

Industrialisation, the State and Education: their role in "Demographic Improvement" among a cohort of rural factory women in West Java

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Abstract. The research incorporates a generational study with an emphasis on the opinions, attitudes and beliefs of the female respondents themselves, which are compared and contrasted with those of their mothers. In essence the research explores the impacts of industrialisation on the culturally-grounded status of women in West Java and around Banjaran in 1996/97. Status of women is analysed in terms of decision making power in the household, control of income, control of the young women's human resource (factory labour) and within the realm of gender relations in Banjaran, both in the household and the village. The social and economic impacts and outcomes of industrial development upon cultural values, attitudes and traditional employment of women are important to the demographic impacts apparent in the findings of this paper.

Keywords: Women's status; female employment; age at marriage; industrial development; cultural change; education of women; sundanese women; West Java; 1997.

1. Introduction

In 1996/97 approximately 200 million people lived in Indonesia. Of these, over 84 million people lived on Java, a small island which makes up only 6% of the total Indonesian land mass. West Java is Indonesia's most populated province and if the special territory of Jakarta is combined with West Java, a population of over 50 million people is achieved. The province of West Java is only 46,000 square kilometers and heavily over-populated. Inhabited by the Sundanese, West Java has exhibited problematic demographic trends in the recent past, including very young marriage age (for women), high fertility levels

and resistance to family planning. These problems were traced to Sundanese culture, Islamic traditions and intense patriarchal structures and the consequent poorer status of women there. Sundanese culture had in the past inhibited the improvement of economic, educational and social status of its women and hence demographic problems in the province were immense.

2. Background

Demographically, West Java stands apart from the entire nation. Between 1971 and 1995 West Java's population more than doubled. In 1995 the province's fertility rate was more than twice that of Java's two other major provinces, inhabited by the Javanese. Here the infant mortality and maternal mortality rates were far higher than the rest of Java and amongst the highest in the nation, and women tend to marry at very young ages and continue to exhibit extremely low education levels (CBS 1996). West Java is the nation's most industrialised province and contributes more to the national investment yet it remains relatively backward economically, demographically and socially. However, the findings of this research show significant improvement in these indicators when a cohort of young Sundanese factory workers were sampled. These findings show that the combination of industrial employment, which caused improved status (demographic and social) among the women, with state-driven family planning schemes caused significant improved demographic indicators among the women sampled when compared to those exhibited by their mothers. Further, education and state involvement in industrial development were found to have positive impacts upon women's status and hence upon their improved demographic position. Nevertheless, the education standards, status and demographic indicators of the young highland women sampled were comparatively very poor and this was a result of geography, poor transport and educational infrastructure and continuing tradition in highland regions, despite the fact that the highland areas were only 8 kms the lowland areas sampled. For example, the average age highland factory women left school was 12 years, compared to 15.2 years for lowland women. This point highlights the great influence geography has upon women's status in highland Banjaran and is discussed below.

Female labour force participation rates (FLPRs) in West Java in 1990 were less than two thirds those of the rest of Java. Further, the official unemployment rate of females in West Java in 1990 was more than double the level of the rest of Java's provinces (ILO 1992). Finally, female labour participation rates in the agricultural sector in West Java are far below, not only

that of the rest of Java provinces, but the entire nation. This long standing problematic position of female labour in West Java is ultimately the outcome of a culture which favours the economic position of men over women, despite the obvious importance of female labour to the provincial and national economy. This position has been exacerbated over the last 50 years as the provincial population has increased incrementally, quickly making West Java Indonesia's most populated province. A very large population, densely settled with a scarcity of new arable land has meant women have been further disadvantaged regarding traditional employment. Increasingly, Sundanese men have found themselves unemployed and under-employed, forcing many women out of competition for employment in a patriarchal system developed to support the employment of men as breadwinner. Industrial employment has in many instances provided salvation for women in the province as factories employ predominantly, young and unmarried women who are providing positive demographic incentives to their female siblings, all of which will eventually lead to sustainable demographic transition among these women.

