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# Management control system, leadership and gender ideology

## A study of an Indonesian construction company

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to reveal the relations between management control system (MCS), leadership style and gender ideology. It investigates how a female leader's gendered personal values are formed, translated, produced, and reproduced in her leadership style, the subsequent MCS and organisational life.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This is an interpretive case study that uses the anthropological lens of emic and etic views. The emic view is derived from the interpretation of the company's subjects. The etic view refers to the interpretation of outsiders (the researchers and previous literatures). The combination of these two views enables an in-depth understanding of the case. Interviews, observation and documentary analysis were used to collect the data.

**Findings** – In a gendered society, a female leader will gain full respect if she demonstrates leadership behaviours that fit her subordinates' gendered expectations. The leader's and followers' common gendered cultural background will result in leadership and followership that support each other. Gendered leadership produces gendered MCS. Gendered MCS is based on gendered cultural values that direct the behaviour of organisational members to focus on certain competencies based on a single gender perspective. In turn, the gendered MCS sustains and reinforces the gendered leadership.

**Research limitations/implications** – The study does not focus on the potential value of including feminine measures in MCS. In the future, MCS literatures need to explore the strategic advantages of introducing measures into the system in order to develop feminine competencies in organisation. Furthermore, the processes by which MCS reinforces gendered practices in a society are not explored in the study. Therefore, another important next step is to examine the patterns of the reinforcement processes and their magnitude in strengthening the biases beyond organisational boundaries (e.g. in professional and industrial practices).

**Practical implications** – This study encourages leaders to consider the use of masculine and feminine characters in MCS to increase organisational effectiveness, build a more humane organisational atmosphere, establish organisational cohesion and harmonise different personal aspirations.

**Originality/value** – MCS literatures tend to hide gender bias in the system. This study offers insight on how MCS translates, produces and reproduces societal gendered practices in organisational life.

**Keywords** Leadership, Indonesia, Gender, Management control

**Paper type** Research paper

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### Introduction

Gender issues have become one of the main trends in accounting and management studies. Parker (2008) conducted a comprehensive mapping of the extent of gender research in accounting/management and identified areas that require further development. Accounting research has so far mostly focussed on the implication of gender for accounting employment and careers, public accounting, the accounting

**JEL Classification** — M40

profession, job satisfaction, social responsibilities and accounting ethics. Parker underlines that there is a need to study the impact of gender on strategic management accounting, management control and decision making, and how gender discourses are being produced and reproduced in organisational processes. Parker stresses that such study should investigate gender beyond a narrow structural perspective (position, rank and role).

More attention has been paid to gender issues because women's roles in top management positions are much less significant than those of men. A survey from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2005) revealed that women only occupied 7.9 per cent of top management positions in US companies, while a survey from the European Commission (2005) showed that women occupied 30 per cent of managerial positions and 3 per cent of CEO positions in the top 50 public companies in Europe. This situation also occurs in Indonesia. Based on the SWA team's research in 2011 (Rahayu, 2011), there were only 64 women out of 382 directors (16.75 per cent) in banking companies, while the number of women occupying a position of director in state-owned companies was 5 out of 99 in total, i.e. a mere 5.5 per cent. The same pattern also appears in public listed companies on the Indonesian Stock Exchange, where out of 1,879 directors, only 222 (11.8 per cent) are women.

It is believed that gender bias is the main factor causing the gap. Doubts lingering on about women's capabilities are the utmost reasons for sex-based discrimination (Yukl, 2010; Pounder and Coleman, 2002; Deal and Stevenson, 1998). In addition, some religious teaching interpretations define the normative roles of men and women in a society. In fact, gender discrimination disadvantages a society, because it limits women's leadership capacities to participate in the improvement of society (Marshall, 2007; Smith *et al.*, 2006).

Management control system (MCS) is a leadership style that is constructed in a system (Efferin and Hartono, 2014). Since the leader's values are fundamental in characterising the MCS, the gender ideology of its society needs to be investigated and explained in order to understand gender bias in MCS design and implementation. Hence, gender, leadership style and MCS are interconnected. However, the gender aspects of MCS are relatively unexplored. MCS literatures tend to assume that control is an issue that is not connected to gender. Until now, there is only one study conducted by Piercy *et al.* (2002). The study examines the relations between leadership, gender, organisation citizenship behaviour (OCB) and sales control. It is found that gendered sales management control strategy is an antecedent to salesperson OCB. Because of this limitation in the literature, the authors attempted to map the publications related to gender and leadership.

In general, studies on gender and leadership are divided into two contradictory positions. The first position states that gender influences leadership styles (Helgesin, 1990; Rosener, 1990; Schwartz, 1989; Eagly, 1987). This position states that women's roles in their household activities shape their psychological abilities to build relationships, give attention to others, and support their subordinates. In contrast, men are more authoritarian, competition-minded and target oriented. The second position states that gender has no influence on leadership styles whatsoever (e.g. Powell, 1990). This perspective supports the idea that leadership styles and gender have no connection. Both men and women have similar capabilities and leadership characteristics, which means that gender is irrelevant to leadership styles.

However, understanding gender only in terms of sex differences tends to simplify the issue (Scott, 2004). Gender implications in accounting and management processes

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are socially constructed and their inherent meanings are changed over time (Parker, 2008). In addition, Fletcher (2004) mentions that leadership results from complex interactions between gender, power, and human relationships in organisations and wider society. Hence, gender studies in accounting and management need to investigate the nature of society's gender ideology beyond mere sexual discrimination in an organisation.

Furthermore, Parker (2008) states that gender studies are dominated by quantitative approaches based on statistical data and laboratory simulations, leading to a limited understanding of the implication of gender on management and accounting processes. To respond to this issue, this study follows the qualitative methodology used by Efferin and Hopper (2007). Efferin and Hopper (2007) investigated the ethnicity and cultural aspects of MCS in a Chinese Indonesian company using the anthropological lens of emic and etic analyses. Emic analysis describes indigenous values of a particular society from native insiders' semiotic interpretation relying on "thick description from fieldwork" (p. 225). Etic analysis refers to how outsiders see and interpret a phenomenon. The combination of the two analyses enables an interpretive understanding that can be grasped by both insiders and outsiders. They conclude that values underlying the MCS result from the combination of the socialisation processes experienced by the leader since his/her childhood with business pragmatism. The leader's values produce "a complex mix of cultural, action and result controls that defies simple classification or dichotomies" (p. 252). These three controls are intertwined to cope with technical, organisational and cross-cultural issues.

