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## Islam, *Pasanga ri Kajang*, and Multicultural Feminism: Gender Equality in the Tanah Toa Kajang Community Through the Encounter of Islam and the *Patuntung Teaching*

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### Abstract

*The current discourse on gender equality has explored the gender concepts and practices from various local communities in Eastern countries. Certain local ethnicities or communities are considered to have gender equality whose concepts, forms, and practices are not exactly the same as the feminism movement. This article aims to reveal the gender equality practices of the Tanah Toa Kajang community in Bulukumba. These practices are based on the culture and beliefs that they have embraced and practiced all this time. Based on this research using a qualitative method, it was found that the Tanah Toa Kajang community actually did not recognize the strict distinction between public and domestic spaces. Therefore, the assumption that women in the local communities struggle more in the domestic sphere does not apply in Tanah Toa Kajang. Even if the Tanah Toa Kajang community wants to share the arena, it is more appropriate to call it a closed public space and an open public space. In addition, the concepts and practices of gender equality in this community are considered to have originated from local culture and beliefs called Patuntung. However, it has experienced a long encounter with Islamic teaching. The encounter between Islam and Patuntung in building the concepts of gender equality can be seen in Pasanga ri Kajang (the messages that came down on Tanah Toa Kajang). Thus, it can be concluded that the concepts and practices of gender equality in this community emerged from a process of the encounter between universalism and locality.*

**Keywords:** Gender equality, encounter, Islam, Patuntung, Pasanga ri Kajang

### Introduction

"*Di ingkalingamue lho ko mabbicarai makkunrainna Karampuang, pa tu madongo manoki idi lho*"

The sentence above came from a woman in the *Karampuang* Indigenous Community, Sinjai. She is a *Sanro* in the community. *Sanro* is considered to heal and is also often the leader of rituals in the ceremonies of the human life cycle. Her words mean: "Would it be heard if this woman from Karampuang speaks (gives an opinion)? because we are all stupid people."

Her words inevitably hit the heart of the feminist movement, representing all women's issues in the world. In sync with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's sentence, her question, "can the subaltern speak?" or in line with Gyant Prakash's saying, "can the subaltern ride?". These two sentences of the two

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postcolonial proponents are questioning the same problem: "Is it true that all this time the voices of the periphery have been heard"? (Spivak, 1988). The words from this Karampuang woman are also asking, "have all our voices, the paths of life we followed, our interests, become a part of the gender equality movement initiated by the middle-class women?"

The feminist movement since the twentieth century has become one of the crucial discourses in social movements in the world. The feminist movement has also become a study of various disciplines. Today, feminism has entered its third wave. In this phase or third wave, mainstream feminism, such as liberal, social, and Marxist feminism, has experienced sharp challenges and criticisms. The claims of gender equality by the early feminist movement began to be questioned for their accuracy in answering women's problems in various places, especially in third-world countries.

In this case, feminist activists and academics who are concerned about the issue of feminism are encouraged to look at women's oppression in various places, as well as women's strategies in dealing with gender inequality. Spivak, for example, calls on feminist academics to learn from the ways of local women. Spivak stated:

*"The academic feminist must learn to learn from them, to speak to them, to suspect that their access to the political and sexual scene is not merely to be corrected by our superior theory. Also, it enlightened compassion to learn enough about Third World women and develop a different readership. The immense heterogeneity of the field must be appreciated, and the First World feminist must learn to stop feeling privileged as a woman (Spivak, 1988)."*

Women in local communities are often seen as the objects of oppression. Patriarchal culture is assumed to be so entrenched in their culture. The feminist movement empowers the local community's women in such a situation. They begin to understand the difference between public and domestic spaces. Local women are also taught that their space is not only in the domestic sphere, particularly around the house, but they can also go outside. They can leave the domestic space that is considered shackled.

In such an empowerment plan, sometimes the local women's voices, what they feel and want to do, do not appear. Their voices are still considered a part of the stagnation and are still in the hegemony of patriarchal culture. Their voices are obscured by feminist agendas outside. At this point, *Sanro's* words from the Karampuang community at the beginning of the article are getting more and more pronounced. Agendas for women's empowerment drawn from the outside often fail to understand the local women's problems. The oppression they experience, for example, is always assumed as the effect of unequal gender relations.