3. Methodology

This paper focuses upon a cohort of female factory workers from rural West Java. 323 women were interviewed, surveyed and observed, as were their families, during 8 month fieldwork carried out in 1996/97 in Banjaran, West Java. One-third of these women lived in the highlands, while two-thirds resided in lowland areas. This region is undergoing rapid industrial development and as a result is absorbing tens of thousands of young women from traditional lifestyles into factory employment. This transition has significant implications for the demographic and economic status of women in the region and Indonesia in general. This paper focuses upon the impacts of industrial capitalism upon the household, village, regional and national status of such women. Banjaran was chosen as a research site because it is rapidly industrialising, subject to the forces of modernisation, yet in many regards the region remains traditionally oriented with rural agriculture the mainstay of economy and culture there. As a research site, Banjaran was an ideal place to measure the impacts of the intrusion of large factories upon traditional village life, and especially upon young women and their relationship to tradition.

4. The Nuclear Family

The fact that over 85% of the households surveyed were classified as nuclear is not a completely true indication of the Banjaran region in general. This is because the study was focused only upon factory women and their families, the majority of whom came from landless families. The landowning classes rarely allowed their daughters to work in factories and tended to have large extended families. The poor create household strategies to survive or improve their situation. The level of strategic coordination was high among the household researched and decisions to work in factories involved both parents, husbands and occasionally other siblings. On the surface at least, poor household worked as unified units in their quest for survival. The women studied were predominantly part of a nuclear household strategy, but were also individuals struggling to adapt to factory work and to their new position and role in the household and in society at large. One common aspect of household strategy was to delay the marriage age of their working daughters and ensure that those who were married did not have more than two children to ensure their employment could continue. This is a critical factor, demographics became a part of household survival strategies and "Sundanese patriarchy" is finally releasing the importance of demographic aspects to survival strategies.

When a young couple move into a new residence the young husband assumes the role of *Bapak* (father). However, Sundanese brides need the protection of their parents and if a conflict results, they especially need the public support of their fathers. On the other hand, the young husbands seem to have less family support. The ideal is that young brides are extremely vulnerable when first married and are often blamed for marriage breakdowns. Therefore, the supposed patriarchal sanctuary of marriage is a contradiction. Patriarchy in Indonesia is supposed to provide protection to a woman's reputation but the reality is it can be just as easily tarnished by a bad marriage. Even after marriage, women need the continual protection of their husband or father. This has enormous implications for household status and employment and ultimately upon demographic factors, because married and unmarried women have been traditionally constrained by the protective and contradictory notions of local and state patriarchy. These assumptions are facing a pragmatic and irrepressible confrontation now that young women are entering the work force and gaining valuable experience which will allow them at least to challenge the contradictions of patriarchy, or more realistically, identify where patriarchy is failing them. The deconstructed assumptions of patriarchy, its contradictions of power, control and gender and their impacts upon marriage ECT were obvious in Banjaran.

5. Javanese and Sundanese Women: historical background

Comparisons are made between the roles of Sundanese and Javanese women to explain the very different household functions, decision making processes and forms of patriarchy which operate among both groups of women. Ethnographic studies of Javanese women are common, while Sundanese ethnography is virtually non-existent. Therefore, this paper provides a new perspective of women's status in West Java, essentially contrasting Sundanese women with their Javanese cousins. I argue that Javanese women enjoy higher status for economic reasons. Landless rural Javanese females are significantly involved in waged labour from an early age. On the other hand, Sundanese women have traditionally been denied this. For example, a similar local study found that landless Javanese women spent 80% of their productive capacities in hard labour, usually far from their homes (Hart 1986:128). Sundanese women do not participate to the same extent in paid labour activities.

Javanese women have, according to Wolf (1992:57), inherited higher status than most of their Asian counterparts in terms of kinship and inheritance. According to Javanese law (*adat*) sons and daughters inherit equally and women have the ability to own land. Sundanese women also have the ability to own land and do inherit equally to their brothers. However, Sundanese women have inherently different status from Javanese women which contradicts any connection made between inheritance system and female status as Javanese and Sundanese women exhibit very different household status. Many of the older married women encountered were treated in a child like manner by their husbands. Javanese women do suffer these child like references but have the ability to assert some independence before they are married, especially when they earn an income outside the home (Vreede-de Stuers 1960:44; Koentjaraningrat 1985:139). These authors see a strong relationship between Javanese women's high status in the household and their high levels of participation in the economy, high levels not traditionally enjoyed by Sundanese women and which in the past exacerbated West Java's population growth and resistance to family planning.