This study attempts to reveal the relations between MCS, gender ideology and leadership styles through an in-depth case study in a construction company called GAMMA (disguised name) in Surabaya, Indonesia. GAMMA was founded in 1993 by a married couple (Mr K as its President Director and Mrs M as its Finance Director). GAMMA's projects include real estate in Surabaya and its suburban areas. In 2000, the owners bought a new office in East Surabaya. GAMMA has grown significantly ever since. Its annual profit for 2010 was 400 billion rupiah. This study focusses on Mrs M as an owner and top leader. Although her official position is Finance Director, in practice she controls all the activities of her employees in the company. Her husband focusses more on handling the technicalities of the projects' field operations.

In so doing, the study first examines the gender experiences of Mrs M to understand how and why her gendered personal values were formed and how the values reflect the gender ideology of Indonesian society. The experiences, the gender ideology and the values are described using the emic interpretations of the leader and the employees of GAMMA (emic view). Then, the implication of the values on her leadership style and subsequent MCS is examined by using etic interpretations derived from theoretical literatures and the researchers' interpretations. The research questions are:

*RQ1.* What are the gender experiences of an Indonesian female business leader and how do the experiences shape her gendered personal values?

*RQ2.* To what extent does her leadership style reflect the gendered values?

*RQ3.* To what extent is the gendered leadership style translated, produced, and reproduced in the MCS? What are the consequences of the gendered MCS on organisational life?

The next section discusses the theoretical framework, the research design and the empirical findings of this study.

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## Theoretical framework

### *MCS in developing countries*

MCS is a set of tools and processes used by a leader to influence the attitudes and behaviours of the organisational members to be in harmony with organisational objectives and strategies (Efferin and Soeherman, 2010; Merchant and Van der Stede, 2007; Efferin and Hopper, 2007). MCS consists of cultural control (organisational values), result control (performance target, performance evaluation and incentives) and process control (work procedures, action accountability and authority delegation). The purpose of result control is to promote the subordinates' creativity in order to reach their targets, while the purpose of process control is to ensure that the subordinates perform a series of critical activities according to standard procedures. Cultural control is created through a strong and healthy organisational culture to fill gaps left by result and process controls. The culture is built through the training of employees, the leader's role model, group-based rewards, personal approaches, values symbolisation, work atmosphere and code of ethics (Efferin and Soeherman, 2010). In practice, these three controls are inseparable and support each other (Efferin and Hopper, 2007).

In developing countries such as Indonesia, political and socio-cultural institutions often become the sources of rationality and play crucial roles in forming organisational values (Efferin and Hopper, 2007; Wickramasinghe and Hopper, 2005; Uddin and Tsamenyi, 2005; Uddin and Hopper, 2001; Hoque and Hopper, 1994). In this sense, MCS needs to be understood not only as an ensemble of rational economic processes, but also as socio-cultural processes, with local wisdom acting as a guidance to communicate targets, to identify individual tasks, to monitor activities, to assign rewards and punishments and to build goal congruence. Hence, MCS is not a universal system that suits all contexts since its principles need to be modified or even replaced by local wisdom in order to be effective.

In the Indonesian context, the design and implementation of MCS cannot be separated from the country's societal context including history, culture and its socialisation, politics, and other situational factors (Efferin and Hopper, 2007). Their study has identified several factors influencing MCS. First, the socio-cultural legacy of the New Order era is profound in the business and managerial philosophies of many Indonesian companies. This can be seen in some organisational norms such as social harmony, *bapakism* (paternalistic relations between superior and subordinates), inter-ethnic relations and personal connections. Second, the MCS is the blend between societal culture and formal control system (result and process controls). Societal culture is a resource used mainly to maintain social order and harmony and to fill gaps left by the formal control system in an organisation. Third, there is a link between the leader's beliefs, the socialisation of values through family education, and MCS characteristics. Cultural values vary between core and peripheral, and they can be enacted selectively within the MCS by the leader depending on the situation. The longer the socialisation process, the greater the possibility of a value becoming core. Core values tend to be held more strongly than peripheral values. Thus, pragmatic consideration is used to combine the best business practices and cultural practices within MCS.

Furthermore, the study of Efferin and Hartono (2014) about MCS and leadership in Indonesian family business produces several findings. First, the legitimate source of authority in Indonesian family business stems not only from a leader-owner's values but also from cultural consensus among key persons in the company. The MCS is not imposed solely by the owner but it is negotiated and produced based on the common cultural ground shared by the owner and his/her key persons in the organisation.

Second, business pragmatism goes hand-in-hand with cultural values in giving room for organisational experiments that may result in MCS transformations. Third, the three controls are inextricably linked in family business. Cultural control based on collective familial norms is the most dominant one and simplifies process and result controls. The two formal controls are supplementary and avoid possible ambiguities that may otherwise exist.

The findings are somewhat consistent with the statement from Pearson *et al.* (2008) and Tsamenyi *et al.* (2008). Pearson *et al.* (2008) state that family firms have structural social capital in which collective values help promote collective understanding among organisational members to achieve long-term family goals. Such personal bonds create resilient collective trust that supports cooperation, communication and commitment. Tsamenyi *et al.* (2008) find that formal control in family business is subservient to owner's culture and social relations.

Given the importance of the societal context in shaping MCS, and if gender bias is a part of the family culture, then leadership and MCS may contain the bias and play certain roles in maintaining the gendered order in the organisation. Gendered values may become part of the core values of an Indonesian family business leader due to their socialisation processes since childhood. Such an understanding is vital not only for developing MCS literatures, but also for promoting equality and empowering people to exploit their potential.

