

The impact of an Australian higher education on gender relations in Indonesia.

Ms Kim Edmunds
The Centre for Teaching and Learning
The University of Newcastle
NSW, Australia
Email: Kim.Edmunds@newcastle.edu.au

Abstract

This paper examines gender and the social change impact of an overseas education for a group of Indonesian graduates of Australian universities. Twenty five respondents participated in this research, the majority being Australian Development Scholarship (ADS) recipients from the University of Newcastle. Data collected by survey questionnaire and interview are analysed in relation to the impact of an overseas education on gender relations and social change in the family, community and workplace. It was evident from the study that gender and culture have become increasingly salient and fluid, however, despite the progress made towards gender equity, the core structure of gender beliefs has not changed. While there was evidence of the social change impact of their overseas education and the hybridisation effects of globalisation, considerable gender bias and inequality still persist as a result of hegemonic cultural beliefs about gender.

Keywords

Gender relations, social change, globalisation, hybridisation, hegemonic cultural beliefs

Introduction

Globalisation is profoundly changing the way we live, influencing everyday life as much as events that take place on an international or worldwide scale. Interactions across regions, countries and continents transform the organisation of relations at the local, national, regional and international levels. Globalisation means competing conceptions of order and the position of culture is important within that; it involves increasing global and local complexity, what Pieterse (1995, p.45) refers to as "a process of hybridization." Institutions tend to replace traditions with regulations and guidelines that compel self organization (Beck 2001). As Beck (2001) points out, individuals become actors and managers of their lives, building social links and networks often with a "polygamy of place". While the power of culture is acknowledged, the impact of globalization and an overseas education cannot be ignored as traditional social order declines in developing countries due to the emphasis of the individual.

One aspect of globalisation being experienced in most parts of the world is that more women are seeking greater autonomy, entering the workforce and becoming educated (Giddens 2002). The recognition in the last half of the twentieth century that gender inequities are an issue in development has contributed to greater access to education and employment for women in developing countries. Such changes have the potential to have a profound impact on gender relations within the family, community and workplace, challenging the existing culture and traditions. The internationalisation of education is another consequence of global processes that can transform and contribute to changes in culture and traditional ways of life. In terms of international education, Australia is a popular education destination for students from Indonesia. The Australian government also has a considerable commitment to the provision of education aid to Indonesia via higher education scholarships. Australia's gender equity policy ensures that half of these scholarships are awarded to women (AusAID 1997; 2002). What then, is the impact of a higher education gained in Australia on social change and gender relations in Indonesia?

This paper will begin with a discussion of the importance of gender in development and how, in a globalised world, recent initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), have led to greater access to resources, such as education, for women. Indonesia's response to the MDGs will be examined in this regard and factors impacting on the social construction of gender in Indonesian society will briefly be described. Data collected by survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview will then be analysed in relation to the impact of an overseas education on gender relations and social change in the family, community and workplace for returned Indonesian graduates of Australian universities. The specific questions this paper will attempt to address are: Given the existing gender relations in Indonesia, is the impact of an overseas education different for

women, than it is for men? How does an overseas education impact on gender relations and roles, and what effect does this have on the family, community and workplace?

Gender and Development

Connell (2002), focussing on the social relations aspect of gender, claims that gender is reproduced socially by the power of existing structures and, for this reason, often appears to be unchanging. He claims, however, that gender structures are always changing, as humans create new situations. Ridgeway and Correll (2004, pp.510-511) add further dimensions to gender, saying that it "involves cultural beliefs and distributions of resources at the macro level, patterns of behaviour at the interactional level, and selves and identities at the individual level." This would seem to suggest that development, and particularly an overseas education, would have the potential to impact on gender relations.

The World Bank (2001) identifies gender equality as a core development issue and the most recent global agenda to arise from this recognition of the fundamental importance of gender equality has been the ratification, in 2000, by 189 nations, of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (AusAID 2006), a synthesis of the most important commitments made at summits and conferences in the previous decade to be achieved by 2015. Goal 3, of particular relevance to this paper, is to promote gender equality and empower women.