Historically, Javanese women came from a very different rice culture than did the Sundanese and this has had a major influence upon their household status. The 1930 Dutch economic surveys conducted among the Javanese found that on average 50% to 80% of the labour expended on *sawah* was by women, who traditionally occupied the most labour intensive and time consuming positions. By contrast, similar surveys conducted among the Sundanese found

that in the same era men dominated agrarian employment due to an economic crisis (Van Der Kloff 1936:17 cited in Locher-Scholten and Niehof 1987). Furthermore, according to the economic census of 1930 women in West Java were not involved in paid work to the same extent as were Javanese women. In that census, 44% of Javanese women were active in the workforce, compared to only 23% of women in West Java (Locher-Scholten and Niehof 1987:85). In the 1930s and beyond rural Sundanese women did not work, at least not to the same extent as did Javanese women, and continued to exhibit very low FLPRs (Jones and Manning 1992:369). Different household status resulted, which in turn impacts upon household organisation, patriarchy and women's contemporary position regarding factory employment.

Most studies in Southeast Asia allude to ever-increasing land shortages, but continue to portray peasants as predominantly agriculturalists. This may be true in other areas, but in West Java land shortages have precluded most from agricultural work for many decades. Even before World War II land shortages were extreme, and in a survey area very close to Banjaran, 44% of all families were landless, another 25% had only a compound to live in and 23% owned plots of dry and low yielding land of less than one Ha. (Dam 1956:91). By the 1990s land shortages were more extreme, to the point that rural areas in West Java do not provide significant agricultural employment at all. The words of two mothers of factory daughters in Banjaran support this observation.

In my mother's and grandmother's era it was more common for women to work in sawah and earn a little wage which was usually paid to their father or husband. In my era, with so many people and new settlements, many fields have changed into villages and there is not much work, especially for women. In my mother's era not many children survived, but in my era all the children survive forcing mothers to stay at home. My grandmother owned sawah herself but was forced to sell it to a developer for house. All I have now is some ducks and they are just a hobby.

In my mother's life and even in my life, women only worked a few weeks a year with their husbands then they would be pregnant again. Then they would have too many pressures. In my daughters era women have only two choices, they can marry or work in a factory. Today's women cannot help by working in sawah anymore because most of the land is gone to developers.

Agriculture was very important to the local economy of the highlands regions studied. This is evidenced by the fact that 53% of the "factory" fathers surveyed worked in agrarian pursuit compared to only 33% of the entire cohort sampled. In the lowland regions sampled agricultural only employed 19% of

fathers surveyed. Further, agricultural wages were significantly lower in the highlands compared to the lowlands. Almost half of the young factory women living in the highlands were already married which was a ratio vastly higher than the figures obtained from the entire cohort sampled (39%) or when compared to data from the lowland regions. The highland regions were continuing to rely on traditional agricultural practices and marriage customs which also inhibited the educational and economic advancement of its young women. However, the influences of industrial employment are quickly eroding traditional Sundanese notions that women are a burden. Notions which have created problematic demographic outcomes for the Sundanese.

6. Sundanese Kinship System and Patriarchy

Kinship systems differ on the basis of class among the Sundanese, as they do with the Javanese and most groups in Indonesia. "Marrying off" a daughter among the landless Sundanese was traditionally the only viable option for most. While many young unmarried Javanese women travel away from their villages in search of employment in Indonesia's industrial areas, this option is not appealing to the Sundanese who continue to view female migration as immoral. Therefore, to marry and especially to marry into a family "better off" than your family is the only hope for most landless women. By traditionally marrying their daughters at an early age the Sundanese attempt to relieve themselves of a financial burden, that is a woman who has very little access to employment and by marrying she must be supported by her husband. This helps to explain very low marriage ages among Sundanese women recently. However, it was obvious in *Banjaran* that among many young married couples the husband was in fact a burden upon his new wife and family. Many young husbands had little or no income and the majority had very unstable incomes. They were dependent upon their wives' factory wages and her family's support.