Based on the case in Tanah Toa Kajang, the women's problems are not due to unequal gender relations in the community but from outside. They have issues concerning modernity, huge religion, and capitalism. The way of life of Tanah Toa Kajang's women is trying to be modernized. Their way of dressing is still considered primitive, as well as they are discriminated because their way of practicing religion is different from the mainstream Muslims.

In short, as stated by Ahmad Baso (2005), the feminist movement failed to read women's problems in a complex way. In addition, the mainstream feminist movement seems less interested in exploring the local women's experiences in developing their relationships with men in their communities. They are also less interested in exploring the cultural praxis of the local community because it has assumed that the cultures found in the local community are dominated by patriarchal culture.

In such a situation, this paper shows that the local community has a gender equality praxis that emerges from the experiences and activities of women within the scope of their culture. Such experiences then become a kind of local knowledge or wisdom the local community possesses in building relationships between men and women.

To describe the praxis of gender equality in the style of this local community, the author will take a picture from a local community in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi. This community is called Tanah Toa Kajang. Their thoughts on how to place women fairly in culture emerge from the experiences of Tanah Toa Kajang women in building relationships with men in their communities. They then put these concepts into the guidelines they adhered to, which is called: Pasanga ri Kajang. However, the Tanah Toa Kajang community also encounters universal values or culture, such as the values or teachings of Islam. In the end, this encounter gives color to the values they professed. This includes providing color to their local wisdom about gender equality.

## Literature Review

Multicultural feminism has become a widespread discourse in the study of women's movements since the 1980s. The concept and practice of multicultural feminism in several writings are referred to as the third wave of the feminist movement in the world (Kusharyanto, 2014; Bendar, 2019; Handayani & Daherman, 2020). Multicultural feminism is considered development and even criticism of mainstream feminism, which is the benchmark for women's movements, such as liberal, social and Marxist feminism. The first and second waves of feminism highly focus on the unequal relationship between men and women and the issue of legal obstacles. In addition, the second wave of feminism is considered only to focus its attention on capitalism and social strata as the base of women's oppression. Women's problems are not only those problems but also race, culture, tradition, and ethnicity. Apart from the criticism of this issue, the first and second waves of feminism are also considered biased towards racism and euro centrality.

However, the development of philosophical studies and social sciences also influenced the emergence of this multicultural feminism. In the 1980s, even before that, post-structural studies, post-modernism, and post-colonialism were booming. This study also influenced the development of feminism studies, which eventually gave rise to post-feminism (Faludi, 2009).

The most exciting point in multicultural feminism is a space to study movements and concepts of gender equality from various ethnicities, especially ethnic groups with colored skin, including from local communities that have been seen as isolated and even primitive. The voices and subjective experiences of local women, the way they build relationships with men based on their culture, as well as concepts of justice for women originating from local concepts, have a place in multicultural feminism.

There are at least three essential concepts in multicultural feminism. First, "intersectionality", which is a view from Kimberle Crenshaw, who sees the individual as a set of identities that are intertwined with each other. According to the built context and relationships, the subject's identity is not singular but diverse. Because of the intersectionality factor, the oppression does not apply in one direction. The second concept of multiculturalism feminism is the "matrix of oppression". In Patricia Hill Jones's view, the matrix of oppression shows the oppression's framework that occurs based on the social context (or position) of a person and the relationship he did. Therefore, a woman could be an oppressor when she is in a position as an employer to her gardener. But on other occasions, she is oppressed, for example, when an employee in her office confronts her superiors (Rahadian, 2019).

The third concept is "the otherness of the other." This concept shows differences from others or the other from the other. They are usually the most oppressed in the chain of oppression because they are considered not universalism. Local women are among those who can be regarded as estranged from others (Rahadian, 2019). The concept of the otherness of others does not merely show that the most other is the most oppressed. At the same time, multiculturalism feminism provides opportunities for the voices and subjective experiences that are most different from local women, including their ways of dealing with oppression.

The study of multiculturalism feminism has been rife in Indonesia since the early 2000s. Some appear in Manneke Budiman's (2005) writings and Melani Budianta's (2003; 2005), who discuss the praxis of multiculturalism feminism in Indonesia. Then, the *Srinthil Journal* from Desantara contains various struggles of local women in the archipelago.

