
FORGOTTEN HER STORY: RECLAIMING GENDERED HISTORY OF WOMEN INDEPENDENCE FIGHTERS IN INDONESIA AND PHILIPPINES

Ilham Baskoro, Paul Anthony Colina, Nur Wulan, Lina Puryanti

Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia
University of the Philippines Diliman, Philippines
Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia
Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia

Email: ilham.baskoro-2021@fib.unair.ac.id

Email: pecolina@up.edu.ph

Email: nur-w@fib.unair.ac.id

Email: lina-p@fib.unair.ac.id

Abstract

This study examines the unequal historical recognition of women independence fighters in Indonesia and the Philippines during World War II. Focusing on the comparative cases of bu Dar Mortir and Nieves Fernandez, it employs a qualitative and comparative-historical approach to analyze archival sources, oral histories, and national memorials from both countries. The findings reveal that Indonesian women actively participated in the independence struggle, yet their contributions remain underrepresented due to gendered moral values and state constructions of femininity within religious and symbolic roles. In contrast, Filipina fighters received broader acknowledgment through veteran programs, formal education, and public commemoration. By highlighting these disparities, the study underscores the political nature of gender bias in historiography and calls for the development of gender-inclusive historical narratives. This research contributes to Southeast Asian gender studies and promotes more equitable representations in national history.

Keywords: *gendered history; war historiography; women fighters*

MELAWAN LUPA: MEREbut KEMBALI SEJARAH BERPERSPEKTIF GENDER ATAS PEJUANG PEREMPUAN INDONESIA DAN FILIPINA

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menelaah ketimpangan pengakuan historis terhadap pejuang perempuan di Indonesia dan Filipina pada masa Perang Dunia II. Kajian ini berfokus pada perbandingan studi kasus bu Dar Mortir, dengan pejuang Filipina bernama Nieves Fernandez. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan komparatif-historis, penelitian ini menganalisis sumber arsip, sejarah lisan, dan memorial nasional dari kedua negara. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa perempuan Indonesia secara aktif terlibat dalam perlawanan kemerdekaan. Namun, kontribusi mereka masih kurang terwakili akibat pengaruh nilai moral berbasis gender serta konstruksi kenegaraan terhadap femininitas dalam kerangka peran religius dan simbolik. Sebaliknya, keterlibatan perempuan Filipina dalam pertempuran dan intelijen lebih banyak diakui, baik melalui program veteran, pendidikan formal, maupun praktik komemorasi publik. Dengan menyoroti kesenjangan gender dalam historiografi perang antara Indonesia dan Filipina, penelitian ini menegaskan sifat politis dari bias gender dalam sejarah. Artikel ini menekankan pentingnya penulisan historiografi yang inklusif gender dalam sejarah nasional dan berkontribusi pada pengayaan kajian gender Asia Tenggara.

Kata Kunci: historiografi perang; pejuang perempuan; sejarah gender

I. INTRODUCTION

History has often been narrated as a chronicle of men's wars, and women's struggles remain relegated to the margins. In Europe, particularly in accounts of the French Resistance, historians have increasingly integrated women's action into war narratives (Halbwachs, 1992). In Southeast Asia, however, similar efforts remain fragmented and incomplete. Research on women's wartime contributions has largely been confined to single-country studies with limited comparative analysis across the region. This represents a significant gap, especially between historiography in Indonesia and the Philippines. Both countries not only share legacies of colonial subjugation and women-led resistance during World War II, but also their historiographies diverge in how female fighters are remembered.

Despite both nations perceiving themselves as independence fighters under Japanese occupation, their historical narratives took different paths. Figures such as Bu Dar Mortir in Indonesia and Nieves Fernandez in the Philippines demonstrate striking contrasts. Bu Dar Mortir (Darijah Soerodikoesoemo), as logistical commander in the 1945 Battle of Surabaya whose legacy survives largely in oral accounts and remains largely absent from national history. In contrast, Nieves Fernandez as a former schoolteacher turned guerrilla leader is intermittently cited in Philippine and U.S. wartime records. Nevertheless, her portrayal is often framed as exceptional rather than representative. These disparities highlight how gendered biases influence both recognition and neglect in historical writing.