The Sundanese women spoke with had fixed views toward work. They saw it as a way to improve the education and life's chances of their children or younger siblings. They were prepared to work hard if it meant that improved living standards from that of their mothers' era resulted and displayed more aptitude in formulating and instigating long term plans in this regard. Factory employment has acted as a catalyst and most women see the opportunity it provides them compared to very limited opportunity in the agricultural or trading sectors. Women have been provided with relatively long term and stable employment which has impacted upon their work ethic. Male employment, which is predominantly unstable, has created a long term work ethic whereby men tend

not to make long term economic plans and live on a daily basis. Improved living standard always equated to increased marriage ages, personal choice of spouse and no more than two children spaced well apart among the women sampled.

It is viewed that patriarchy as a trade-off. Women trade-in lower status for protection (financial, moral and sexual) of their reputation (marriageability and re-marriageability). But as population densities have escalated and modern influences encroach upon Banjaran, patriarchal notions are finding it impossible to fulfil traditional protective roles and conflict results. The promises of patriarchy are no longer affordable or pragmatic to many women studied, especially to those financially protecting men in their family. While Sundanese notions of patriarchy have not failed women *per se*, they have had their power eroded.

In gross terms, 40% of the women surveyed said they felt their status had increased as a result of factory work and therefore they had more control over key demographic indicators (marriage age, choice of spouse and number of children and the timing of all of these). The remaining 60% believed their household status had not changed. Of the women (40%) who claimed to see a positive improvement in their status, roughly 45% stated that this was predominantly due their wages, and the remaining 55% claimed it was due to the fact that they were not in the home all the time and therefore not confined to household duties. These findings were supported by focus group and interview data. There was a common theme present among those who claimed their status had increased due to their wages (45%). These women were usually from the poorest of those families researched and in most cases their wages the mainstay of the family. Usually the most common social factor evident among the cohort in highland areas who claimed increased status as a result of dislocation from their home (55%) was that these women tended to come from areas where traditional confinement to the house and the village was more strictly adhered to, usually in highland areas.

At this point it is easy to see why the demographic status of young Sundanese factory women has significantly more ability to improve than did the status of their mothers. Data on the employment patterns of all the mothers of factory women was collected. The small minority of mothers who did work were predominantly confined to two sectors; agriculture or household servitude. The average monthly income for house servants in Banjaran was Rp 40,000 (US\$13.00) per month and agricultural wages for women averaged Rp 50,000 per month. The average income of factory women was Rp 125,000 per month. Rp 125,000 per month is, in itself, a small amount for hard work, however, when

this is compared to the vastly inferior average incomes of their mothers, factory women have significantly more potential to improve status through financial means.

Factory employment places a new generation of women in a new situation regarding patriarchy and status. It was surprised that less than half of the respondents surveyed (who claimed increased status 40%) used their new incomes as an explanation as to why their status was different to that of their mothers. On the other hand, more than 50% were adamant that because they had the ability to travel far from their village to factories and spent more time away from home than actually in their home that their status had changed for the better. Because they were commonly away from home the factory women missed the constant reinforcement of patriarchy, at the household, village and national levels. They were to a certain extent immune from destiny (*kodrat*) in contrast to other women who remained in the village. Therefore, many destinies actually contradict family planning policy in Indonesia and interfere with their implementation and coordination between these is necessary.

Apart from wages and dislocation, women usually measured their status by the degree to which they were included in family decision making processes, their ability to make independent demographic, social and economic decisions and in their ability to solve family problems. That is, by being away from their homes, their village and experiencing new and complex happenings in the factories, including Western notions of production, foreign managers, buyers and investors, they gained valuable and high status experience which allowed them the ability to solve problems in their households. Many parents claimed they were surprised by their daughters maturity and intelligence when they were asked to participate in problem solving after they had experienced factory work. Moreover, factory wages had a complementary impact upon these worldly experiences and both were unavailable to their mothers or grandmothers. Experience and wages, the result of geographic dislocation from their homes, were the key to improving the status of Sundanese women in the home.

Household status of Sundanese women has developed over generations. It is grounded at the household and village level. Because women in the region rarely left the household or worked outside the home and were confined to the village, household status for Sundanese women has been literally just that. They have been bound to a tradition which forbade women from travelling alone, from leaving their village, unless on important business and a tradition which saw almost all young women become just like their mothers, married early, not working and poor and confined by large numbers of children.

