dominant and strong in social

life, politics, and culture. Aristotelian philosophy views women as inferior human beings. This perspective is based on the creation of Eve as the last and least "posterior et inferior".

Women have an equal role and position to gather and organize, as well as to form organization and lead an organization. The *wayang golek* of Arimbi Ngadeg Ratu constructs equality and equal opportunity with men in their roles and positions in politics, equality, and opportunity, and gained legal recognition so that both men and women have equal opportunity to compete de facto and de jure. The movement of feminism as a wave of the women's movement aims to create a just and caring society of gender equality. Only in such a society can women and men develop themselves. This feminist view assumes that there is no difference between men and women; it is culturally difficult to align the role of women so that they have the same rights as men.

Reframe the picture of political leadership with a gender perspective that is sensitive to values and principles and pays attention to daily practice. In the context of a changing and dynamic world, the presentation can be used as an example of other leaders' success stories and can strengthen the importance of feminine values at the core of women's leadership. Further studies, a critical paradigm, or other research methods are recommended so that another point of view can be obtained in understanding the role and position of women sourced from other cultures. In enriching the study of communication science, researchers should further examine the source of cultural and local wisdom to apply results in everyday life.

Leaders who are women enjoy the same privileges as males. Though they are no longer viewed as gentle figures, women still have a significant role in families, businesses, and society at large. Placing women in the same position as

men in all spheres of life—apart from leadership roles—is consistent with gender ideals and change. Gender issues demonstrate that distinctions between the sexes in terms of organization are minimal. If gender and style are linked, leadership demonstrates a particular style that is exclusive to women. Not due to gender disparities, but rather due to aspects related to work characteristics. These work-related traits are connected to the leadership styles of women. It was discovered that there is women's leadership styles as a feminist leadership.

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