This marginalization reflects broader epistemological biases in the production of history. Scott (1986) emphasized that gender must be understood not merely as a descriptive category, but as a fundamental analytic for examining how power operates in historical narratives. In Southeast Asia, national accounts of World War II have long privileged masculinist tropes of armed resistance, battlefield heroism, and state-centered nationalism. Women by contrast have often been depicted in archetypal roles.

The analysis on this research also grounded in Anwar's (2021) concept of "state ibuism," which reveals how Indonesian nationalism domesticates women's roles into moral and maternal archetypes. This framework is complemented by Trouillot's (1995) theory of historical "silencing". But this theory can be understood not as a literal erasure but as a process of archival and narrative exclusion. Together, these perspectives illuminate how power operates through historical narration. This theory used to investigate the gendered mechanisms of historical neglect in Indonesia and the Philippines. It focuses on why figures such as Bu Dar Mortir and Nieves Fernandez are remembered so differently. Methodologically, this paper employs a comparative-historical approach between two countries. Combining archival materials, oral histories, and commemorative sites to trace how women's wartime roles are recorded, neglected, or celebrated in Philippines and Indonesia.

This study contributes in three key ways. First, it advances Southeast Asian historiography by providing one of the few comparative analyses of women's resistance in Indonesia and the Philippines during World War II. Second, it highlights the politics of remembrance, showing

how power relations determine who is remembered and who is being neglect. Third, it offers practical implications for cultural preservation in Indonesia. These include the recommendation for integration of oral histories into national repositories, the development of gender-inclusive museum exhibitions, and the revision of educational curricula to better reflect women's diverse contributions. By reclaiming these narratives, the study urges for more inclusive historiography that recognizes aspects of gendered resistance in Southeast Asia.

II. DISCUSSION

Analyzing from oral testimonies, archival records, historiographical texts, and memory sites, the data reveal critical asymmetries in how the wartime contributions of women have been remembered, institutionalized, or removed from national historiography. To elaborate these dynamics, the findings are organized into three central themes: (1) the nature of women's wartime roles, (2) the politics of rewriting women's history in official narratives, and (3) contested memories through public and state commemoration in Indonesia and the Philippines.

A. Women in Resistance: Supporters or Agents of Change?

Women in both Indonesia and the Philippines participated actively in resistance during World War II, but the scope of their roles and subsequent recognition varied. In Indonesia, the figure of Bu Dar Mortir or popularly known as Darijah Soerodikoesoemo, represents a striking example of women's overlooked contributions in wartime resistance. Her nickname "Dar Mortir" was not due to her handling of weaponry, but rather a symbolic, as she was known to hurl "susur" or tobacco like mortar shells when frustrated with undisciplined fighters. Although she did not bring weapons like front-line combatant, her leadership lay in organizing the logistics and food supply during the 1945 Battle of Surabaya. She really worked hard to command a network of more than 51 communal kitchens (*dapur umum perang*) to sustain fighters with food and water.

The crucial role of communal kitchens in the Battle of Surabaya began to gain recognition when Dr. Mustopo, the Commander of the Surabaya Front, formally supported their operation. Under his directive, Bu Dar Mortir was appointed as the Coordinator of the Surabaya Defense Communal Kitchen, supervising around sixty workers who prepared approximately 5,000 meal packs daily. This achievement was remarkable given the extensive wartime damage to infrastructure and the severe disruption of supply routes. Following an order from Colonel Sungkono, her operation was elevated into the East Java Defense Kitchen under the Sungkono Division, where Bu Dar Mortir was officially listed as a logistics staff member (Legiun Veteran RI, 2000).

The communal kitchen played an indispensable role in sustaining the Surabaya fighters' endurance against Allied forces. Acting on Dr. Mustopo's instruction, Bu Dar Mortir led operations to seize and repurpose Japanese supply depots for the independence fighters (Legiun Veteran RI, 2000). She was even recorded as commanding a team that raided Japanese warehouses in Kalimas and Tanjung Perak, transporting those raided supplies by truck to her central kitchen (Karijoredjo, 1991).

Bu Dar Mortir logistical strategy and her bravery was vital for sustaining combat effectiveness, but sadly her role was long neglected. As local historian Zaki Yamani from Begandring Soerabaija explains, her contributions were forgotten for three decades until a manuscript she dictated to her niece in 1972 resurfaced in closed archives of Museum Tugu Pahlawan, where it remained unread in a vault until 2015 (Radar Surabaya, 2022). Because of that, the biography of bu Dar Mortir still not complete and we dont know lot of puzzle about her past life, how her role is influenced by her status, family, or connection toward another fighter during those era is still unknown.