The words of the women themselves taken from focus groups and interviews highlight this condition.

"Traditionally, the father was like a king in the home and the women had to follow his orders. However, because we work away from home and earn a wage we have greater status from our mothers and grandmothers. We know this when we are asked to help make decisions or are asked for our advice. Our mothers were not in this position. They were never in this position. they were a burden".

"If a young woman can show that she is responsible by working for a long period of time in the factory she will usually be asked to help solve problems and her wage gives her the ability to do this. If our sisters stay at home and never work they will have status just like their mothers, it is their traditional position in the family. If we married now, and our husbands wanted to be like men from the past there is nothing we can do we must accept this, but it would not be good".

7. Marriage

Sundanese women are portrayed as weaker than men, especially sexually. This helps to explain very low marriage ages among them as they prescribe that women need to be married early before their wild desires surface and cause gossip. Elmhirst (1990:187) claims the protection of women's sexuality and gender idealising in the household leads to the strict allocation of women to gender specific and very limited tasks, which in turn reinforces the image of Indonesian women as gentle, caring and weak. Elmhirst claims the roles accorded women in the home translates to their status in the workplace, especially in factory work and the associated feminisation of certain industries. Factory work is considered appropriate for Javanese women, but was originally resisted by the Sundanese and now it is only considered appropriate for poor families without access to land. Ideally, father and husbands should have access to the means of controlling their daughters activities outside the home. In Banjaran they had this access, until factory work took their daughters well out of their reach, which is perhaps the most significant catalyst for changes in recent history.

The social ordering of sexual relations is crucial among the Sundanese. Women were traditionally married at very early ages to protect them from sex, or according to myth, to control their insatiable sexual appetites. Many fathers continue to push their daughters into early marriages to avoid shame. However, just as many fathers have experienced the positive outcomes of having daughters working in factories as a result of improved education (among other things) and

now see the value of delaying the marriage age of their daughters, and once married in ensuring they have no more than two children.

Thirty nine percent of the women sampled were married. Their ages ranged from 14 years to 39 years. The average age of married women surveyed was 25.5 years (Tabel 1). Of the married women sampled, 29% lived alone with their husbands. Their income earning capacity was very high. This was due to the fact that factory work, despite being exploitative, was a year round job, with minimal seasonal breaks or low periods, while most men in the region work only spasmodically. Of the married women surveyed, 57% earned equal to or more than their husbands or fathers. Of the 29% of the married cohort living in a purely nuclear household, 73% earned equal to or more than their husbands on a monthly basis. Further, of this 29%, 2% had very unusual arrangements where the women worked and the husband stayed at home caring for children. These husbands were questioned and felt ashamed of their position, but stated it was the best way to organise their household without the interference of their parents who wanted the wife to stop working and stay at home. This would have led to data above, if the household head was to be the major income earner in a household as many claim (especially the Indonesia state) then young married Sundanese women who work year round should automatically become household heads. But they don't.

Apart from employment, increasing average age at first marriage (AAF_M) and choice of husband are potentially the most significant catalysts to social change among young Sundanese women studied. More than 90% of the women surveyed stated they had the right to marry the man they loved as long as their parents agreed, a considerable change from commonly arranged and very young marriages of their mothers. All stated that marrying under the age of 20 years was bad for women and having more than two children detrimental to their health and economic wellbeing. Contemporary women have access to information about government family planning programs and adhered to their ideologies in private and in practice. However, the quantitative reality of marriage ages among the young women surveyed revealed a slightly different, though improving demographic situation of young factory workers regarding marriage ages.

The AAF_M of the married factory women was 17.2 years. Their overall average age at the time of the survey 25.5 was years, compared to an average age of 19.4 years for the cohort of unmarried factory women. The combined average age of married and unmarried factory women was 22 years. Therefore, the cohort of married factory workers represented an older generation (with an

average age of 25.5 years compared to 19.4 years for the unmarried workers. The AAFM of the married factory women (17.2 years) is still quite low and contradicts the claims of focus group and interview respondents that 20 years of age was the best age to get married. However, considering the fact that the average age of the unmarried cohort of factory women 19.4 years, marriage ages are dramatically increasing among the Sundanese, especially amongst women who work in factories. A highland/lowland comparison reveals very different average marriage ages among the cohort of married factory women. In the highland areas the AAFM of factory women was 15.8 years compared to 18.2 years for lowland areas (Table 1). Despite the fact that these areas are very close geographically, very different marriage ages are evidence of continuing traditional and geographic influences in the highlands.