Indonesia has achieved considerable progress in addressing the third MDG, the target of which is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. Looking at the first indicator, the ratio of girls to boys at all levels of education based on net enrolment, Indonesia has almost achieved gender equity, with parity at the primary level and higher female enrolment at the junior secondary level of education (NDPA 2004). There is slightly lower enrolment of girls at senior secondary level possibly due to socio-cultural reasons, such as gender stereotyping and willingness of parents to pay for education for girls or to allow them to study any distance from home. Tertiary enrolment ratios for girls were close to 93% in 2002, possibly lower for similar reasons to those mentioned for secondary education.

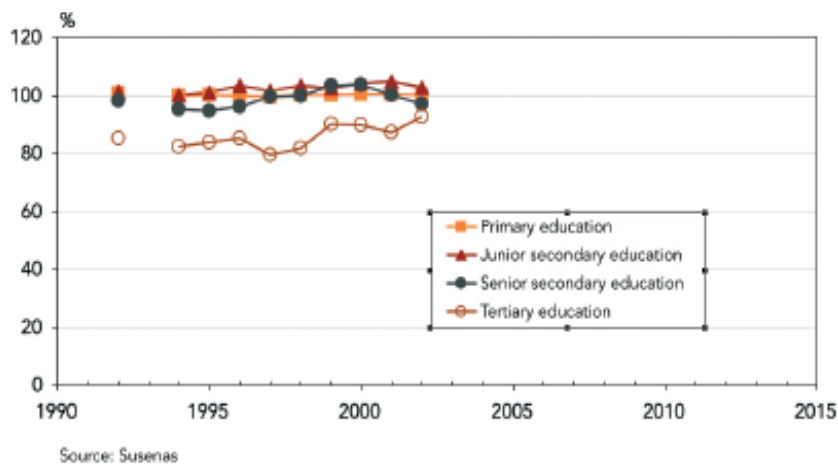


Figure 1. Ratio of female to male net enrolment at each educational level (NDPA 2004)

The second indicator is the ratio of literate women to men 15 to 24 years old. Literacy is high in Indonesia with a gender parity index of 99.8% for 2002. However, as Figure 2 shows, the gap in literacy widens if older population groups are included suggesting recent change as evidence of the achievements reflected in the first indicator.

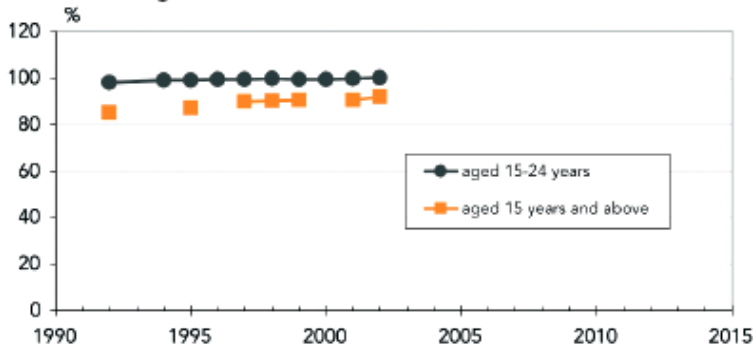


Figure 2. Ratio of literate females to males (NDPA, 2004)

The third indicator is the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector. As shown in Figure 3, women's share of wage employment was only 28.3% in 2002, with a steady decline evident since 1998, possibly resulting from the 1997 economic crisis and decline in tourism, an outcome of political instability, particularly in those areas that had previously shown a 50% share of employment such as Bali, Jakarta and Yogyakarta (NDPA 2004).

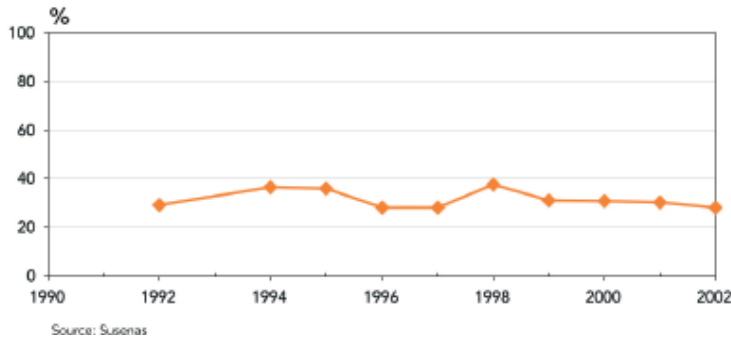


Figure 3. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (NDPA 2004)

Women holding seats in National Parliament is the final indicator of gender disparity for the third MDG and there is very low representation in Indonesia, with 9% in 2002, down from 12% between 1992 and 1997 (NDPA 2004). Despite early representation of women in politics and the establishment of the State Ministry for the Role of Women in 1983, few women participate in development planning or policy making, that is, in formal decision making (Oey-Gardiner & Sulastri 2000). However, the demand for greater representation of women in parliament and in the public sphere is now on the political agenda.