In fact, some archives of manuscripts written by bu Dar Mortir remain unpublished to the public. Author does not yet have full permission to access her substantial archives and therefore must rely on the interpretations and transcripts provided by local historians. This situation suggests institutional neglect rather than mere archival accident. This actual restricted access to bu Dar's manuscripts and the reliance on intermediaries for transcription can be seen as patterns of archival invisibility that constrain scholarly research and public recognition of women's wartime agency. This is further exacerbated by a lack of focused research on her life and activities on her era. As a result, records and archives on bu Dar Mortir remain scattered and locked away in government institutions, thus rarely published for public.

More broadly, women's wartime roles were shaped by the prevailing gender ideologies of their time. Because of that, dominant social norms and state formations determined which forms of female participation were intelligible as "political" or "heroic," and thus which activities were recorded, valorized, or suppressed in official histories. During the Dutch period, Indonesian women were positioned in auxiliary roles as caregivers, logisticians, and nurses. Nursing was institutionalized in the early 20th century to address the shortage of European staff, with *suster* (from the Dutch *zuster*) trained to provide basic care under European supervision (Juanamasta, 2021). Such arrangements reinforced gender and racial hierarchies, as women were confined to domestic and supportive tasks rather than leadership or technical roles, a pattern that persisted into later historiography (Hesselink, 2017).

The Japanese occupation reinforced these gendered structures through organizations such as Fujinkai. Aditia et al. (2022) show that this compulsory women's association mobilized girls as young as fifteen in domestic and public campaigns for the war effort. Those program for women's mobilization also being stated by Kurasawa (2015). She documents how such women's mobilization relied on the rhetoric of self-sacrifice (*hokō seishin*) and aimed to discipline women into roles of agricultural and civic labor. Fujinkai appropriated pre-existing women's networks, neutralizing anti-colonial activism while presenting coerced participation as patriotic duty. Training sessions on hygiene, sewing, and childcare extended state control into private life, transforming women into agents of colonial governance. These frameworks curtailed autonomy and reinforced gender norms, ensuring that even when women's participation increased, it remained limited within ideological limits.

In this context, the role of Bu Dar Mortir was remarkable. Her logistical work as a supplier of food is very important for tactical support on the front line. Her strategy was decisive for the course of battle, even though she did not carry weapons herself. Nevertheless the narratives surrounding her often framed this contribution within the symbolic ideals of maternal sacrifice, consistent with the discourse of “state ibuism”. Instead of being remembered as a strategist and key agent of resistance, her heroism was narrated in ways that aligned with the image of women as caretakers who “support” rather than “lead.” This dynamic reflects Scott’s (1986) argument that historical knowledge is gendered, where action and strategy are associated with masculinity, while support and morality are feminized.

By contrast, Filipino women like Nieves Fernandez were commemorated more visibly as guerrilla leaders and strategists. Fernandez commanded a unit of 110 men and was credited with killing over 200 Japanese soldiers. Remarkably, her story was recorded in wartime media with reports of a 10,000 peso bounty on her head (Abrera & Santillan, 2022). Her image circulated through photographs, transforming her into an icon of female bravery. Other women, such as Commander Liwayway Gomez-Paraiso, Yay Panlilio, and Felipa Culala, similarly played leadership roles that entered public memory through oral accounts, veteran narratives, and peasant movements (Kerkvliet, 2014). While these representations often emphasized femininity alongside militancy, their contributions were preserved within broader narratives of national resistance. This contrast demonstrates how, in the Philippines, women’s agency was incorporated into memory culture, while in Indonesia it was systematically neglected.

B. Politics of Rewriting Women’s Roles in National History

Contested Memories of Women In both Indonesia and the Philippines, women’s resistance during wartime has undergone a process of mythologization, in which their contributions are reframed through nationalist and patriarchal lenses. This myth-making does not simply commemorate their heroism but re-inscribes it within state-sanctioned ideals of femininity. As Scott (1986) argues, historical knowledge is produced through gendered categories that masculinize agency and strategy, while relegating morality and sacrifice to the feminine. The result is that women’s acts of resistance are rarely remembered as disruptive to gender hierarchies; instead, they are celebrated only as they reaffirm the nation’s heteronormative and patriotic ideals.