## **Research Methods**

The data in this paper were obtained through ethnographic research in the Tanah Toa Kajang Community. It is called ethnography because it reveals the cultural behavior of Tanah Toa Kajang women from their point of view. Data collection also follows ethnographic rules, such as observations and interviews (Spradley, 1997). The Tanah Toa community is not positioned as an object but as part of the research subject (Ridjal, 2004:91). The author considers Tanah Toa women as friends and places to learn. In addition, the authors are also actively involved in their activities.

## **Discussion**

### **Tanah Toa Kajang**

When people hear the name of Tanah Toa Kajang, some still frown. Maybe it is a sign that they do not know Tanah Toa Kajang, but more than that, their attitude shows a sense of anger. Especially if you call Tanah Toa by another name: Kajang Le'leng (Black Kajang). People imagine this community as primitive and wild. Many people feel scared since this community is considered a witchcraft expert. People might say, the Tanah Toa Kajang community is a society that is alienated from the modern world.

When Anderson Sutton visited this community in 1993 for research purposes, he witnessed the Tanah Toa Kajang community isolated from the outside world. He finally concluded that Tanah Toa Kajang is a community that does not know Indonesia outside their environment (Sutton, 2002). Outsiders' views about the Tanah Toa Kajang community are not entirely correct. The Tanah Toa Kajang community is not a community that does not know civilization and is not considered witchcraft, but they are a community of people who also know civilization.

It is undeniable that some choose not to follow modernity with all its principles in the Tanah Toa Kajang community. However, it does not mean they reject civilization because they have their own wisdom in viewing advancement. This view results in the Tanah Toa Kajang community dividing their territory into two areas: *ilalang embayya* (inside the fence) and *ipantarang embayya* (outside the fence). *Ilalang embayya* is a location that still applies strict customary rules, including not being in contact with modernity and technological tools, while *ipantarang embayya* has been in contact with modernity (Syamsurijal, 2005).

Many of the Tanah Toa indigenous communities in the scope of *ipantarang embayya* are already in high school. In terms of schooling, the indigenous people of Tanah Toa do not discriminate between boys and girls. Some people have already reached the undergraduate level. It has even been recorded that some go to school up to the post-graduate level. Among these scholars, many are women.

Currently, several children in the *ilalang embayya* area are also attending school. This transformation shows that along with the times, the Tanah Toa Kajang community is increasingly open to outside changes. Of course, without losing the principles, they believe in.

The Tanah Toa community also has a customary structure in addition to the official government structure. The highest customary leader is called *Amma Toa* (the eldest father). *Amma Toa* is assisted by the *Galla*. All this time, *Amma Toa* has served as a male, as are the *Galla*. Then, where is the position

of women?. Women usually become Sanro, a medical expert and a spiritual expert in life cycle rituals. Nevertheless, women occupy an important position in the traditional structure. They are entrusted with determining the time of Amma Toa's election, known as Anrong (Queen Mother). There are two Anrong, namely Anronga ri Bongki (a mother who is domiciled in Bongki) and Anronga ri Panggi (a mother who is domiciled in Panggi).

The rules that guide them are Pasanga ri Kajang or messages in Kajang. The contents include several teachings on monotheism, humanity, protecting the environment, and the relationship between men and women. Pasanga ri Kajang is the unwritten value taught from time to time. Now some researchers have written such topics, for example, KM Usop and Samiang Katu (Usop, 1978; Katu, 2000).

### **Encounter with Islam**

The Tanah Toa Kajang community is considered to adhere to the Patuntung belief. This belief was embraced by people in the southern part of South Sulawesi, particularly in pre-Islam. After the entry of Islam, the Tanah Toa Kajang community formally adopted the religion, although the teachings of Patuntung were not completely abandoned. In some cases, Islam and the teachings of Patuntung have actually undergone a process of amalgamation.

The entry of Islam in South Sulawesi, as mentioned by Kadir Ahmad, did not change the cultural structure and values of pre-Islamic traditions extremely. In many ways, they even embraced it, or rather, both supported each other (Ahmad, 2019).

Islam became known in Tanah Toa Kajang since the Gowa and Tallo kingdom officially accepted Islam around the XVI-XVII centuries. In Mattulada's version, when Islam had spread to several areas in South Sulawesi, including Gowa, Wajo, and Luwu, Amma Toa and her assistants held a meeting to respond to the new religion's arrival. This resulted in sending several people to study Islam. Jango Toa went to Luwu to study with Datuk Patimang, Jango To Jarra went to study at Wajo, and Asara Daeng Mallipa was sent to Gowa. Among the three, only the teachings received by Jango Toa from Datuk Patimang were accepted by Amma Toa.