While Indonesia is very close to achieving gender equity in terms of education and literacy, with little or no disparity between urban and rural areas, there does not appear to be a flow-on in terms of women's share of employment and parliamentary representation. What this also suggests is that women now have greater access to opportunities, but still no real power. While these indicators provide measurable outcomes, they do not provide any real explanation of what is happening with regard to gender issues at the micro level. The progress made in gender and development demonstrates that while gender equity in Indonesia has been supported politically and with legislation, the important impact of traditional gender beliefs and socio-cultural factors cannot be discounted. Ridgeway & Correll (2004) claim that it is the hegemonic cultural beliefs about gender and how these function in "social relational contexts" that maintain and change the gender system, and it is these that will be examined in the next section.

Gender in Indonesian society

Historically, in the fight for independence against the Dutch colonialists, women, often as members of women's organisations, fought alongside men and felt they were part of the same struggle (Oey-Gardiner & Sulastri 2000). Since that time, Indonesia has a long record of legislation empowering women. While gender equality

has been actively promoted in Indonesia, particularly since independence, and supported politically and by legislation, the biggest hurdle that women face in the fight for rights is the cultural perception that women are not equal to men (Parnohadiningarat 2002). This inequality exists, despite the fact that many societies in Indonesia are bilateral, (i.e. equal import is given to the male and female line), and it has often been attributed to barriers such as Islamic ideology, New Order ideology and prevailing socio-cultural stereotypes based on traditional belief systems.

In relation to religion as a barrier to gender equality, the position of women in Islam has long been debated. This is a complex issue, often involving varied interpretations of a combination of religious teachings, laws and customs. Positions in this debate can range from the view of Islam as egalitarian to that where a sex-based hierarchy is viewed as legitimate and ordained by God (Bessell 2004). Similar to the situation of New Order ideology, such views at all levels of society are often politically motivated. One famous example is the opposition, openly expressed by Abdurrahman Wahid and other leading Muslim figures, to a female president on the grounds that it would be unacceptable for the majority of Muslims or that it would be contrary to Islamic teaching.

Similarly, the New Order encouraged a gendered model of political authority (Robinson 2000). Gender stereotypes were reinforced to achieve political ends. Suharto's portrayal as the "father of the nation" reflected the paternalistic nature of Javanese political culture with its deference to power and authority (Bessell 2004). In addition, this also contributed to New Order philosophy which valued the family as the basic unit of the nation. The family and women's position within it was used by the state to control society. The role of women was one of motherhood, that of the homemaker, a good wife and mother, serving the needs of her husband and children and totally accepting of this "natural role" (Oey-Gardiner & Sulastris 2000). Women's associations such as Dharma Wanita, PKK (Family Welfare Empowerment Movement) and Kowani (a federation of 79 women's organisations) were co-opted by the government and contributed to this entrenched gender inequality (Sadli 2002). For example, the wives of civil servants were expected to participate voluntarily in Dharma Wanita to support their husbands, the government and development, through traditional female roles in arenas such as education, health and family planning (Buchori & Soenarto 2000). This depoliticisation of women's groups under the Kowani umbrella, some with origins as politically active organizations with important roles in the struggle for Indonesia's independence, implicitly excluded women from the public sphere.

The pervasive patriarchal culture has meant that women are not encouraged to take active roles in the public domain, but to focus on the private household domain. Such traditional cultural norms are so entrenched that many women feel inferior and too lacking in skills to participate in politics or take an active role outside the home. Many women are simply ignorant of their rights due to lack of information and awareness. A similar lack of awareness exists on the part of men in that they do not recognise the importance of women's participation in decision making, nor do they realize the extent of their exclusion. This socio-cultural environment results in a lack of social and household support such that women are too constrained in terms of the time needed to fulfil their many roles of mother, housewife, worker or professional, to engage in the public sphere.

