MAMA PAPUA’S ROLE IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SOCIETY:  
CASE STUDY OF THE DANI TRIBE IN JAYAWIJAYA REGENCY, PAPUA,  
INDONESIA

O PAPEL DA MAMA PAPUA NA SOCIEDADE SOCIOECONÔMICA:  
ESTUDO DE CASO DA TRIBO DANI NA REGENCIA DE JAYAWIJAYA, PAPUA,  
INDONÉSIA

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to mainstream the figure of the Papuan mama (mother) and its role in socio-economic conditions, especially in the Dani tribe in Jayawijaya Regency, Papua, which has so far received little attention. In addition, this research is to enrich the treasures of women in socio-economic history. The existence of the Papuan mama can survive the deplorable economic conditions and the shackled traditional social structure. The ethnographic method used in this research is Naturalistic. The purpose of the naturalistic ethno is to illustrate that the ethnographic research carried out aims to capture the natural character of the Papuan mama and is obtained through direct contact, not through intervention or conditioning. Data collection techniques used by observation, literature review, and documentation. The results show that Papuan mama is the central figure in the household, loved by her children, a symbol of struggle, and a source of inspiration for today's women, especially in Papua.

KEYWORDS: Papuan Mama; Dani Tribe; Women’s Emancipation; Indonesia

RESUMO: Este estudo visa integrar a figura da mama papua (mãe) e seu papel nas condições socioeconômicas, especialmente na tribo Dani na regência Jayawijaya, Papua, que até agora recebeu pouca atenção. Além disso, esta pesquisa é para

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enriquecer os tesouros das mulheres na história socioeconômica. A existência da mama papua pode sobreviver às condições econômicas deploráveis e à estrutura social tradicional algemada. O método etnográfico utilizado nesta pesquisa é o Naturalista. O objetivo do etno naturalista é ilustrar que a pesquisa etnográfica realizada visa capturar o caráter natural da mama papua e é obtida por contato direto, não por intervenção ou condicionamento. Técnicas de coleta de dados utilizadas por observação, revisão de literatura e documentação. Os resultados mostram que a mãe papua é a figura central da casa, amada por seus filhos, símbolo de luta e fonte de inspiração para as mulheres de hoje, especialmente em Papua.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Mamãe Papua; Tribo Dani; Emancipação da Mulher; Indonésia

1 INTRODUCTION

There have been many studies that explain how important the figure of women and mothers is, even beyond the boundaries of state, religion, culture and race. In Indonesia, there are very famous quotes that describe the importance of women and mothers, namely "women are the pillars of the country, if the woman is good then the country is good and if the woman is damaged then the country is also damaged" (NURLINA, 2019; MUSTAQIM; TAMAM; RAHMAN, 2021). However, the narrative of great women and mothers is still dominated by women and mothers who come from urban community groups. The mother figure from the interior tribe is often missed in the narrative of women's emancipation in Indonesia. Even though Indonesia is one of the countries in the world that is very multicultural both in terms of race, ethnicity, religion and culture (MALIHAH, 2015; NOOR; SUGITO, 2019; ZAMRONI et al., 2021). One of the causes is the lack of research and publications on the emancipation or role of mothers from rural tribes, in fact there are many stories about the important role of mothers in the structure of tribal society.

At a time when there are still restrictions on indigenous tribal customs, mainstreaming the narrative of the mother figure from the hinterland must be an important agenda in fulfilling sustainable development and strengthening current gender mainstreaming. This means that the narrative of the greatness of women and mothers should not only be dominated by women and mothers from urban communities with all adequate facilities and wide opportunities to develop their
potential. It is different with women and mothers from remote tribal communities who are very limited and underdeveloped, both in terms of competitive opportunities, developing self-potential, job training, health and education.

Researchers are interested in studying the mother figure of the Dani tribe in Jayawijaya Regency, Papua Province, Indonesia, when the researcher served as a teacher at Niniki State Elementary School, Pyramid District, Jayawijaya Regency, Papua through the Undergraduate Education Program in Frontier, Outermost, Disadvantaged Regions (SM-3T) by the Ministry of Research and Higher Education (Kemenristekdikti) in Batch V, period August 2015-August 2016. The figure of the Papuan mother in the socio-economic life of the indigenous Papuan people is one of the researchers' concerns, apart from children, education, and nationalism in Papua.

Not only being a teacher, the researcher is also the Head of the Education Division of SM-3T in Jayawijaya and chair of the Jayawijaya Papua Golden Generation Week in 2015-2016. This is an opportunity for researchers to get to know the figure of *mama* in the *Dani* community in the Baliem valley, Jayawijaya Regency, Papua.

