

Wanita frontier pada abad ke-19 dan ekonomi keluarga

Nurul Arsyianti Arsyad, author

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Abstrak

ABSTRAK

Tesis ini menunjukkan bahwa kira-kira dari tahun 1800 sampai tahun 1900 dengan menerapkan nilai-nilai budaya Amerika, wanita frontier (daerah perbatasan) memberi sumbangan kepada ekonomi keluarga dan lingkungannya.

Pada waktu itu, pemerintah merasa perlu memperluas daerahnya ke arah barat, mengingat terus meningkatnya jumlah pendatang baru ke Dunia Baru itu. Westward Movement atau Gerakan ke Barat ini akan memberi kesempatan kepada warga Amerika untuk memiliki lahan seluas mereka inginkan, karena kawasan yang membentang sampai ke Samudra Pasifik hanya dihuni suku Indian dan binatang buas. Perbatasan di antara daerah yang sudah dihuni dan yang belum dihuni disebut frontier. Penghuni frontier disebut pioneer atau perintis. Mereka harus menjalani hidup yang sangat sulit disebabkan medan yang sering tidak bersahabat, iklim dan cuaca yang sering merugikan, serta ancaman serangan suku Indian.

Khususnya wanita frontier memikul beban tugas yang arnat berat. Di samping pekerjaan rumah tangga biasa, seperti memasak, mencuci, membersihkan, dan sebagainya, dia juga mengurus trenak sapi dan unggas, bercocok tanam sayuran di pekarangan, dan mencari bahan bakar kayu dan gambut. Kecuali itu dia juga menjadi guru anak-anaknya yang masih kecil, yang belum mampu berjalan jauh ke sekolah di kota kecil terdekat. Dia juga merawat anggota keluarga yang sakit, mengawetkan makanan untuk musim salju, serta membuat lilin, mentega dan keju sendiri. Tidak jarang wanita frontier membantu suaminya di ladang atau turut menghalau atau menangkis serangan-serangan suku Indian.

Untuk menambah pendapatan keluarga dan menyumbang ekonomi lingkungannya, wanita frontier sering menjual produk rumah tangganya, seperti telur, susu, mentega, keju, sayuran dan daging yang sudah diawetkan, di kota kecil terdekat. Tidak jarang dia menjual hasil jahitan dan rajutannya seperti taplak meja, spre, atau selimut.

Sebagai wanita frontier dia tidak mungkin melakukan semua pekerjaan di atas tanpa menerapkan nilai-nilai budaya Amerika. Beberapa di antara nilai-nilai yang diterapkan wanita frontier adalah keraa keras, individualisme, dan self-reliance atau mengandalkan kemampuan diri sendiri.

<i>ABSTRACT</i>

This thesis attempts to show that approximately between 1800 and 1900 American frontier women made contributions to the economies of the family and environment, while applying American cultural values, such as hard work, individualism, and self-reliance.

Because the increase of new immigrants in America, the government launched the Westward Movement to find new land for the population. The border between the populated and new territory is called frontier.

Farmers and their families who lived on the frontier owned large lands, but they had a difficult and hard life. They had to work their lands by themselves, because they lived far from their neighbors and their neighbors were also too busy with their farms. These pioneers had to work very hard and had to protect themselves from wild animals and Indian attacks.

Especially the wives must work very hard. They had to do the household work, such as cooking, washing, cleaning, and sewing. They also had to teach their small children, who could not walk to the distant schools. Wives also had to nurse sick family. They also looked after their cows and chickens, and vegetable garden. Wives often helped their husbands in the fields and had to collect wood and peat as fuels for cooking and to keep warm in the winter. Beside performing the above work, wives usually sell products in the nearest small city. For instance she sold eggs, milk, home made butter and cheese, sewn or knitted ware, such as tablecloths and blankets.

The frontier women carried out all the above work by applying American norms, such as hard work, individualism, and self-reliance.

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