*Gender and leadership*

Gender is related to roles attached to men and women. Although those roles and characters are not innate, social environment provides a socialisation/education that forces men and women to behave accordingly (Eagly, 1987). Gender affects our ideas and values in viewing ideal behaviours, jobs, and activities for men and women.

In organisational context, Ely and Meyerson (2000) state that gender is a social relation enacted across a range of social practices made by and for men which tends to reflect their life situations and experience. Although sex difference is not explicitly used to differentiate treatments among organisational members, many organisational processes that seem neutral contain gender biases. The biases are manifested in policies, formal procedures, narrations and daily informal interactions that appear neutral but actually imply and preserve inequalities (men above women, masculine above feminine).

In many cases, leadership tends to favour masculine characters (such as individualism, control, strictness, domination, aggressiveness, independency, objectivity, rationality, confidence, ambition and impersonality), above feminine characters (such as empathy, togetherness, sensitivity, cooperation, intuition, affection, being keen on sharing ideas and having interpersonal skills) (Fletcher, 2004; Korac-Kakabadse *et al.*, 1998). Rewards are more likely to be given to those who perform heroic-individual activities with visible results rather than to those who perform relational activities (creating interaction, building affection, and empowering others). Female leaders are expected to follow the attitudes and behaviours of male leaders in order to prove their competencies (Marshall, 1995).

However, gender has different meanings and expectations in societies with different socio-cultural institutions (Pounder and Coleman, 2002; Parker, 2008). In a society, structure, system and social regulations are related to status and power, which are embedded in gender ideology, and themselves involve the characteristics of an ideal leader (Bartol *et al.*, 2003). Thus, the institutions affect the power he/she establishes and his/her leadership style.

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*Culture and gender in Indonesia*

Indonesia is a multicultural country which numbers around 245.9 million people living in its 33 provinces (Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), 2010). The country is rich in cultural diversity with more than 1,000 different ethnic groups and more than 100 local languages (Suryadinata *et al.*, 2003). Nowadays, more than 60 per cent of Indonesians live in Java.

The culture of those living in Java is heavily influenced by the traditional Javanese culture. This culture is basically paternalistic emphasising social etiquette, such as social harmony, avoiding resentment and hostility, friendliness, respect for social status and politeness (Efferin and Hopper, 2007; Geertz, 1961; Rademakers, 1998). In some situations, those with lower social status may ask for protection, rewards and/or help from a person with higher status but they then must listen to, obey and be loyal to him. In this sense, the person with higher status then becomes a *bapak* (father/patron) to them. This relationship resembles interactions between parents and children in traditional families. Whilst significant cultural transformation is taking place in Indonesia, these paternalistic, family-like relationships can still be found in many families and organisations. The paternalistic culture also includes gender relations, which are discussed below.

Gender relations in Indonesia are heavily influenced by the gender ideology of the New Order regime which governed the country for 32 years (1966-1998). Suryakusuma (2011) calls the New Order's gender ideology *State Ibuism*. *Ibu* means mother. The New Order State created the image of an ideal woman by adopting numerous norms from Javanese aristocracy (*priyayi*) and European monarchy (petit-bourgeois) that were repackaged and modified through several government programmes to preserve the state's power. These programmes combined concerted efforts consisting of state-controlled family education (PKK) in both rural and urban areas; social activities of civil servants' wives' associations (e.g. Dharma Wanita) and military wives' associations; and national curricula in schools.

*State Ibuism* views men as the core element of nation and society, while women act as secondary elements who support men by taking care of the families. In this sense, women are said to have a divinely assigned role of being a wife and mother (*kodrat wanita*), which should be their main responsibility above job and career. Women must be submissive towards their husbands, take care of their families, and support the nation's development programmes sincerely. Power is the men's right (husbands'). Thus, women's power is localised, domesticated and depoliticised. Overall, *State Ibuism* created a gender hierarchy that supported the country's power hierarchy: the country controlled civil servants, wives and junior wives, children, and eventually all family members.

Since the collapse of the New Order State in 1998, processes aiming to deconstruct the gender ideology have appeared (Dewi, 2007). In public sectors, women's empowerment is supported by numerous non-governmental organisations (e.g. Suara Ibu Peduli – Voice of Concerned Mothers, APIK – Indonesian Women's Association for Justice, Yayasan Jurnal Perempuan – Women's Journal Foundation, etc.). In addition, between 1999 and 2001, when Gus Dur was the Indonesian President and Khofifah Indar Parawansa the Minister of Women's Empowerment, many government programmes were launched to change the doctrine from "the wife is the husband's companion" to "woman is man's equal partner". This policy is supported by the ratification of Bill No. 23/2004 on Eradication of Domestic Violence that places men and women in equal positions, sharing equal responsibilities and rights.

However, these deconstruction processes still need time to eventually create gender equality. This is because *State Ibuism* ideology has been deeply implanted in

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Indonesian societal culture (Dewi, 2007). The majority of Indonesian people still assume that men are more firm than woman in making decisions; women must fulfil their divine role in taking care of the family; and female leaders are incapable of overcoming challenges. Women should display feminine characters, by being soft and weak (*lemah lembut*), speaking in soft tones, and not asserting their interests against those of their husbands and fathers (Nilan and Utari, 2008).

However, job competition is getting harder, making husbands' salary no longer sufficient to support their family needs. Consequently, educated women are driven to work, and play a dual role (as a mother and a career woman) to fulfil their financial needs. Nilan and Utari (2008) observe that many middle-class, well-educated Indonesian women choose to work in female-dominated occupational sectors because the types of work, the positions within the organisational hierarchy, the working hours, and the salary they earn, are acceptable and can be reconciled with their identity as respectable women. By doing so, they can gain prestige as career women to fight the conservative value of *kodrat wanita*. Thus, the ideology has shaped the worldview of many Indonesian people that if women become leaders, it is not because of their own capabilities, but simply because the men are unable to do so.

Many people including women still oppose women's decision to work after giving birth because it is considered as a disruption to their main responsibilities as good wives and mothers. This whole situation has made the relations between work and family problematic for Indonesian women. If a mother works and a family problem occurs, then she is considered the guilty party because she has sacrificed her family for her career. Sadly, an even worse stigma is attached to a mother who does not work: if there is a problem in her family, she is considered as even more guilty because she cannot fulfil her sole domestic responsibilities. In the case that both parents do not work and a problem occurs, the society tends to judge that the mother cannot fulfil her responsibilities because she is failing to support her husband. Hence, the woman's position is difficult in all situations.