Leny (2014) explained that the Baliem Valley was discovered by chance on June 23, 1938 (before Indonesia’s independence) by a researcher from the United States, Richard Archbold, while flying over the valley with his PBY Catalina 2 seaplane named Guba II at the time carried out a vegetation research expedition for vegetation above an altitude of more than 4000 meters on the northern side of the Nassau Mountains (now the Jayawijaya Mountains) in the central mountains between the Baliem Valley. On December 4, 1921, after a strenuous 90-kilometer journey through high mountains, the Wilhelmina peak was finally conquered by Overste Kremer, Dr. Hubrecht, Captain van Arkel, Lieutenant Drost, a pilot from Ambon named Mairuku. Paul Wirz's writings and also through his photography, a cultural anthropologist who was one of the participants in the expedition led by Kremer, about the life of the Papuan people in the high mountain valleys is the first study of the culture of the Central Highlands of Papua (Numbery, 2018; Crawford House Publishing Australia, 2022).
In the interactions and dynamics of life that the researcher experienced with the Dani tribe, the figure of the Papuan mama became the inspiration for researchers to describe the central figure in the socio-economic family and community. So far, outsiders think that only the tribal chief is the central figure in Dani tribal society. The absence of research on the role of Papuan mama is because not many have written about this topic, even though if we look in more detail, Papuan mama have a very big role in the socio-economic conditions of the Dani tribe. So, this is a reflection to remember the figure of women among the feminism, emancipation and gender equality movements.

The visit of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo to Papua, expressed his opinion that mothers in Papua or popularly called ‘mama’ are symbols of the struggle of mothers (KUWADO, 2017). The statement made by the president, which is questionable, is no longer true or not. However, how did the number one person in Indonesia know about it? According to the researcher, there are two possible answers, namely, from research or own experience. While the researchers experienced it themselves and lived with Papuan mama in 2015-2016.

The reality regarding Papuan mama is that Papuan mama work in the garden, sell in district or city markets, do housework, experience domestic violence (KDRT),

Figure 1: Map of Papua and where the Dani live (red circle). Source: (AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL INDONESIA, 2018).
cut their fingers when their husband dies, called *Iki Palek* (a form of loyalty) (Zonggonau, 2017; Putro, 2019). Indeed, the mother is the central figure in the family even in the country. The role of Papuan *mama* has not been written much. People outside Papua have only known the authority of tribal chiefs (males) in Papuan society (Tarima et al., 2016; Enembe et al., 2018; Sitorus, 2019). The figure of *mama* Papua is an inspiration for every woman who will become a mother. This is the background for researchers to study more deeply about *mama* Papua and its role in the Socio-Economic Society of the *Dani* Tribe, Papua.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative research method with an ethnographic approach. Ethnographic research is a form of qualitative research method in which researchers observe and interact with the subjects studied in their real-life environments which are often used in the fields of anthropology and various other social sciences. Van Maanen (2015) explaining that ethnographic research is carried out when used as a method, ethnography usually refers to fieldwork (alternative-participant-observation) carried out by a single researcher who lives with and lives like the people being studied, usually carried out in approximately one year or more. Therefore, the researcher observed and interacted with Papuan *mama* in the *Dani* Tribe community, Jayawijaya Regency, Papua Province in 2015-2016. The ethnographic method used in this research is Naturalism. The purpose of ethno naturalistic is to illustrate that the ethnographic research carried out aims to capture a character that appears naturally and is obtained through direct contact, not through intervention or experimental engineering (MOSCHKOVICH, 2019). Lee et al., (2011) explained that there are four stages in conducting data analysis in ethnographic research, namely as follows:

a. Domain Analysis

Domain analysis was carried out on data obtained from participating observations or interviews and descriptive observations contained in field notes. Descriptive observation means conducting a thorough observation of the Papuan mother and the culture of the *Dani* people in the research setting. In
conducting this domain analysis, the data obtained has gone through re-
checking first so that there are no repetitions in the analysis.

b. Taxonomy Analysis
After completing the domain analysis, observations and focused interviews
were conducted on the figure of the Papuan *mama* in the *Dani* tribal community,
Papua. This analysis has entered the preparation of the research matrix. The
data from the selected interviews are contained in the field notes contained in
the appendix book.

c. Component Analysis
This analysis is carried out after the taxonomic analysis has been completed
correctly. In this analysis, the researcher conducted selected interviews or
observations with Papuan *mama*, teachers, village heads and religious leaders
to deepen the data that had been found by asking a number of contrasting
questions. The data from the selected interviews are contained in the field notes
contained in the appendix book.

d. Theme Analysis
The theme analysis is a set of procedures to holistically understand the
landscape being studied, namely, the role of Papuan *mama* in the *Dani* tribal
community, Papua.