In Indonesia, Anwar’s (2021) framework of “state ibuism” provides a crucial lens to understand this symbolic domestication. Figures such as Kartini, Cut Nyak Dien, and Rahmah El-Joenesijah are publicly commemorated, but their militant or intellectual agency is reframed into docile, moral, or maternal symbolism. Kartini’s radical critique of colonial patriarchy is muted into a celebration of her patience and devotion as a Javanese woman. Similarly, Cut Nyak Dien’s tactical leadership is often represented as an extension of wifely loyalty rather than autonomous political vision. These examples show what Anwar terms the “domestication of feminist symbols,” where female resistance is made legible only when aligned with state ideology. This ideological

project intensified under New Order era through Dharma Wanita and PKK, which mobilized women in domestic roles while erasing their history of militancy. Bu Dar Mortir exemplifies the consequence of this narrative filtering. Her vital leadership during the Battle of Surabaya is remembered only in local oral histories and not popular in national historiography. Her memory does not conform to the “ibuist” archetype. Because she neither raised weapons as an “exceptional heroism” nor fit neatly into the maternal symbolism that the state was willing to celebrate. Because of that, her representation in local historiography reflects the lingering discourse of state ibuism, which moralizes women’s public engagement by domesticating their contributions under maternal imagery and supporter of man heroism.

The Philippines presents a different but parallel dynamic. Women like Josefa Llanes Escoda, Nieves Fernandez, Remedios Gomez-Paraiso (Liwayway), and Magdalena Leones are commemorated more explicitly in monuments, textbooks, and military accounts. Nevertheless, their visibility is mediated by exceptionalism. As Abrera and Santillan (2022) note, these women are remembered not as part of a broader feminist or collective struggle but as individuals who transcended their expected roles. Fernandez was often depicted as very masculine and armed with a rifle in photographs circulated by the U.S. military. She was just admired as uniquely brave rather than as a representative of women’s collective right to fight. Even Liwayway’s story is aestheticized. Her courage as a guerrilla commander is narrated through her iconic red lipstick and beauty queen background, which frame her militancy as an extension of femininity. In this way, Philippine historiography recognizes women fighters but filters their stories through tropes of maternal sacrifice, beauty, and loyalty to the nation. This commemorative pattern is reinforced by the symbolic metaphor of Inang Bayan (Motherland), which casts the nation itself as a maternal figure. Within this framework, women’s heroism is celebrated when it embodies sacrifice, protection, and devotion to male revolutionaries (Abrera & Santillan, 2022).

In both contexts, women’s wartime agency is refracted through narrative strategies that neutralize its disruptive potential. In Indonesia, “state ibuism” selectively celebrates female figures as icons of morality and education. But also excluding those roles like Bu Dar Mortir’s tactical organization of logistics fall outside acceptable gender boundaries. In the Philippines, women fighters are recognized as exceptional heroism, but their commemoration relies on aesthetic, maternal, or sacrificial tropes that avoid addressing structural gender inequality. Both models reveal what Trouillot (1995) calls the “silencing” of history, where acts of resistance are documented but also stripped of their political and feminist meaning through selective representation. This politics of rewriting women’s resistance shows that national historiography actually ignore more broader aspect of female fighters. It also actively reshapes their stories into forms compatible with patriarchal nationalism.

C. Contested Memories of Women Fighters in Public and State Commemoration

In the Philippines, commemorative practices display a relatively broader recognition of women’s participation in World War II. The National Museum of the Pacific War’s exhibit *Untold Stories of WWII: The Women of the Philippine Resistance* highlights how Filipina

guerrillas assumed diverse roles, from combat leaders and spies to medics, activists, and communication coordinators, often simultaneously within the same war effort (Lanzona, 2009). This multidimensional remembrance challenges conventional dichotomies of masculine warfare and feminine support, offering a more gender-inclusive historical narrative. Prominent figures such as Nieves Fernandez, Commander Liwayway, Josefa Llanes Escoda, Naomi Flores, and Valeria “Yay” Panlilio are commemorated publicly through statues, memorial plaques, scholarships, and documentary films. Notably, a veterans ward in Tacloban is named after Captain Nieves Fernandez, signaling institutional acknowledgment of her military contribution.

At the same time, Philippine memorialization also addresses the darker legacies of war, such as through the Filipina Comfort Women Statue in Manila, which honors the lolas (grandmother) forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese Army during the occupation (Cepeda, 2019). Such commemorations reflect a relatively institutionalized effort to integrate women into the national memory of war.