### *Recapitulation*

Based on the theoretical reviews, we developed a model to guide our study (see Figure 1). The gender ideology of Indonesian society and its socialisation characterises an Indonesian business leader's life experience and personal values. In a family business context, the values of the owner/leader become the core values of the company. The values will in turn affect his/her leadership style and the subsequent design and implementation of the MCS. By using this framework, we expect that this study will reveal gender biases contained in result, process and cultural controls.

## Research methodology

### *Data collection*

Field data collection was conducted from May 2011 to February 2012. The methods used were interviews, observations and documentary analyses (Neuman, 2011).

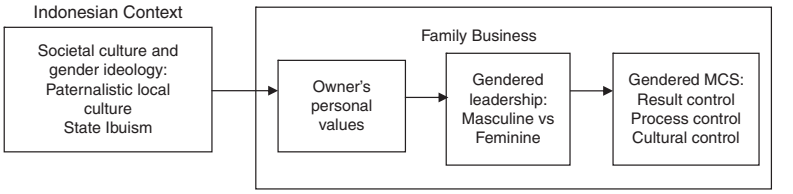


**Figure 1.** Theoretical model for analysing gender bias in a family business' MCS

Interviews were recorded and used a semi-structured approach to render them thematic yet flexible in order to obtain detailed and full information. Answers from the respondents were developed during the sessions. Observations used the non-participant observation method, where the researchers acted as pure observers and were not involved as actors. Documentary analyses were conducted to analyse the company's internal documents to obtain written, formal "rules of the game" of the company. Summaries of the interviews, observations, and documentary analyses are provided in Tables I-III.

During the interview sessions, Mrs M was asked about her social background and gender experience since childhood, the history of the company, her work relationships with her husband and employees, her values in managing and controlling the company, her company problems and her methods in solving them. Interviews were also conducted with employees. We selected the employees based on their positions, their knowledge/experience and their willingness to cooperate in this study. The topics of the

| Subject | Status/subject's position | Hours |
|---|---|---|
| Mrs M | Owner, Vice CEO and Finance Director | 4 |
| Mr N | Director | 2 |
| Mrs Ni | Architecture Planning Division | 1 |
| Mrs I | Architecture Planning Division | 1 |
| Mr T | Construction Planning Division | 1 |
| Mr S | Construction Planning Division | 1 |
| Mrs L | Administration Division | 1 |
| Mrs A | Administration Division | 1 |
| Mrs K | Administration Division | 1 |
| Mrs C | Administration Division | 1 |
| Mr B | Site Supervisor | 1 |
| Total | | 15 |

**Table I.** Interview method

| Activities | Observation period |
|---|---|
| Mrs M's daily activities | October-December 2011 |
| Daily interactions among organisational members during working hours | |
| Daily interactions among organisational members during break/outside working hours | |

**Table II.** Observation method

| Document type | Category |
|---|---|
| Organisational structure and job descriptions | Internal |
| Accounting system and procedures | Internal |
| Regulations about employees | Internal |
| Regulations about incentives | Internal |
| Reports of employee's performance | Internal |
| Construction project documents | Confidential |
| Employee data | Confidential |

**Table III.** Documentary analysis

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interviews included their daily tasks, their personal relationships with the company's owners, their motivation to work here, their ambition/aspirations for the company, their personal and work problems during their employment, and the values of the company. Interview sessions were crucial in gaining the emic view of the respondents. Following the methodology of Efferin and Hopper (2007), the emic view was interpreted by comparing it to the etic view (theories and concepts). The results were then presented to the respondents to obtain confirmation from them (reconciling etic and emic views).

Observations were conducted in key activities including daily formal and informal interactions among organisational key members. The observations were conducted by following several principles. First, the observations and the observers' behaviour did not interfere with the on-going activities. For example, the dress code of the observer was similar to that of the organisational members (casual-formal) and the observer developed personal relationships beforehand with the organisational members to gain their acceptance. Second, the situations observed were chosen according to the main purpose of the observation session. For example, to understand the personal interactions between employees, the observations were conducted during break/lunch time. Third, to construct explanations, the results of an observation session were confirmed through interview sessions.

Documentary analysis was performed by considering the informational content of the documents, the purposes of the documents, the rules/conventions used in the documents and the way the documents were used. For example, the accounting systems and procedures were analysed to help researchers understand the flow of work more systematically, and the organisational structures and job descriptions were studied to understand the authority and responsibilities of the key persons. In addition, the results of the analysis were subjected to confirmation by interviewing relevant participants. This was done to ensure that the documents were valid in describing the actual practices. Should there be discrepancies, the observer would then collect further information to understand the actual practices.

*Data analysis and triangulation*

All data obtained from interview, observation and documentary analysis were initially coded into six major categories: Mrs M's childhood experiences, reasons for building GAMMA, personal values, leadership style, MCS and organisational life. The initial coding was made in accordance with the major theoretical issues. The coding was performed to identify which areas needed further data collection. Then, relations among the categories were developed continuously during the data collection processes by focussing on four key dimensions of each phenomenon: what, when, how and why. The researchers uncovered the relations based on keywords from the data, such as: "because", "when" and "for that reason".

The six categories evolved continually and at the end of the study, the categories became GAMMA history (including Mrs M's childhood experiences and reasons for building the company), leadership style (including leadership characteristics, leader's values and followers' values), result control, process control, cultural control and employees' organisational experiences. There was no separate data category for "gender perspective" since this perspective is used to analyse how gender is implicated in each category. By doing so, the gender implication could be continuously integrated into the three control elements (result, process and cultural). The new categories were then combined with the societal culture and gender ideology from literature review (Figure 1) to produce a final model (see Figure 3 in discussion section) to answer the research questions.