Triangulation is an analytical technique that combines and compares several
methods with the aim of providing a deeper and holistic understanding of the Papuan
*mama* and its socio-economic role in the *Dani* tribe community, Papua. Triangulation
is not only an important way for ethnography to establish methodological rigor/quality,
but the use of triangulation is also an important aspect of data synthesis to build
contextually rich and representative articulations of what is being studied (REEVES et
al., 2013). Because the scope of ethnographic research based on culture and
observation and conducting interviews is the basic standard in ethnographic research,
it is necessary to develop several assumptions that form the basis of the main
researcher before conducting research. In addition, literature studies are also needed
to support these assumptions.
3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In several studies on nuclear families that have been carried out, it was revealed that in the family and household, women basically often have multiple roles. This is firstly reflected by her role as a housewife, who does housework, takes care of and guides children, takes care of her husband, a productive job that does not directly generate income because it allows other family members to earn income directly. The second role is as a breadwinner, either the main or additional breadwinner (IHROMI, 1990).

The women's movement in Indonesia grew in the early 20th century when modern schools were established by the Dutch colonial government, and modern organizations were founded by “kaoem bumiputera” (Yanti, 2020; Abdullah, 2020). The personal experience of the pioneer of the women's emancipation movement, Raden Ajeng Kartini (a hero of the Republic of Indonesia), who felt not free to make choices, even felt that she had no choice at all because she was born as a woman (Taylor, 1976; Mahy, 2012; Wahid, 2021). Kartini felt that she was always treated differently from her male relatives and friends, as well as feelings of jealousy with the freedom of Dutch women, eventually growing the desire and determination in her heart to change these bad habits (HARTUTIK, 2015). At that time, Raden Ajeng Kartini who was born in Jepara, Central Java on April 21, 1879, actually really wanted to get a higher education, but as was customary at that time he was not allowed by his parents. Until now, for almost a century, the struggle has had its ups and downs. Even the so-called achievements of "Women's Rights" today, in principle, have not been able to answer the problem of oppression experienced by women themselves. In the context of the social structure of the Dani tribe, Papuan women (mama Papua) are relatively untouched by the achievement of women's rights in question.

Women and men engage in different roles and activities, and occupy separate social and physical spaces (BRIMACOMBE et al., 2017). Papuan society adheres to a patriarchal system. In this case, initially the patriarchal system was intended to protect women who tend to be weak, but in fact this system is often used arbitrarily by men even from their own people to satisfy their egos, oppress and even limit the movement
of women. The patriarchal culture that continues to grow and survive in Papuan society to this day causes women to be at the forefront of fighting for family survival (RANSTA, 2018). Papuan women are defined by many characteristics. In local customs, Papuan women usually do not have the right to speak, but on the other hand, Papuan women currently play a very active role, and are able to contribute to Papua in their respective fields. In fact, taking children to school is a daily struggle for Dani Lembah Baliem women (MUNRO, 2013).

![Figure 2: Researcher and Mama. Source: Private Collection.](image)

In Papua, structural constraints are often related to issues of education, social status, economy, and employment. Women's work is still often identified with "second class" work which is difficult to balance with men (FALINDA; WINARNI, 2015). Meanwhile, cultural constraints are related to cultural factors in society that place women as housewives in charge of taking care of all the work in the household. Physically, women are placed as companions in biological fulfillment. On the other hand, the consequences of physical meaning place women as weak people. Women can appear and express themselves with their abilities. Women are very actively involved in selling in the market and forming the *mama-mama* Market organization.

Papua Special Autonomy Law No. 21 of 2001 has provided opportunities for the protection and empowerment of Papuan women. However, in its implementation the policies for the protection and empowerment of Papuan women have not been maximized and synergistic. In fact, the special autonomy fund allocated for women’s empowerment is only 6%, it has not been felt directly in increasing women’s participation in development. Village Law No. 6 of 2014 provides opportunities for
increasing women's participation in development in the village (FANZIKRI, 2019). Funds allocated for village development are very open to women's empowerment. Interaction with the community and especially Papuan women so far implies that:

1. The role of Papuan women is highly dependent on education and skills.
2. The role of Papuan women also depends on the personal character of women.
3. The role of Papuan women depends on the access given to women for creativity and expression. Access that is wide open and can be an entry point is through participation in church organizations, and in community organizations.

Dani women are required to be able to do everything for their families and even take responsibility for supporting their families. So loud was the news about the oppression of Dani women, that a novel entitled "Sali: The Story of a Dani Woman" was created, which became a hot topic of discussion among writers and culturalists, and even became the subject of various scientific studies. The novel tells of the oppression that must be experienced by a Dani woman named Liwa. She experienced such severe oppression from her father, and after she married the oppression was carried out by her husband. But as a woman she could not do anything until she finally decided to end her life and leave Sali, the last dress she wore before her death (KOGOYA, 2021).