The comparatively low AAFM of the mothers of the factory women provides a brief insight into the recent history of Sundanese women. The AAFM of surveyed mothers was 14.3 years compared to 17.2 years for their daughters. However, when these figures are broken into a highland/lowland distinction, significant patterns emerge. For example, the AAFM of the mothers in lowland areas was 15.6 years compared to 13.3 years in highland areas (Table 1). This distinction between married and unmarried factory women, combined with the highland/lowland distinction provides an interesting insight into the differences operating between the more traditional highland areas and lowland Banjaran. The highland areas are less affected by industrial development and modernisation and more importantly lack proper access to education after primary school.

An interesting challenge to traditional marriage age and practices is provided by factory employment. A sideline to this challenge is in-factory marriages. Many of the women who work in factories meet their husbands at the workplace. The factories are providing some women with a wider choice of spouse, from a larger geographic area and providing husbands who have the relative financial security of factory employment. Their mothers had very limited choices in these regards, and tended to marry men who worked in agriculture, lived nearby and were known to their family for many years. Factory husbands were becoming an increasingly prevalent phenomenon and young factory couples were obviously better off than most and were usually in a position to buy or build their own home. The factories themselves provided an alternative to tradition and many couples chose to be married on the factory grounds and not in their *kampung*s. This is an unprecedented phenomena and the factory management supported factory marriage alliances by allowing young couples the use of factory facilities to hold their marriage ceremonies. In these situations factories have taken away the traditional role of local village alliances in

organising marriages. In 1996 this was only occurring on a small scale, but is a significant occurrence. In one weekend, for example, three couples married at a local shoes factory and marriage ceremonies carried out with traditional dress and festivities were held in the unlikely place of a large foreign-run factory.

8. Education and Marriage

All women surveyed stated that when their children grow up they will need a better education than they had. They must reach a better future than their parents so they do not have to work in factories. Education and factory employment are two crucial factors in relation to female status among Sundanese. Factory employment encourages women to improve their education and better educated women are less prone to work in the most exploitative factories and hence have more opportunity to improve their status. Most of the women in the focus groups stated that they would ensure that their daughters received a good education because they knew if they did not they would not have to work in factories like Feng Tay (Nike). This factory was commonly used as a yardstick to measure against other factories by the local community.

Most of the large factories in Banjaran employed women only if they had completed SMP or high school education. Other factories provided incentives, such as higher wages and more elite production work to workers who had completed SMA or senior high school. Other less scrupulous factories such as Feng Tay (Nike) employ women with no education at all. This tends to concentrate uneducated women into the most exploitative factories, causing many to leave factory work soon after starting. This in turn tended to create problems in the home, whereby these women were seen as failures. In general poorly educated workers had a very short working life due to the overt exploitation they faced and tended not to attempt formal employment again as they were ashamed (*malu*) because they could not support their families as they knew other female workers did. This caused such women to marry at unusually low ages and was a negative outcome of industrial employment upon women's status.

Each social survey sought data about the factory workers' education level compared to their mothers. The findings are presented below and correlate strongly with the marriage ages above, especially when the married cohort of factory women (and their mothers), were compared to the unmarried cohort. It must be remembered, however, that the average age of both cohort of factory women, married and unmarried, was different by 6 years. Between the two cohorts, significant differences in education levels resulted. Of the married

cohort, education levels were significantly lower when compared to their unmarried counterparts. At the same time there was very little difference in the education levels of the mothers from either cohort. For example, 51% of the married cohort (average age of 25.5 years) had no education or only completed SD or primary school, while only 28% of the unmarried cohort fitted this low education category. Further, 69% of the unmarried cohort had completed high school or senior high school compared to only 44% of the married cohort (Table 1). Low AAFMs correlate strongly with low education. In lieu of the educational differences highlighted it is evident that significant changes are occurring rapidly among Sundanese women. Many more women are completing their education, even over a period of six years and this has helped to improve many problematic demographic indicators in the region.