The decentralisation taking place in Indonesia at present could also contribute to the restriction of women's participation in the public sphere because, at the regional or local level, this could mean the reinstatement of customary laws and feudal or patriarchal values. Noerdin (2002, cited in Bessell 2004) states the example of the revival of syariah law, the Marriage Law that states the husband is the head of the family, and regional regulations which state that only the head of the family can become a member of the village council, as barriers excluding women from the formal decision making process.

The end of Suharto's 32 year rule in 1998 brought hope that the political changes would be a catalyst for further change and greater empowerment of women. The victory of Megawati Sukarnoputri's election as Vice President in 1999, the first woman to hold such a high post in Indonesia's history, and the work of Kofifah Indar Parawansa, who when appointed as Minister for the Role of Women changed its name to the State Ministry for the Empowerment of Women, further contributed to this hope (Oey-Gardener & Sulastris 2000). While governments prior to 1999 adopted many aspects of the international agenda for women by attending conferences and ratifying conventions, the patriarchal ideology of New Order dominated and the commitment was shallow. Since 1999, however, the Ministry for the Empowerment of Women has lived up to its change in name by taking the approach of changing the societal construction of gender that restricts the rights of women and advocating for greater representation of women in parliament, the establishment of women's caucuses, the introduction of quotas, amendments to the Marriage Law so women's roles are defined outside the domestic sphere, and so on. While these developments are outcomes of a new political environment, the actual empowerment of women will require enormous commitment, resources, political will and determination (Bessell 2004).

With the brief socio-cultural, religious, and political background to gender in Indonesia described above, the continuing internationalization of education, a greater commitment to aid on the part of the Australian government and the recognition of the importance of gender equity and women's empowerment for development, it is of interest to examine the impact of an Australian higher education on gender relations and social change in Indonesia.

Method

Twenty five graduates (14 females and 11 males), who had spent a minimum of two years in Indonesia since completing their degrees in Australia, participated in this research between 2002 and 2004. Twenty four of the 25 students were graduates of the University of Newcastle. One was a graduate of the University of Wollongong. Most data were collected in Indonesia from returned alumni. Participants were chosen according to their accessibility to larger population centres, Jakarta and Makassar, where the research could realistically be conducted. In addition, Indonesian postgraduate students who were currently enrolled at the University of Newcastle, but who had previously completed study in Australia, were also eligible to participate in the study. These respondents, in addition to Jakarta and Makassar, came from Singarajah in Bali, or Palu and Manado in Sulawesi.

Given the small size of the sample, the research methodology utilised in this study was qualitative and the instruments employed to gather data were survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Twenty five respondents completed the questionnaire. The data collected were analysed in order to identify recurring themes and significant factors in the experience of the graduates. These themes or factors were then followed up, clarified or further developed in the semi-structured interviews. Sixteen respondents consented to be interviewed and were assigned pseudonyms to protect their privacy. Those participants interviewed in Australia were audiotaped, and the interviews transcribed and manually coded using thematic analysis as a process of categorising this raw data. Notes were taken and observations made to support the taped data. Notes only were taken for the seven interviews conducted in Indonesia, for technical reasons. Consent forms included email contact details and participants were very responsive when contacted by email to answer follow-up questions.

The experience of returned Indonesian graduates

What follows then, is an analysis of gender-related data collected via questionnaire and semi-structured interview for a study conducted to investigate the social change impact of graduates of Australian universities on their home country of Indonesia. Seventy two percent of the respondents in the sample were recipients of Australian Development Scholarships (ADS). The remainder comprised World Bank and/or Indonesian government scholarship recipients (16%) and privately funded students (12%). As the majority (96%) of the sample population was drawn from alumni of the University of Newcastle, which has an AusAID contract to educate ADS recipients, these proportions are not surprising.

So, what is the impact of an overseas education on gender relations and social change in the family, community and workplace for these Indonesian graduates? Gender relations with regard to family were addressed via questions in the survey questionnaire about changes in family responsibilities, gender equality, role in decision making, and harmony. It is interesting to note that with regard to family responsibilities, of those who experienced change, four males (25%) and two females had greater responsibilities and one female had fewer responsibilities. Responses to changes in gender equality elicited eight responses, seven for greater gender equality (close to one third of the sample), comprising five males and two females and one male who said he had experienced less gender equality. This respondent had been separated from his family against his will, due to his daughter's disability and also spoke of his decreased role in family decision-making on his return to Indonesia. It is possible, therefore, that he may have interpreted his diminished role as less equality from his perspective, assuming that the pre-existing status quo was equality. With regard to this gender empowerment (or disempowerment in the case above), four women experienced a greater role in decision making on their return to Indonesia. With regard to family harmony, nine respondents (seven males & two females) experienced greater harmony in family relationships, and one female experienced less harmony. Her husband, who was not of Indonesian origin, often travelled back and forth to Indonesia and did not assist her with home or family duties while she was studying in Australia.