Picture 1. The Comfort Women Statue at Roxas Boulevard, Manila
Source: Robles, 2018

In contrast, Indonesia offers a starkly different picture. Figures like Bu Dar Mortir remain largely absent from state-sanctioned memory and are preserved instead through localized oral histories, community storytelling, and vernacular remembrance. Unlike the Philippines, which enshrines women’s contributions in public monuments and museums, Indonesian commemorations rarely provide women fighters formal visibility, reflecting the problem of gendered bias in national historiography.

Notably, bu Dar Mortir has no national monument nor full textbook inscription about her in Indonesia’s mainstream historiography. She is just documented in some pages of books about local veteran, such as *Bunga Rampai Perjuangan & Pengorbanan* published by Legiun Veteran Republik Indonesia and *Sejarah Revolusi Kemerdekaan 1945–1949 Daerah Jawa Timur* published by Department of Education and Culture Republik Indonesia. However, her presence also acknowledged in two key local commemorative spaces: (1) the statue in front of Panti Werdha Hargo Dedali in Surabaya, and (2) a small memorial diorama in the Museum 10 November,

Surabaya. Both spaces are deeply regional and lack state-led historiographic framing. Unlike the monumentalism granted to male commanders like Bung Tomo, Bu Dar Mortir and other women fighters is remembered not as a national heroine, but as a localised legend.



Picture 2. The diorama of Bu Dar Mortir working to supply Indonesian army during Battle of Surabaya. This Statue displayed in Museum 10 November Surabaya.

Source: Septi, 2018

Historical narratives of Bu Dar Mortir just rememberence in local Surabaya. While valuable, it remains fragile without institutional and national support. As Halbwachs (1992) emphasizes, collective memory requires structural support to endure across generations. In Surabaya, her bravery during the 1945 Battle is preserved primarily through oral historians such as Begandring Soerabaia and local community narratives. Nevertheless, her stories circulate mainly through walking tours, community discussions, and informal retellings rather than full on textbooks or published state archives.



Picture 3. The statue of Bu Dar Mortir in front of Panti Werdha Hargo Dedali
Source: Surabaya Historical, 2016

The absence of Bu Dar Mortir from formal education underscores the limits of Indonesia's commemorative framework. While Kartini is nationally celebrated each year, there is no institutional effort to integrate lesser-known, militant female figures into the national education system, public school textbooks, or state-led exhibitions. The stark contrast with the Philippines where figures like Nieves Fernandez or Commander Liwayway. Even though they started as local legends, they also appear in museums and veterans' memorials. We can highlight that Bu Dar's story, despite its significance, remains confined to microhistorical spaces, excluded from the broader macrohistorical narratives.

In principle, Bu Dar Mortir could legally qualify for the title of National Hero under Indonesian law such as Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2009 on Titles, Decorations, and Honors, and Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 35 Tahun 2010, which outlines its implementation. However, such recognition requires a strong foundation of collective memory supported by public awareness and local advocacy (Legiun Veteran RI, 2000). In reality, Bu Dar Mortir's name remains largely absent from Indonesia's collective remembrance. There are no national monuments, museum exhibits, or streets bearing her name, and scholarly publications about her are still scarce. According to local historians in Surabaya, this lack of public memory among younger generations significantly hinders the process of nominating her as a national hero. Strengthening local remembrance through civic education, memorial sites, and cultural initiatives therefore crucial. Rather than impeding such efforts, both the Surabaya municipal government and national authorities must actively support commemorative practices that reassert her historical significance.

This gap between formal recognition and local remembrance, if left unaddressed by the Indonesian government, it risks perpetuating the systemic neglect of women's historical contributions and further reveals how gendered politics shape Indonesia's memorial landscape. Unlike male heroes whose contributions are institutionalized regardless of how publicized or dramatic their struggle was, women are rarely honored unless their narratives meet thresholds of

martyrdom or spectacular militancy. This pattern of gendered exceptionalism selectively highlights women who just embody masculinized traits of sacrifice and armed combat, precisely as critiqued by Scott (1986) and Trouillot (1995). For example, the statue of Laswi (Laskar Wanita Indonesia) in Bandung highlights women who took up arms in 1945 and were killed on the front lines, while their organizational or ideological roles still not being highlighted. Similarly, Emmy Saelan is commemorated in South Sulawesi for her combat role and death in an ambush, remembered more for bodily sacrifice than strategic vision. Such representations valorize the spectacle of female death in battle rather than the complexity of women's contributions to the independence struggle.