The highland/lowland distinction reveals a stark contrast in education levels of the women studied and highlights the influences of geography and cost upon education attainment. In the highland areas education levels were disturbingly low. Of the highland mothers studied, almost all (97%) had no education or only completed primary school. The lowland mothers had slightly better education levels, with only 69% stating that they had no education or completed primary school. More specifically, of the entire cohort of lowland and highland mothers surveyed 34% stated they had no education. Forty nine per cent of the mother surveyed in the highland areas fitted this lowest of education categories. Of the factory daughters studied in the highland areas 70% had no education or only completed primary education compared to only 30% among the lowland cohort. At the junior high school and senior high school level 70% of the lowland cohort had achieved these higher levels compared to only 30% among factory daughters in the highland villages. The lower education levels of highland mothers tended to be reflected in their daughters education standards and in turn in their comparatively lower AAFMs.

The major reasons highland women do not attend school after primary level is distance and cost, combined with the influence of a more traditional patriarchy. Primary school are available in the highlands. However, when young women graduate they face the problem of getting to distant high school (8 kms). Costs of transport, food, books, clothing and fees preclude most from continuing their education and the road systems are so poor that many who do attempt to continue soon give up after travelling daily up and down treacherous roads sometimes for two hours a day. The investment is not worth the expense and time according to those interviewed because there are really no jobs for anyone with a good education unless they have good connections needed to get a government job.

There was evidence of disillusionment with the education system in the highland regions and in some cases decreased female status in the home resulted from supposed improvements in female education levels. Many of the parents of young women who had afforded the expense of a junior high school or senior high school education were annoyed that their daughters were unable to find stable and well paid employment despite promises by the state that increased education was the key to alleviating poverty. Many female high school graduates were no better off than if they had left school at primary school. Improved educational infrastructure in highlands regions of West Java is desperately needed, especially for young women so as to ensure the positive social and demographic status observed, especially among better educated lowland women, continues and is sustained.

Table 1
AVERAGE AGE OF RESPONDENTS, AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE AND
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY EDUCATION
AND PLACE, BANJARAN, WEST JAVA, 1997

	Married Cohort (1)	Unmarried Cohort (2)	Combined Cohort (3)	Mothers Cohort (4)	Highland Mothers (5)	Lowland Mothers (6)
Average Age (Years)	25.5	19.4	22.0	NA	NA	NA
AAFM (Years)	17.2	NA	17.2	14.7	13.3	15.6
Highland AAFM	15.8	NA	15.8	NA	15.6	NA
Lowland AAFM	18.2	NA	18.2	NA	15.6	NA
No Completed Education (%)	5	3	NA	34	49	28
SD Education or lower (%)	51	28	NA	74	97	69
Highland			70			
Lowland			30			
Completed SMP or SMA (%)	44	69	NA	26	3	31
Highland			30			
Lowland			70			

Note: NA = Not applicable. The NA Columns 4 and 6 in the Average Age (Years) section is because the "current" age of mothers was not sought only their AAFM.

9. Attitudes of *Lurahs* (Village Heads)

Seventeen *Lurahs* or Village Heads in Banjaran were interviewed to gain their perspective. Those *Lurahs* who resided over *desa* with high numbers

of factory workers claimed that the new factory wages of young women increased the income of their respective *desa*. Five of the 17 *Lurahs* interviewed stated that factory work was more important than agriculture in regard to the local cash economy. The remaining *Lurahs* (except two) stated that women's wages positively contributed to local development and provide incentives to other women not to have "many" children as did their mothers. Incomes from factory wages help to elevate the status of the *desa* by helping to improve its yearly budget. Therefore, without doubt, factory women contribute in many ways to the development of their local geographic area and at the same time provides a significant positive impact to other young women considering early marriage and to the traditional patriarchy which has in the past represented women as an economic burden.