In contrast, the others were rejected because they might destroy the sacredness of the Tanah Toa Kajang's teachings. An intensive encounter with Islam occurred when Datuk ri Tiro and his students taught Islam in the Tiro area and its surroundings (Mattulada, 1977). The arrival of Islam in Tanah Toa Kajang does not eliminate local values, especially good values. These values encounter Islamic teachings. Values from old traditions and the Patuntung belief become a customary rule that the Tanah Toa Kajang's people implement. For example, in getting married, they follow Islamic procedures through married in front of the penghulu (a person who presides over a wedding). At the same time, traditional rituals are also held through the nideppoki tradition (the bond is strengthened by the advice of the traditional holders of husband and wife).

The amalgamation of customs and Islam in Tanah Toa Kajang is described in a Pasanga ri Kajang's message: "naiantu adaka nakimbuki agamayya" (custom is a blanket for religion). This means that in the Tanah Toa Kajang community, Islamic values are the substance, but the expression of Islam appears in the form of customs common in Tanah Toa Kajang. In another message, it is also stated:

Guru Sara' tala tappa ri patuntung tala assai kaguruanna, Sanro tala tappa ri sara' tanga assai patuntunganna

An Islamic scholar does not believe in Patuntung, so his expertise is not valid. While Sanro (an expert in Patuntung) does not believe in Shari'a (Islam), then his kepatuntungan is not valid (Katu, 2003).

This pair once again shows that in Tanah Toa Kajang, two values, Islam and Patuntung are both used

as guidelines. However, it can no longer be separated in practice because the two have become one unit. On the other hand, this process cannot be called syncretism, which is mentioned by L Esposito & Basuki as arbitrary fusion without looking at the principles that exist in each entity (L Esposito & Basuki, 2001). The two entities maintain their fundamental principles in the Tanah Toa Kajang community. For example, in Islam, the values of monotheism are maintained, while in Tanah Toa, the crucial principles in the implementation of certain ceremonies commonly called sara-sara are also maintained.

### **Pasanga ri Kajang, Gender Equality and Encounter with Islamic Values**

Pasanga ri Kajang is a guideline for the Tanah Toa Kajang community. This Pasanga ri Kajang is not only a guide for the people who live in ilalang embayya, but also a reference for those in ipantarang embayya. Pasanga ri Kajang is indeed followed more rigidly by those who live in ilalang embayya.

Pasanga ri Kajang is the verbal message that has been passed down from pre-Islamic times. Still, the contents of Pasanga ri Kajang have also experienced dialogue or encounter with Islamic teachings. Even in the view of several Galla, as Puto Cacong said, Pasanga ri Kajang can be considered Islamic values themselves because their contents are not much different from the Islamic teaching.

Some interpret Pasanga ri Kajang as the last 10 juz of the Al-Qur'an. This view is not popular among the Tanah Toa Kajang community, but it grows outside. According to Syamsurijal, the outsider's perspective is stigmatization because it seems that the Tanah Toa people modified the contents of Al-Qur'an. (Syamsurijal, 2014).

Pasanga ri Kajang is the local value that has encountered Islamic teachings in many ways. The contents, for example, are familiar with the words as-sambajang (prayer), sara' (shari'a), guru (ulama), kali (qadhi), je'ne (wudhu). One example in the Pasanga ri Kajang, which shows the vocabulary of Islam is: Je'ne taluka, sambajang tamattappu (Wudhu never cancel and prayers never stop). In this sentence, je'ne (wudhu) and sambajang (prayer) are terms that come from Islam.

One of the messages or values in this Pasanga ri Kajang is about treating a wife or woman. This message is a gender relation rule in the Tanah Toa Kajang community. One of them is mentioned in the regulation how the birth of a human being comes from a male and a female. It is said in Pasanga ri Kajang:

#### **Ammuko, Ammembara, Nuparua-Ruangi**

##### ***Petta Kalennu, Kamaseang Kulantu'nu***

(Tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, you betray your wife  
Pity yourself, love your knees)

Pasanga ri Kajang implicitly invites a husband not to betray his wife. This message does not prohibit but only suggests a husband not to have more than one wife for the family interests. If a husband has more than one wife and can't be fair, it will only make themselves and their offspring miserable. This is in line with the teachings developed by Indonesian scholars when regulating marriage in the Compilation of Islamic Law. There is no prohibition against marrying more than one person, but they must meet certain conditions.