In Indonesia, as discussed earlier, the family has always been valued; New Order ideology promoted it as the basic unit of the nation, so it is not surprising that many students are accompanied by their family when they come to Australia to study. Similarly, for many AusAID recipients, the family stipend was a major factor in their decision to choose Australia as a study destination (IDP 2004 & 2005). For those in the sample who had family accompany them in Australia (17 of 21 married respondents; of the remaining four respondents in the sample, three had husbands who could not take leave from their jobs and the other's family was refused a visa

due to his daughter's disability), quite a few spoke of sharing the responsibilities of the family and of equality while in Australia, but most spoke of this not being the norm.

My husband appreciates what I am doing. He is a bit different to others in terms of how he appreciates to his wife. You know, he says, if you are well educated, you know you can pursue until you can get your PhD and I am still here with my under degree, sarjana in Indonesia....So, it wouldn't make me feel like inferior because you are more highly educated than I am because I support you fully, people will see that I am a part of your success....but very rare that this happens. I have a friend had a similar thing happen to her, I mean, her husband he could not stand for her to have higher qualifications...he tried to stop her, made it very difficult for her,...he wanted to get the balance back...in the end, she had to get a divorce.

[Lah Int03 Newcastle f]

My husband cooks and helps me at home in Indonesia, just as he does here...but then we lived in Sydney before, so that changed things...but do you know...funny thing is, in Indonesia, he would never cook or wash dishes in front of his family...he could never do that...

[Iny Int02 Newcastle f]

There was often disparity such as that expressed by Iny above, in terms of the nature of gender relationships in Australia and those in Indonesia. Iny admitted that her first experience of overseas study had changed their gender relations, but cultural traditions and norms were still observed in the presence of significant others, like her husband's parents in Indonesia.

It is not hard...you just do it...you forget, we are Indonesian first, we know what we have to do and we just do it. Don't really think about it. He helps when his family is not there, he doesn't mind helping; he likes to help. You know how he likes to cook barbecue here, like Australian men... remember how he liked to cook for you at the barbecue...

[Iny Int04 Newcastle f]

Here Iny begins by saying he likes to help her, but then comments on how he enjoys cooking on the barbecue, like Australian men, possibly because he perceived this as an acceptable male gender role in Australia. However, gender has a background role in his pleasure in cooking for the interviewer, an older woman in a position of respect (his wife's teacher). Age and contextual relationship are more important in determining identity in this exchange, than gender. As Ridgeway and Correll (2004) point out, any context is social relational if an individual feels their behaviour will be socially evaluated. Individuals must define themselves in relation to others in order to manage the situation. Hence, the behaviour of Iny's husband, in the presence of his family in Indonesia or peers and guests in Australia, contrasts with his behaviour in his home with his wife and children and close friends, where he is not being evaluated. An example of what Ridgeway and Correll (2004, p.513) refer to as hegemonic beliefs acting as "the implicit rules of the gender game in public contexts."

Another respondent spoke of how he had observed Australian men with their families and how he had modified his behaviour in Australia, seemingly identifying with male gender roles in an attempt to situate himself.

In Australia, I was surprised by the role men played in the family. They would spend time with their wife and children, after work, on weekends...it was expected... it seem everyone do it. In Indonesia, before I went to Australia, I would meet my male friends after work...not get home til later ...Australia made me think I should spend time with my wife...my family

[Rin Int02 Newcastle m]

Rin expressed a desire to spend more time with his family when he returned to Indonesia, because he enjoyed going on picnics and being with his wife and family and other families, as if it had never occurred to him before because it was not the norm. After he returned home, he remarked on the greater gender equality in his family, his greater family responsibilities in terms of home duties and greater harmony in the family. He did, however, become very busy on his return, with his extra workload as secretary of a languages department and greater responsibilities (email correspondence, 2004). For others as well, the daily situation was identified as impacting more on gender relations in the family, than traditions or cultural norms. As Lah relates in her reference to division of home duties in Australia:

...he works 30 hours per week, so we have to organize our time. Roles in the house are evenly divided, half and half. I do the cooking; he does the dishes, all the washing, the clothes.