To minimise researchers' biases, triangulations were performed by comparing the results of the interviews, the observations and the documentary analyses in order to check the consistencies or contradictions of the data (Neuman, 2011; Denzin, 1989). In cases where the data were contradictory, the researchers would then collect additional ones to find further explanations. These processes were repeated until the researchers found logical explanations for the contradictions. The contradictions could be caused by different contexts, deeper meanings that were previously hidden and/or biases originating from the researchers or respondents. For example, Mrs M's statements about her philosophy in managing female employees were compared to stories obtained from interviews with female employees themselves; data obtained from the documents on job descriptions were compared to interviews with the relevant participants; and accounting systems flowcharts were compared to interviews with persons from the divisions of administration and construction planning. Combining data from the different sources provided researchers with fuller pictures. The processes were performed iteratively until the researchers found more valid explanations.

## GAMMA Company's background

GAMMA Company is located in Surabaya, in the East Java province. According to BPS (2010), this province has the greatest number of Indonesian construction companies. From a national total of 130,432 construction companies as per 2010, 13 per cent of them are registered in the East Java province. This province's economic growth and massive infrastructure development are the main reasons for this concentration.

The construction business is considered by Indonesian people as a "male" business sector because its activities are closely related to engineering, field activities, strength, dirtiness, and physical endurance, and because firmness is required in dealing with male field workers. Usually, it is difficult for a woman to reach top-level positions in a masculinised sector because she is seen as a mere supporter (e.g. as a clerical employee). Sidelining female employees in such an environment is not considered discrimination, but on the contrary, is viewed as a way to protect their social status and physical weakness (Lahiri-Dutt and Robinson, 2008).

GAMMA Construction was founded in 1993. The company focusses on housing projects in East Java, Indonesia. It is owned by Mr K (President Director) and his wife Mrs M (formally acting as Finance Director). Mr K focusses on handling field projects, while Mrs M focusses on managing the company's financial affairs and human resources (including coordination, performance evaluation and reward/punishment matters).

GAMMA has 33 full-time employees (ten women and 23 men): one president director, one finance director, one director, one employees in the general planning division, three employees in the construction planning division, two employees in architectural planning, two employees in internal planning, four site employees, three employees in administration, and 15 logistics staff. In addition, GAMMA also employs contract labourers, their number dependent on current projects. GAMMA's organisational structure can be seen in Figure 2.

## Gender experience and Mrs M's leadership style

Mrs M is an energetic, 47 year-old businesswoman. Before running GAMMA Company, she used to work as an employee in a manufacturing company for more than ten years until she reached the position of head of production division. She had always been

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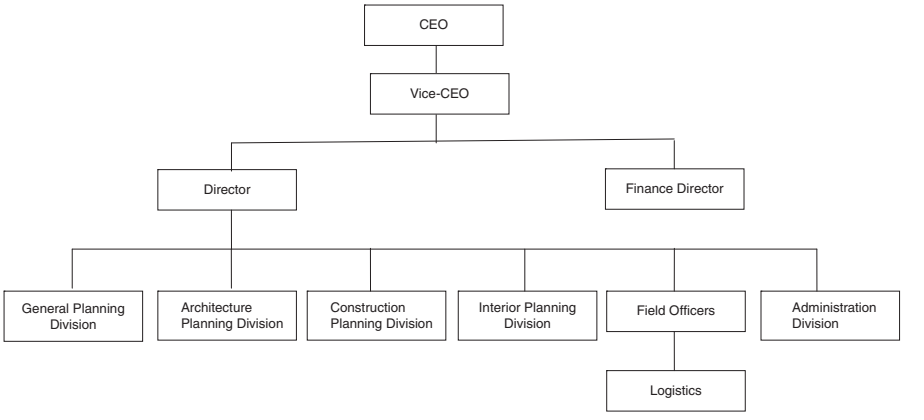


**Figure 2.** Organisational structure of GAMMA

**Source:** Internal document

obsessed with owning her own company. Eventually, she encouraged her husband in taking the risk of starting their own company. Although Mrs M did not have any educational background in construction, she tried to develop her company, thanks to self-learning from books on construction business management:

> At the beginning, I did not know anything about this construction business. But since I was a kid I used to tell myself that I had to be able to master everything. That is why I was bold enough to try this business. The main obstacle at that time was to find sufficient funds. My husband and I went around asking our respective families to lend us money. Although the interest rate was 4% a month, I agreed. At the beginning, my husband was afraid and doubtful, but I kept reminding him that we could not be salarymen forever. We had to believe that we had the ability to start our own business, and we were eventually able to settle our debt (Mrs M).

It is obvious that she is actually stronger, more determined, more of a risk taker, and more result oriented than her husband. In other words, Mrs M is more masculine than her husband in many ways.

Mrs M experienced the marginalisation of women's role in her family education during her childhood. As stated:

> If I were asked how I can be a leader, then I would answer that you have to lead yourself first. When I was a kid, I always met my own needs. My parents rarely took care of their children. My parents also gave more attention to their sons than to their daughters. So I was raised in a different way. Every morning at 3 am, I woke up and cleaned the house, washed my clothes, cooked, but I still made time to study. Everyday I did my chores this way and it became my habit.

This family education is a manifestation of how *kodrat wanita* is delivered to members of Indonesian society. Mrs M was told that a woman ought to fulfil her divinely assigned female gender role to accompany her husband and to assist her family. However, on another occasion, she explained her determination in having a broader role beyond her domestic duties:

> In my opinion, sons and daughters actually have the same abilities and skills as long as they are given the same opportunities. This drives me to show my abilities and skills, by always studying diligently, reading, maximising myself to do everything […] I don't want to be a weak woman and to depend on men or on my parents.

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Family values taught her that life, as a basic right for women, depends on men. Family education that contains female subordination has shaped Mrs M's character and convinced her that masculine is superior to feminine. However, because she has decided not to rely on a man, she tries to be masculine. She has also learned about human personality in order to know how to control people. The given statement tells how Mrs M was determined to dare enter "men's territory" without having to neglect her *kodrat wanita*:

> When I was a kid, my parents used to say that a girl did not have to get higher education. When I wanted to go to college, my parents also said that it was useless, but I went anyway and paid for it myself by working part-time. After finishing my degree, I got married. However, I am still pursuing my career besides taking care of my family.