This message of Pasanga ri Kajang shows that polygamy, which is considered part of patriarchal culture and is common among indigenous peoples or local communities, does not apply in the Tanah Toa Kajang community. At the same time, it undermines the claim that polygamy is a habit of the local community.

Thus, if one form of oppression of the local community is polygamy, it does not occur in the Tanah Toa

community. Even polygamous, local women have particular strategies to guarantee their position is not exploited by men. For example, each woman who will be married requires a garden as sunrang (dowry). This garden becomes the private production tool for the woman who became the wife. If using Marxian glasses, one of the conditions for someone not to experience oppression is having his own production tool.

*Pasanga ri Kajang* also includes messages addressed to a husband in domestic life, as follows:

*Ako Laroi punna mata kanrea*

*Anu mata nipallu*

*Mutungu kanu api ritujunna*

*Peca'i kanu nilau ere*

*Jako Parenta Bilasangi babinenu*

*Bilasangga jintu, nipeppepi na rie erena*

*Jako parenta deppo babinennu*

*Deppo a jintu nituddupi na haji*

Don't be angry if the rice (which is cooked by the wife) is raw,  
because the ingredients are raw.

Likewise, if it is scorched,  
because there is a fire burning under it.

Also don't be angry if the rice is soggy,  
because when it's cooked, it's mixed with water

These two *Pasanga* couplets are a message for husbands to treat their wives well, full of understanding and affection. Do not hurt and do violence in verbal expression, especially by beating. This is interesting because this pair is presented to the bride and groom by Amma Toa or the representative of Galla, in the wedding ritual. The marriage itself is carried out in a sara (Islamic) manner by the penghulu, but the ta'liq talaq is replaced by the nideppoki tradition. The term deppo is from one of those *Pasanga* couplets. During the nideppo, those couplets are conveyed to the two prospective brides. Here again, it can be seen that Islamic teachings and local traditions strengthen the marriage process, which contains anti-violence against women.

### **Gender Equality Practices in Culture**

In everyday life, people in Tanah Toa Kajang do not differentiate between domestic and public spaces. It is in contrast to the general assumption of the feminist movement, which determined that human activities are domestic and some are public. The distinction between public and domestic activities appeared before the industrial revolution but became evident when the industrial revolution occurred in 1750-1850. Men work in industrial sectors to accumulate capital, while women only work around the house. Women's work at home is considered unproductive. Thus, women are considered only complementary, cannot accumulate wealth like men.

The first wave of feminism emerged in 1792 when the Industrial Revolution era was underway. It was marked by the appearance of Mary Wollstonecraft's writings, "Vindication of the Right of Women". This first wave of feminism tried to challenge women's rights, including the issue of an unfair division of labor (Kristeva, 2015). Today, the feminist movement, especially the liberal ones, is still focusing its struggle on the issue of the division of domestic and public labor.

This division of public and domestic is precisely not seen in the activities of men and women in Tanah Toa Kajang. They believe that the Tanah Toa Kajang environment is common property, so both men and women work outside the home, such as gardening, as well as working together at home. In everyday life, women are weaving at home. The women make tope le'leng (black sarong). They start from the weaving process to coloring the sarong with black. Although this work can be called a cottage industry,

it does not indicate a domestic job. On the contrary, weaving is one of the industries in Tanah Toa that produces a mode of production.

In addition, agricultural activities are also carried out jointly between men and women. Men prepare the land (rice fields) for cultivation, and women weed the seeds and play a role in picking rice. The Tanah Toa Kajang community has a tradition of singing together. The women sing when picking rice in the fields called *kelong palele pare* (song of picking rice).

Then, what are the women's positions in the traditional structures?. Amma Toa is always a man. Similarly, Galla is also a man. Thus, the conventional government system is regulated by those men. However, it should be noted that in selecting Amma Toa, women play a vital role. A candidate of Amma Toa could be confirmed as Amma Toa, only when two women called Anronga ri Pangsi and Anronga ri Bongki give their blessing. The blessing is shown by draping a tope from Anronga ri Pangsi and serving betel and areca nut from Anronga ri Bongki.

Women in this case also have an essential role in determining the leadership in Kajang. They do not show up to occupy Amma Toa's position, but they are behind the scenes to determine who is most worthy of being the leader. The two Anrong play in a closed public space. They do not appear in front of the public as leaders, but they train and determine their leaders.