More gender equality?...yes, but it is the situation...he is more available than in Indonesia. In Indonesia he doesn't have the time to help and we have a maid or help from our family, so it is not necessary.

[Lah Int03 Newcastle f]

Similar to Rin, she spoke of greater marital harmony or improved family relations.

...the quality of meeting time in the house is a lot improved. I can help the kids with their homework and I spend most of my time with the children, talking to each of them, all three of them. Home time is family time... I am also more tolerant of my husband, I don't know why, I think because I appreciate the sacrifice he has made for me. He is a government official; he will spend four years away from his job...so he will be one whole level lower, because he supports me to come here.

[Lah Int03 Newcastle f]

So, for many respondents, there were changes in gender roles and relations while in Australia and many of these practices continued to an extent in the family when they returned to Indonesia. However, the impact of the context and situation were very important in terms of behaviours.

The community context was one in which the experience of an overseas education affected gender roles, however, the differentiation in outcomes for men and women was markedly different in some arenas. Questions that addressed the impact of gender and social change in the community related to respect in the community, active involvement in community groups, community profile, community networks, leadership role and mentoring role. Eighty percent of respondents perceived an increase in the respect held for them by their communities. Two male respondents did not answer this question and the three respondents who experienced no change were female. Two female informants who were interviewed had very different perceptions with regard to the respect held for them in the community. One felt much more confident in expressing her ideas as a result of her overseas education, as she expressed below:

I am probably more confident in expressing my ideas, when you have pursued your career and studied overseas, that means you have more knowledge and people will believe what you are saying, and that makes me more confident.

[Lah Int03 Newcastle f]

In contrast, another female respondent from Bali felt that people would tend to judge her more, that she would feel different and wouldn't fit in; she felt very keenly the pressure and constraints of tradition and the community:

I don't trust any of them. I wouldn't talk to them; they like to gossip...they will probably say bad things about me. ...They will look at me and say, "Look at her, catching public transport instead of driving a good car and she has been overseas..."

[Tu Int03 Newcastle f]

She also openly expressed her feelings of helplessness with regard to the extra religio-cultural workload women are burdened with on a daily basis in Bali, feeling that this situation would change little because it was such a long tradition, both religious and cultural. She rather eloquently described the social relational contexts and what Ridgeway and Correll (2004) refer to as hegemonic cultural beliefs and practices:

There are so many intervening things, social things with work friends, family, community things. So many ceremonies I have to go to, every week maybe ten hours per week. Men are too busy but women have to come... I feel there needs to be a change there....if you are a career woman, you can't do that all the time....sometimes just the whole day you must be there...the whole day...you have to go...For Balinese, festivals are more important than our formal work. To be there, to be seen by people. If I have a good maid, I can send her, but not always, I must be seen to go sometimes. I am lucky to be in the city. These days...for people who have money, you can just pay, it is easier. In my husband's place (more rural area), I must do a lot of work. If I just pay, I can't come and I just pay, they will talk very bad things about you... It will not change, not in a short time...I don't think there is anything I can change...it will just take time, a long time...

[Tu Int03 Newcastle f]

In terms of more active involvement in community groups, gender did not have much impact, 56% of female and 63% of male respondents reported increased involvement in the community. One respondent explained the three responsibilities of academic life as teaching, research and community work, and most respondents were academics. Community work was also important in terms of promotion. The greater gender equality is not surprising given the above and that an overseas education would strengthen the possibility of promotion for

some women. Eighty eight percent of the sample believed they had a greater community profile, yet only 59% of female respondents had increased community networks, compared to 91% of males. In one sense, this is an interesting result given that, traditionally, women are perceived as more "communal than agentic" (Ridgeway and Correll 2004, p.526). However, as mentioned above in relation to women's place in the domestic sphere, a number of factors would contribute to male domination in the public domain: the workload of women; men's motivation in networking; the communities' needs; and the perception of men as more 'agentic' and therefore more highly valued by the community in terms of getting things done and in leadership roles.