Figure 3: Mama's activities in customs.
Source: Private Collection.

Papuan mama's enthusiasm in the economy can be seen in the pig farming business, considering that pigs are the most expensive livestock in Papua, the price can be up to Rp. 40 million rupiah per head (estimated $2,858 US dollars). Fr.
Ferdinand Pr was the Pastor, when he asked the residents to raise pigs again, but by holding them in captivity. This step has received a good response from the residents, especially Papuan women (KOMPAS, 2008). This shows how Papuan mothers really want a decent life for their families by increasing the family's economic income through pig farming, because pigs are very expensive in Papua. So far, mama only sells in the market.

Table 1
The Role of Women Based on Customary Territory (FALINDA; WINARNI, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Role</th>
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| 1  | Maybrat (West Papua)         | 1. Women as a man's investment to become Weight/nobility. For the people of Maybrat, it is better to have a daughter than a son.  
                              | 2. Women open traditional political channels.         |
| 2  | Dani (Jayawijaya Regency)    | 1. Women as the foundation of family economic life, women as a symbol of the glory of a man (tribal chief). |
| 3  | Asmat (East Papua)           | 1. Women are the head of the family (to provide for) because they have more roles than their husbands. |

The table above explains that the role of Papuan mama in social and economic terms is very significant and tends to be exploited. In this paper, the researcher examines the role of Papuan mama in the Dani tribal community.

3.1 THE _IKI PALEK_ (CUTTING FINGER)

The _Iki Palek_ (cutting finger) tradition as a form of wife's loyalty to her husband and customs. Not only in the economic field, in the social structure of the Dani tribe, there is a tradition of finger cutting or called _Iki Palek_ which is still carried out in the Dani tribe (HASMIKA; SUHENDRO, 2021). Generally, those who carry out this tradition are Papuan mama who have been abandoned by their relatives, children, to their beloved husband. The more fingers that are cut, the sign of the number of relatives who died or the amount of grief.
3.2 TRYING FATE IN FRONT OF SHOPS AND MARKETS

The term market is actually not like most markets in other regions in Indonesia. The market in Wamena, Jayawijaya Regency, Papua is just an open backdrop, with no rain-roofed buildings. If it rains heavily, the traders disperse. If it’s only drizzling rain, traders use umbrellas. The market spilled on the asphalt splinter along the protocol road. According to Jack Morin, Head of the Anthropology Laboratory of Cendrawasih University, not only do mothers sell, they also have a desire to meet and observe the world, while waiting for their merchandise. Relationships between friends are very important, because Papuan mama considers friendship as a social investment (KOMPAS, 2008).

Figure 4: Mama’s Activities at Traditional Market.
Source: Private Collection.

Crocker (2014) saying that there has been a marginalization of mama-mama as Papuan traders, they were evicted on the grounds of cleanliness, tidiness and regularity by the local government. Because of this action, mama formed an organization called SOLPAP (Solidarity of Papuan Authentic Traders). After struggling at the city and provincial level, in December 2010, they were given a temporary place in a roofed market, but the equipment was inadequate (no water, no garbage collection, no security, and no toilet). Mama sells several products in the market such as processed or grown products, they also resell some products that have been...
purchased from other sellers in the hope of making a profit. It could be difficult for the government to eradicate poverty in Papua because the role of *mama* is still not fully involved, further studies are needed to examine this. Not that there is a saying that the progress or failure of a country or region depends on the woman.

4 CONCLUSION

In the history of this republic, women have played a very important role in nation building and even women's movements and congress have been carried out long before the country's independence. According to President Soekarno in his book "Sarinah" he said that women are a matter of society, because women are closely related to generations. Social welfare in Indonesia will be realized if there is no gap between men and women in fighting, there is no gap where men and women struggle alone. Like other women, the role of Papuan *mama* in the socio-economic status of the *Dani* tribe is very significant, but Papuan mothers still experience acts of domestic violence and injustice in fulfilling their rights. A holistic policy is needed to overcome this. Yohana Susana Yembise was chosen as the first Papuan woman to become the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia in the Working Cabinet of President Joko Widodo and Jusuf Kalla in the 2014-2019 period. Previously, Yohana was the first female Papuan professor, so that Yohana's achievements can be an inspiration for Papuan women to get out of the crush of Papuan culture which tends not to side with women, Papuan women must dare to realize their dreams. This motivation and reflection is very relevant to remember the report from Jim Elmslie in his writing entitled West Papuan Demographic Transition and The 2010 Indonesian Census, Sydney University, February 2011 that there has been a decline in the demographics of indigenous Papuans, one of which is the high maternal and child mortality rate.

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178
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