The family education that Mrs M received was very conservative. She learned from her family that men and women have different roles. Her father was the leader of the family and her mother performed her domestic chores to support her husband's work. Hence, she believes that equality is impossible to obtain without fulfilling her domestic roles first. Only after having performed the roles can she play larger roles and act as a respectable leader.

Eagly (1987) states that the social environment requires men and women to act "appropriately" based on their gender expectations. Mrs M regards this situation as a challenge that has to be coped with. Her struggle is not aimed at obtaining gender equality, but rather to prove that women can "be" men by rejecting feminine characteristics and adopting masculine ones. For her, feminine characteristics are seen as "a weakness that needs correction". Obviously, the gender ideology of *State Ibuism* has shaped her values that a good, respected leader should own masculine leadership characteristics. This is consistent with the statement of Marshall (1995) that a woman should follow the man's model to get any legitimation as a leader. The image of a masculine woman able to cope with all challenges ultimately became the model for her leadership in GAMMA.

Mrs M's leadership styles consist of several characteristics.

*Detailed observation and direction*

Mrs M always observes and gives detailed instructions to her subordinates for performing their jobs followed by rewards and punishments to enforce compliance. As noted by Mr T:

> She always gives clear directions that can help us in our work, for example she explains what we can and cannot do according to our work contracts. In addition, she also explains our job description clearly. So if there is a mistake, we will get some warning and will be informed of what is going wrong. When we reach certain targets, we may get rewards.

She believes that detailed instructions can minimise misperception or miscommunication with her subordinates in GAMMA. This reflects the emphasis placed by Mrs M on constant surveillance and assessment of individual conduct in order to produce obedient employees. Such practices are widely accepted by the employees. Masculine leadership characteristics, such as control, domination, and aggressiveness are obvious here.

*Centralised authority*

Mrs M's habit of giving detailed instructions, also produces a centralised delegation of authority. As stated by Mrs L:

> Here we never take decisions ourselves, because we have to inform the top management first, if it is not the Director, then it is Mrs M. because every decision is important, that is why we

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> are afraid to take our own decisions. However, we are allowed to give our own opinions or suggestions in certain conditions, which she may consider.

This resembles the parents' approach towards their children in Indonesia. Children's obedience towards their parents' decisions is a family norm. In Mrs M's case, the centralised decision-making process leaves room for suggestions and opinions before the decision is taken. However, this room must not be interpreted as authority, it is rather an opportunity to give consideration. Mrs M wants all activities to be performed under her absolute control.

*Job assignment based on gender*

Gendered job assignment can clearly be seen from the way Mrs M assigns duties to her employees. She believes that site work should be performed by men because of their physical abilities, while female employees are assigned for inside office duties such as design, drawing and administrative tasks. She assumes that women are very meticulous in drawing and accounting. She believes that gender determines individual competencies and therefore should be used as the basis of recruitment policy and staffing in GAMMA. In her eyes, such policies are not gender-biased, but they rather aim to protect the nature of woman as a human being "with natural limitations" as well as to utilise the "natural strengths" of a woman.

Interestingly, the site control for construction projects is directly performed by Mrs M's husband, Mr K. As a President Director, he should focus on the strategic affairs of the company rather than managing site workers and the projects' technical affairs. From various interviews, we identified two reasons explaining this assignment. First, Mr K's educational background is civil engineering which enables him to understand the technicalities of a project. Second, works related to construction are considered as a man's domain. Indonesian people tend to question or downgrade women who have too many interactions with men through their work. Assigning a woman to an "incorrect" area (e.g. a construction site) may destroy her image as "a good woman".

*Fostering confidence and full commitment in performing duties*

Mrs M's gender experience has taught her the importance of being self-confident and fully committed in order to overcome challenges. As the leader and owner of the company, she has the same expectations from her employees:

> As a woman, I always try to prove that I am capable of doing things. I believe that if I do things with good purpose, then the results will be good (Mrs M).

In another interview session, Mrs M stated that the thing she could least tolerate from her employees is when they do not complete their tasks before the assigned deadline. In her opinion, commitment to the job is the main point and it has to be respected by men and women when working in GAMMA. Sexual identity is not a reason for discrimination in performance evaluation and fairness should be promoted by using the same measures for all employees. Hence, she continually encourages her female employees to build their self-confidence to compete with male employees. Obviously, she defines fairness as a uniform commitment for all employees regardless of their sex and this commitment is assessed under masculine ideology.

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Apparently, this leadership style has made all employees regard her as their role model. As explained by Mr N:

> Mrs M is a person with high self-confidence who always shows determination in moving forward to achieve GAMMA's purposes. With such a strong commitment, GAMMA will be able to survive in tight competition conditions. For us, Mrs M is an extraordinary woman who possesses determination to always move forward. This inspires us to work hard without feeling tired.

GAMMA employees need a heroic figure to emulate. The Indonesian gender ideology has produced "a truth" about the character of a true leader, who is directive, firm, strong, and brave, i.e. masculine. The fact that Mrs M is the Co-owner of the company supports her legitimation as a leader. However, if the status was not supported by her strong masculine leadership style, then she would only be viewed as her husband's companion. The situation at GAMMA reveals how dominant the roles played by Mrs M are in the eyes of her male and female subordinates. Therefore, her masculine traits enable her to be a legitimate leader.

*Interpersonal approaches*

Mrs M always uses direct personal communication not only with her customers but also with her subordinates. As stated:

> We succeeded in building good business relations with one of the largest developer companies, thanks to Mrs M because of her ability to communicate well with the owner of that company. Besides, she shows respect towards her husband as well as towards her employees, one thing that supports her career all the time (Mr N).

> Mrs M is easy to talk to, she always treats us like her family. If a mistake is made, we will be informed and the action will be corrected. This makes us feel respected and appreciated. For example, when we all came to talk to her asking for a holiday trip during Eid al Fitre holiday, she accepted our request, even asked us to decide which place we wanted to go to, and told us that the company would pay for the trip (Mrs A).