Other empowerment related issues for women in this study, perceived as one of the areas of greatest weaknesses in terms of gender equity in Indonesia (Bessell 2004), are leadership and mentoring roles in the community. As would be expected, given the discussion on gender in Indonesia above, gender disparity is greatest in such contexts, with 82% of male respondents having leadership roles and 91% having mentoring roles in the community, compared to 59% and 49% of female respondents, respectively. An excerpt from an interview with Rin shows how men are approached to take on such leadership roles in the community:

Within community, I am usually asked to be a leader of the school community in my son's school. At the General Election for Legislatives and the President a few months ago, I was one of the members of the IT team to control data input for voting in South Sulawesi.

[Rin Int03 Makassar m]

These results can be explained by the cultural and traditional perceptions that women do not belong in the public arena (Bessell 2004). According to Ridgeway and Correll (2004), this would be an example of how gender beliefs combine with other identities and roles, which are weighted by situational relevance, to shape behaviour and evaluation in a context. They claim gender becomes effectively salient in two contexts, the one relevant here is a context where the stereotypic traits and abilities of one gender is culturally linked to the activity in that context. These are hegemonic gender beliefs, hence the perception of women as being unsuited to the public arena is a difficult one to break down or change. Tu demonstrated how these hegemonic gender beliefs combine with cultural beliefs to determine behaviour in social relational contexts when she spoke, almost with resignation, of Balinese women as unambitious:

I am not an ambitious person. I do not want a position. If I was, it would be a problem. Women have less chance. At work, there would be a problem, not as much as in community. Most of the women not very ambitious...so much responsibilities in the community...

[Tu Int03 Newcastle f]

Two of the female respondents who had greater leadership roles when they returned to Indonesia had been president of the Indonesian Students' Association at the University of Newcastle during their candidature, and spoke about how much they had valued their experience:

Personal change...maybe leadership? I feel that I am more competent in managing people (laughs) because... yeah now... I haven't been a president of an organisation before but I do it now here and I learn a lot how...how...to...er...to solve problems among the members of the organisation, and things like that...I don't know...I don't know if that is relevant??

[Lah Int03 Newcastle f]

From a gender perspective, this discourse is particularly interesting. Firstly, the interviewee had to be prompted for more input about personal change. It seemed as if she did not want to say these positive things about herself, as if it were inappropriate, or could possibly be construed as boasting. Her discomfort shows in the questioning of her suggestion (her last) of leadership, in her halting flow of speech when she is otherwise so fluent and articulate, and in her laughing. Finally, she even questions the relevance of her comment. The other student had also previously completed a Master's degree at the University of Newcastle, where her ability was highly acknowledged by her all male colleagues, and she had also been given professional responsibilities (but no power) on her first return to Indonesia. These women demonstrate how individuals define themselves in relation to others in order to manage the situation. It is possible that the growing confidence of these women as a result of their PhD studies, equal professional interaction with male colleagues in Australia, and their experience of Australian women in high status positions had affected the competence components of their own gender beliefs, hence their decision to run for president of the Indonesian Students Association. Culturally, however, it was apparent that this confidence was a little discomfiting. One exception was Yu, who confidently spoke of her greater profile in the community and her important leadership role at work:

People are more aware, and give more respect to a woman who has competency and has a vital position in the office or organization.

[Yu Int04 Makassar f]

Yu was an exception in terms of what Ridgeway and Correll (2004) refer to as status and competence components of gender beliefs. She came from a privileged and elite family and always wore a particular style of *jilbab* or headscarf that signified this. Both her parents were prominent lawyers in Indonesia and she was one of the younger (31) respondents, who ranged in age from 28 to 45.

These references to leadership and status bring the discussion to the impact of an overseas education on gender roles and relations in the work environment. The questions in the survey that related to gender issues addressed equality, pay, contribution to development, respect from supervisors, and empowerment (decision making responsibility and feelings of empowerment). In relation to perceptions of greater gender equality in the workplace, 56% of respondents said there had been no change in equality and of those who claimed there was greater gender equality, 63% were male. With regard to earnings, all respondents with the exception of four females (16%) and one male (4%) had increased earnings, often not from promotion due to the rigid four year public service promotion structure they worked within, but through appointments as secretaries, or involvement in research project work as Rin and Dian attest:

At work I am working as Project Coordinator of Mini Lab Computers for my department. Ministry of Education and Culture agree to give my department AU\$50,000.00, after submission of my proposal in July 2004. ...I have been chosen as well as a Secretary of Department of West Asian languages for the period 2005-2009.