At the household level all *Lurahs* acknowledged that the income from women in factories has been most helpful to their husbands and fathers. However, in the long term, most *Lurahs* acknowledged that women's wages will benefit the entire *desa*. One *Lurah* stated, "that because their wages can be used for the education of children and at the same time the example provided by factory women inspires other women to increase their education, employment prospects and status of the *desa*. Factory women are good for our development because they help to improve the status of younger women and decrease our population problems". Another *Lurah* stated that "as women find it very easy to get factory work, their contribution to the development of human resources in the *desa* is increasing each year and becoming more important". And yet again, another *Lurah* stated "factory wages increase the families' incomes and allow many poor families to participate for the first time in the economic and social development of the *desa*".

Other comments by the *Lurahs* are recorded to highlight the way in which the importance of women's wages are viewed by local government.

"Factory wages are good because they improve health and education and at the same time give new experience to our young women. Factory work creates good views on our women in the world and working makes the families realize the importance of a good education. Factory work also increase marriage age. Working in the factories reduces unemployment and supports the development of the desa. It also takes a burden off their parents and they are able to suffice their own needs. Their wages can be used to buy secondary items such as clothes and televisions. Women can now support their kampung's activities and spend more at ceremonies. The women working in the factories gain knowledge and new life skill which helps the kampung".

Two *Lurahs* had more negative comments to report and did not support the idea that women should work in factories. Both *Lurahs* were negative

towards women working in factories because the *desa* cannot transmit the central government programs to them because they are always at work. They also stated that because such women have less time to supervise them and this is bad because it is women's responsibility to bring up the children (*kodrat*). However, it is found that Sundanese women working in factories to be acutely aware of Government Programs and they adhered to them, especially Family Planning Program. Factory employment had not inhibited their loyalty to their government or family as these two *Lurahs* claimed.

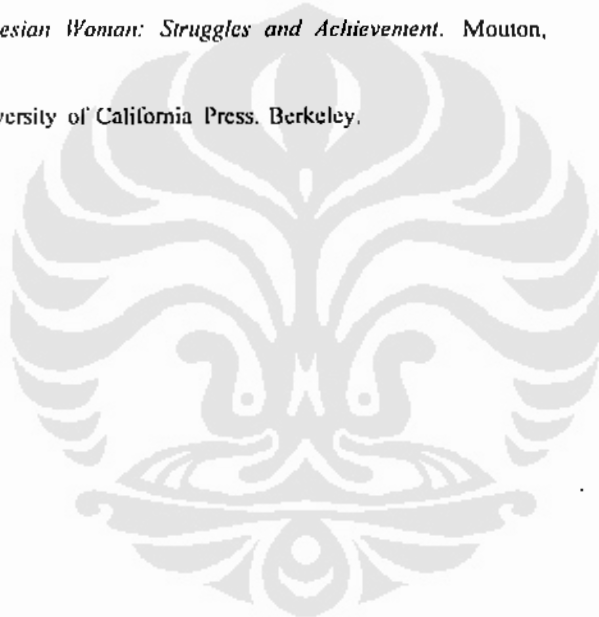
10. Conclusion

Industrialisation has had significant positive impacts upon the demographic status of Sundanese women. However, industrial employment *per se* cannot achieve this as indicated by the data from highland women discussed above. Factory work needs to be supported by effective education, state intervention and by changing patriarchal beliefs. The analysis of the continuing problems faced by highland factory women in this paper highlight these factors. Poor educational infrastructure combined with geographic problems inhibit the improved status of many young Sundanese factory workers. Improved road system, transport facilities and education would significantly improve the demographic position of highland women. Women who find it extremely difficult to destroy traditional notions that they are working in factories and earning relatively good incomes.

Overall, education, state intervention and industrial development have helped to improve the demographic status of women in Banjaran. To achieve this, however, required changing patriarchal and attitudes toward women. Not all of the women sampled had achieved such positive results once employed in factories, but most were striving to this end. However, it is obvious given the data pertaining to the mothers of factory women discussed above that a considerable and "positive" gap exists between the two generation of women regarding education, employment, tradition and hence demographic status. In time more positive outcomes will ensue, but this also depends on the state in Indonesia further promoting the status of women and putting in place infrastructure in highland regions as well as eliminating contradictory state policy such as *kodrat* which continues to portray women as obedient to men as belonging in the home.

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