> Mrs M often praises our work, and if there is a mistake, she corrects it straight away. For example, when I made a mistake in preparing a financial report, she directly told me and corrected it. That is enough to make me feel happy and respected (Mrs C).

She delivers a clear message that although everyone has personal constraints, work commitment should come first. Sometimes Mrs M asks her female employees to ride in her car on their way back home after having worked overtime because it is already quite late and they also go in the same direction. Some female employees said that they had become accustomed to such work commitment, although they admitted that it was not easy to divide their commitment between the company and their families. The difficulties of female employees in balancing their personal life and work implies that they are continuously in a state of dilemma: caught between the need to obtain the status of respectable women and the reality that requires that they play the role (at least partially) of breadwinner in their family. In addition, Mrs M also provides interest-free loans to her employees (male and female) who are experiencing financial struggles. The loans are payable in monthly instalments deducted from their monthly salaries.

Obviously, feminine leadership characteristics of empathy and affection are present. These approaches are effective in gaining respect and obedience from employees. However, these efforts are not intended to create harmony between the employees' family commitments and work commitments. Instead, they are intended to increase the employees' conformance with a masculine organisational commitment.

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*Recapitulation: leadership and gender in GAMMA*

It can be concluded that Mrs M's leadership cannot be separated from her gendered values. The values have been socialised since her childhood through her family education and social environment. Thus, if a society believes in the superiority of masculine traits over feminine traits in public affairs, a female leader will also share these values and consider them as part of her core beliefs in managing people.

However, the above results also reveal that a woman does not necessarily take all societal norms for granted. To some extent, a woman may exercise her free will and autonomy, especially regarding her aspiration to possess roles beyond domestic life. For Mrs M, the best way to achieve her aspiration is by fulfilling her "divinely assigned roles" in her family first, then moving forward to become a strong, masculine female leader in her company. This is her strategy to achieve her personal ambition whilst simultaneously respecting the existing gendered societal norms. In this sense, there is a high correspondence between presupposed roles of men and women in society, stereotyping of male-female characteristics and gender traits in Mrs M's leadership. Her leadership is essentially masculine and it is oriented towards strong direction and control. Although some feminine characteristics are present in her leadership (interpersonal approaches), they are secondary, only complementing the masculine leadership characteristics. Therefore, this reveals her preference towards a masculine working atmosphere. Her gender experience has shaped her mind to associate masculinity with strength and femininity with weakness.

## MCS in GAMMA

Mrs M's leadership characteristics are translated into the company's MCS. To understand how gendered leadership permeates MCS, we followed the control categorisation used by Efferin and Hopper (2007): cultural, process and result controls.

*Cultural control*

Cultural control represents the organisational norms of what is appropriate and what is not. The leadership styles of Mrs M have created masculine norms that are based on the employees' submission to the higher authority of the owners. These norms create employees who are obedient, loyal and respectful towards their superiors, just like children are towards their father in the Indonesian context. In this sense, a typical gendered-familial organisational culture is created and becomes the company's cultural control. The company is seen as an extension of the Indonesian family structure/hierarchy where the owners have a legitimation as "the head of the family" to place employees into the right positions in the company and have a responsibility to take care of the employees' well-being. On the other side, the employees adopt the familial norms as their guidance when performing their duties. Given the societal expectation that a strong leadership is masculine, Mrs M's masculine leadership styles have produced a role congruence that makes her effective in controlling the employees. For example, the cultural control has made the employees' promotion or career path irrelevant in GAMMA. Work allocation is the privilege of the owners. Rotation is possible but it is limited to the same department. As stated by Mr S (construction plan):

> In GAMMA, there is no promotion or rotation, we can only swap tasks. For example, in the beginning I was assigned to construction planning, my task could be supervised by Mr L and then I got an assignment to draw the building. Probably because if there is rotation, the

> person may not master the skills required in the new division, not to mention the long training periods, which can slow down the construction process, or even create new problems.

The absence of a promotion scheme is not an issue in GAMMA. Obviously, this company is not suited for those who wish to pursue their careers based on equal opportunities. This situation represents the familial hierarchy in Indonesia, where children will forever remain children, and will never be asked to become the head of the family. Respect towards Mrs M's authority has prevented her employees from ever considering their career path as an important issue. Instead, expectation towards a family-like relationship and financial welfare is much more important than promotion or delegation of authority. As stated:

> I have been working here for 8 years, and it feels nice because of the close relationships among workers, where we help each other in time of need, which makes us like a family (Mrs Ni).

> None of us here has a problem with our assignments. Everyone knows their responsibility, for example in the administration division, then we try to perform as well as we can (Mrs L).

Mrs M's absolute authority is strengthened by several rituals. Family-like rituals are performed on various occasions such as meal gatherings to celebrate the owners' birthdays, the company's anniversary, the employees' birthdays and reaching the company's targets. Various interviews with employees reveal that they regard these rituals as positive and necessary to build togetherness and intimacy inside the company. During the rituals, the owners usually give speeches to the employees, emphasising the expected working norms and behaviours in GAMMA including discipline, fulfilling deadlines, performance assessment, productivity and commitment to work above personal matters. Interestingly, the forms of communication are similar to the directions given by parents to their children. The rituals include feminine characteristics (a mother's approach) to strengthen the emotional ties among the members of the organisation. On the other side, the rituals also remind the employees of the masculine core values of the company (parents' expectations of their sons). Hence, the rituals demonstrate how feminine approaches are used to boost the employees' performances which are still defined under masculine criteria.

Therefore, Mrs M's leadership style has promoted a strong gendered-familial cultural control that, in turn, creates submissive employees who accept the absolute authority of the company's owners as their superiors as well as their "parents" in daily organisational life. The cultural control is the foundation of the company's process and result controls.

*Process control*

The implementation of process control in GAMMA is based on the owners' basic assumption that employees tend to make mistakes if not meticulously monitored. This resembles traditional Indonesian family views that children must be guided continually to prevent them from making mistakes. Almost all decisions are made by Mrs M and her husband Mr K (President Director). As Director, Mr N has limited authority, being subject to approval from the two owners. As stated by Mrs M:

> In decision making processes, all employees need to get the director's approval (Mr N). If the director is in doubt, then he will consult my husband or myself, and if it is approved, then the decision will be made. Employees can still give their opinion and we are always ready to hear them out. For urgent matters, we usually make a special forum attended by Mr K, Mr N and myself.