In such activities, the power or strength of women does not appear from their position but in their roles. In the customary structure, the leader is Amma Toa, but in certain cases, for example, in determining Amma Toa, the decision comes from women (Anrong). This is like Camille Paglia's emphasis, as mentioned by Manneke Budiman (2005), that gender equality should be seen in the power relations of each party, not in the positions that determine norms or rules.

Furthermore, the relationships between men and women in the context of customary government in Tanah Toa Kajang provide a distinct identity for each subject. In multicultural feminism, one of the key concepts is intersectionality. In this case, Anrong and Amma Toa are two subjects whose identities change according to their actions. If it is developed to look at the matrix of oppression, then Anrong is a subordinate of Amma Toa in the customary system. She is subordinate, and if the terms 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' are applied, her position is 'oppressed'. On the other hand, in the selection of Amma Toa, when Anrong ri Pangsi and ri Bongki are the determinants of whether or not Amma Toa be elected, then Anrong became superior. In that position, Anrong turned into an oppressor.

Another example can be seen in a female Sanro in Tanah Toa Kajang. Sanro is a subject with multiple identities. She becomes a spiritual leader during ritual events of the human life cycle. In contrast, she becomes a wife led by her husband in her domestic life and becomes an ordinary woman in everyday life. Her figure looks so graceful, superior, and decisive compared to men in the *akkalomba* ceremony (the ritual of the baby birth) because she is the one who decides. Nevertheless, during the *andingingi borong* event (cooling the forest), she is in the shadow of Amma Toa and Galla (the men).

The relationship between men and women in the Tanah Toa Kajang community is a picture showing that domination does not run unilaterally or belongs only to men and is not one-way. It is moving, fluid, and highly depends on the ongoing relationship and the role of each party in the relationship. Thus, the Tanah Toa women's problem is not a matter of the patriarchal culture. It is a shared problem with men when dealing with external forces, including modernity, religion, and industry.

An example of the modernity problem of the Tanah Toa Kajang community is the Keluarga Berencana (KB) program. KB is a modern society program to regulate births. This program became a state policy around the 1980s until now. This program is a problem for Tanah Toa women because it is against their cultural principles.



Currently, their most challenging problem is the rubber industry which has penetrated the customary land of Tanah Toa. This resulted in the acquisition of several customary lands and the grounds of Kajang farmers. A further impact is both men and women lose their jobs.

Thus, rather than questioning the patriarchal culture in the Tanah Toa Kajang community, which is not a problem, we should encourage, quote Linda Tuhiwai Smith, the Tanah Toa Kajang woman, to voice and implement her own agenda, in terms of claiming, testimony, celebrating survival, representing, connecting, gendering, and various other agendas (Smith, 1999). In short, they speak and act for the benefit of themselves, as women, and as part of the local community.

## **Closing**

The concept of women's equality in the Tanah Toa Kajang community originates from Pasanga ri Kajang. The messages passed down from time to time through these utterances contain many teachings about the relationship between men and women. These teachings show that women should not only be treated well and should not be hurt but also get a respectable position in this community.

In addition, Pasanga ri Kajang, which embodies many teachings on gender equality, cannot be called merely local teachings but has also experienced an encounter with the universal values, especially Islamic teachings. Many terms from Islam are used in Pasanga ri Kajang. Even some of its teachings are considered to have originated from Islam. At the same time, Islamic teachings, especially those concerning gender equality, are also colored by local values.

In everyday relations between women and men, it is seen that their roles are not dominant than the other. They work together and do not recognize any different roles; men must play a role in the public sphere and women in the domestic sphere. Even if in one particular activity, men appear to be dominant, it does not indicate that women are in an inferior position because, on other agendas, women are seen as dominant.

This description of local women in the Tanah Toa Kajang community indicates that the women's movement should not be trapped in universalism, for example, by assuming that there is a women's agenda that applies universally. Having such an assumption will only lead to essentialism which has been strongly rejected by feminism itself. However, one cannot be trapped by merely celebrating the diversity of the local women's movement by altogether rejecting the values of universalism and essentialism. It is because the universal concepts and essential values of the local women's movements must be built for the benefit of the women's movement in general. Certainly, it is not essentialism or absolute universalism, but, as Spivak calls it, it is simply 'strategic essentialism' (Sangeeta Ray, 2009; Budiman, 2005).

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