[Rin Int04 Makassar m]

In the end of March, 1999, I completed my Master program. In October, 1999, I was promoted as Secretary of the department in my faculty. I received additional salary for that position until 2003. In 2003, I worked outside as technical assistant of quality assurance program in a government institution for seven months. In 2004, I assisted the Depok Health District office in quality improvement effort for three months.

[Dian Int05 Bogor m]

The fact that 80% of negative responses to increased earnings came from women, could relate to the time factor and the burden of so many other responsibilities, gender perceptions of role and behaviour as in the case of Tu mentioned above, and the fact that women participating in the public arena is perceived as inappropriate.

In relation to ability to contribute to development or change, five women felt that their gender constrained them. One disappointed respondent shared what she perceived as gender discrimination:

I did all of the work, wrote the proposal...it was hard work...took me many months working with Bel; she help me. Then we get a new boss...I win the government grant for our Polytechnic and he take it and gives the project to a man...I feel disillusioned... now I just teach like before...always it is like this. What can I do?

[Elf Int03 Manado f]

While Elf had still contributed to the development of her region by securing a highly sought after and lucrative government grant, she felt that she had been robbed of the chance to run the project or at least be involved in it because of her gender. Again hegemonic cultural beliefs tend to determine gender roles. A woman did all the hard work and once the project was won, a man was given the responsibility and position of leader in running it. Ery, another respondent from Sulawesi, also expressed the feeling that her ability to contribute to development was limited by her gender. The fact that she was working in chemistry, a male dominated field, and her minority religion, Christianity, may have contributed to her perception that she was being discriminated against.

In relation to respect from supervisors in the workplace, only 20% of respondents had not experienced increased respect from their supervisors at work; however, these were all women, representing 35% of all female respondents. Similarly, in relation to empowerment issues, the only respondents who had not experienced increased responsibilities in decision making at work were women, again representing 35% of women and 20% of the total sample. Two of these individuals were also in the group who reported no increase in respect from supervisors. In relation to feelings of empowerment, only 52% of respondents admitted to feeling empowered in their workplace on their return to Indonesia, which in terms of gender, translates to 35% of women and 63% of men. Again it is evident that, while there have been gender gains in general, in the area of empowerment and the public arena, considerable gender bias and inequality still persist.

Conclusion

To return this discussion to the impact of globalization on gender and social change raised at the outset, as the evidence above attests, globalization involves the institutionalized construction of the individual, such that gender roles tend to embrace cultural and traditional dichotomies, such as 'communal' for women and 'agentic' for men (Ridgeway & Correll 2004). The hybridization effect of globalisation has meant that gender and culture have become increasingly salient and fluid. However, as many of the above examples from the data show, despite the progress made towards gender equity, the core structure of gender beliefs has not changed. A life lived between cultures will result in hybrid traditions and some of this was evident as respondents in this study struggled, due to hegemonic cultural beliefs, to situate themselves within new structures and with new identities.

Finally, in response to the questions on gender raised by the study, the impact of an overseas education was different for men than for women, particularly in terms of empowerment. While there was greater gender equity at the level of the family, this was often only when the male did not feel he was being evaluated, that is, within the home. Better family relationships were often developed in Australia, but could not always be maintained in Indonesia due to the situation, greater workloads of both partners and hegemonic gender beliefs. In both the community and the workplace, men benefited to a greater extent in terms of opportunities to participate in the public sphere, greater respect and decision making responsibilities, and leadership and mentoring roles. In contrast, women referred to inequality in terms of cultural and social workload, discrimination in terms of opportunities for promotion or leadership roles and a constrained self perception. Despite considerable social change resulting from their overseas education and the hybridisation effects of globalisation, considerable gender bias and inequality still persist as a result of hegemonic cultural beliefs about gender. Ridgeway and Correll (2004) claim that it is these beliefs that act as the rules of the gender system and have remarkable effects on perceptions and behaviour, hence, allowing them to persist despite considerable social change. Perhaps Tu's comments, with regard to the time it will take to change the current inequality, are more insightful than they at first appeared.

It will not change, not in a short time...I don't think there is anything I can change...it will just take time, a long time...

[Tu Int03 Newcastle f]

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