Picture 4. The statue of Laswi or women fighters in Bandung
Source: Saptorini, 2022

In principle, the Indonesian government has the authority and capacity to initiate programs that recognize and nominate local female heroes such as Bu Dar Mortir for national acknowledgment. However, in practice, numerous structural and bureaucratic barriers still persist. Because of that, it requires stronger collaboration between local governments and historical communities in Surabaya. Therefore, this study urges both local and national authorities to utilize their institutional resources and regulatory frameworks to more formally recognize female independence fighters like Bu Dar Mortir.

Especially for the city of Surabaya that branding itself as the “City of Heroes,” such recognition would be particularly significant, as it would mark the first time a local female hero from Surabaya is elevated to national status. Achieving this would not only strengthen civic pride but also signify an important step toward gender equity in historical remembrance. Ironically, continued governmental neglect or inaction would only reinforce the critiques articulated by Scott

(1986) and Trouillot (1995) that dominant historical narratives still remain shaped by gendered bias and selective or neglecting remembrance. Ultimately, the question remains: will the Indonesian state and local historical communities choose to revitalize collective remembrance of women heroes, or choose to allow gender bias in historiography to persist unchallenged?

III. CONCLUSION

A. Deduction

This study has demonstrated profound gendered asymmetries in the remembrance of female independence fighters in Indonesia and the Philippines through the comparative cases of Bu Dar Mortir (Darijah Soerodikoesoemo) and Nieves Fernandez. The findings reveal that the marginalization of women like Bu Dar Mortir is not a historical accident but a systemic neglect in outcome of ideological and institutional frameworks.

In Indonesia, nationalist memory, shaped by the patriarchal ideology of “state ibuism”, actively constructs a narrative that valorizes women primarily as moral and maternal symbols. This framework has led to the systematic neglect of female figures. The case of Bu Dar Mortir is definitive proof of this process. Despite her documented, strategic role as a logistical commander such as orchestrating a network of 51 communal kitchens, supplying 5,000 meals daily, even leading raids on Japanese warehouses but her legacy survives primarily in localized oral histories and unpublished manuscripts. Her near-total absence from national curricula, monuments, and archives, compared with the canonical status of male commanders from the same battle underscores a historiographical bias that privileges militarized masculinity.

In contrast, the Philippine context exhibits a more pluralistic, though still imperfect, commemorative culture. Figures like Nieves Fernandez are integrated into national memory through veterans’ recognition, educational texts, and public memorials. However, this recognition is often mediated by a logic of exceptionalism, framing her heroism as a unique anomaly rather than a reflection of women’s collective capacity for armed resistance. This parallel demonstrates that while the degree of inclusion differs, both nations’ historical narratives are filtered through gendered lenses that neutralize the potential of women’s wartime agency.

Ultimately, the stark contrast between remembrance of Bu Dar Mortir and institutional recognition of Nieves Fernandez highlights how historical visibility is politically determined. The irony of archival invisibility of Bu Dar Mortir, where her firsthand account remained locked in a museum vault for decades, is a powerful testament silencing as a process of narrative and institutional exclusion. This research concludes that the struggle over national memory is not merely about adding women to history but about confronting the power structures that decide which forms of sacrifice and leadership are deemed worthy of remembrance.

B. Recommendation

Based on these findings, we recommend a fundamental rethinking of Indonesian historiography that moves beyond bias gendered inclusion. Strengthening local remembrance through civic education, memorial sites, and cultural initiatives therefore crucial. Rather than impeding such efforts, both the Surabaya municipal government and national authorities must actively support commemorative practices that reassert her historical significance. It also noted that government with academic institutions should foster partnerships towards community historians (like Begandring Soerabaia) to document and validate oral histories, ensuring that local memory is preserved and integrated into scholarly discourse before it is lost.

By implementing these recommendations, Indonesia can begin to dismantle bias gendered that have long constrained its history of women fighter. This study urges a critical engagement with the Philippine experience not as a perfect model, but as a comparative mirror that reflects the possibilities of a more inclusive memory politics. Such an endeavor is not merely corrective; it is a necessary step toward a historiography that truly honors the complex and indispensable role of women in the making of the nation.

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