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This is confirmed by Mrs K (Administration):

> I never take my own decisions, all decisions are taken by top-level management, i.e. Mrs M, Mr K, and Mr N. I am afraid if I make my own decisions, I may make mistakes which are not in accordance with the company's objectives. But we can still give our opinion or ideas to Mrs M.

The process control includes a flexible separation of duties. Although individual job descriptions are provided, the employees are expected to help each other when their main duties are completed. As mentioned by Mrs M:

> In this company, an employee can help another employee as long as his/her main task is completed. I usually ask them whether they have already finished their job or not. If they say they have, then it is fine for them to take a rest for a little while or to help the others.

At a glance, one may form the view that teamwork and cooperation (as feminine characteristics) are present. However, such practices only exist because of the high workloads faced by the employees. Efficiency is the top priority, so adding new employees is not the first choice. Working to tight schedules has created a situation which requires mutual help among employees. An employee who is inactive and relaxed when others are very busy will be viewed as selfish and ignorant; he/she may not be assisted by others when he/she really needs help himself/herself. An unfinished task may create some bottleneck effect which can delay the completion of a project and eventually no one will benefit from the situation. Thus, helping each other is important for a technical reason, i.e. to speed up the whole process.

Process control is also implemented in the form of action accountability (compliance towards the company's "rules of the game"). These rules include regulations for employees, standard operating procedures, action monitoring mechanisms and detailed reporting. They are communicated in both written forms (e.g. work agreement and SOP documents) and oral forms (during gathering sessions with employees). Numerous documents related to technical-functional matters are available and accessible for all GAMMA employees.

For example, no employee is allowed to come late to the office, and a time clock (clock card machine) is used to set the arrival time to no later than 8.00 a.m. The device is connected to Mrs M's computer; if an employee does arrive late, the indicator that is individually assigned to her will automatically change colour to red. The sanction for employee's tardiness is a salary reduction in accordance with the written rules, which have been established by the owners. The same policy is applied when the employees have finished their tasks. They have to clock out, and those who leave before the established time will get a direct warning from their supervisor:

> I always implement clear, written regulations for all divisions. For example, we give a salary reduction as a sanction for tardy employees. You will receive a warning if you use the uniform inappropriatelyand in the case of a project progress report being submitted later than the agreed schedule, etc. (Mrs M).

Other examples of procedures are the standard operating procedures related to cash receipt and expenditures, material procurement, storage and usage of materials, receiving orders and progress monitoring of projects. Those procedures have been established to ensure that the deadlines for a construction project are met and that everyone has responsibilities in performing his/her own tasks and completing them on time.

The regulations do not mention guidance or work norms that are required to build collective efforts and teamwork to reach organisational goals. This reveals that social

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interactions within the organisation are not considered as actual parts of the work. No matter how important these interactions are, they are considered secondary if compared to the main focus of technical and functional matters in the organisation. In other words, masculine aspects are considered more important than feminine aspects in the employees' performance evaluation. Violation of expected behaviour can result in written or verbal warnings and sanctions, up to permanent lay-offs. Conversely, consistent compliance will bring about rewards in the form of pay rises as often as twice a year, the percentage of which is decided by Mrs M and Mr K. Thus, the forms of rewards and punishments reveal a strong masculine motivator, i.e. financial consequences.

In addition, rewards are given to the employees at spontaneous and informal occasions (for example, gifts for the most diligent employees, the most honest employees, etc.). The forms of gift depend on gender. For example, female employees may receive a gold necklace, while male employees may receive a wristwatch. In the Indonesian context, these forms of reward symbolise the affection of a mother towards her children and reflect the feminine character, i.e. personalised gifts adjusted to their background and personalities. The significance of the gifts does not lie in the monetary value but rather in the symbol of care.

Overall, the process control in GAMMA reflects the prevailing masculine characteristics such as firmness, domination, subjugation, impersonality and rationality. Although on several occasions feminine characteristics appear, they only act as complements to the masculine process control. The control heavily relies on constant monitoring that aims to differentiate "the good" from "the bad" employees according to their attitude and behaviour. Self-initiative is not expected from employees. The practices are enforced by rewards and punishments that are communicated to all employees beforehand. The discipline that is instilled through the process control integrates all male and female employees in a masculine organisational life. In this sense, gender issues are buried under the issues of justice and uniform treatment for all employees.

The process control is also made effective by implementing the existing gendered-familial cultural control. The company's tight process control is justified in the employees' eyes since the cultural norms emphasise their obedience to Mrs M as the legitimate source of truth and wisdom. As a strong leader, she is perceived as having more knowledge than the employees on what is better for the organisation. Just like a child must continuously listen to and learn from his/her parents, the employees must listen to and learn from Mrs M to avoid making mistakes. Thus, the cultural control has created a situation of domination that enables the effective implementation of the masculine process control.

*Result control*

The company's cultural control shapes its result control. The purpose of the result control is not to build creativity in reaching targets, it is rather implemented to ensure the employees' obedience to the owners' directives and to ensure that they act efficiently.

At the beginning of each year, Mrs M and Mr K set revenue and profit targets which become the basis for planning and controlling their projects. GAMMA uses individual project plans (*RAB – Rencana Anggaran dan Biaya*) consisting of detailed estimations of direct wages, material, and overhead costs, as well as the completion schedules for all stages of the construction projects. Mrs M's approval is required before the RAB can be implemented. RAB is the main tool used to control the efficiency, the completion of

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projects on schedule and the company's cash flow. It is considered by the owners to be an objective and scientific tool. Its utmost indicators are the units of materials required, the number of workers needed, and the progress of a project. As revealed in the interview:

> Before starting a project, we usually make an expenses budget to estimate the costs of the project. In the budget, we determine the direct materials, the number of workers and their wages for each project. This budget is prepared by the architecture planning division because they know exactly the resources we need (Mrs M).

> My team and I, in addition to drawing the design, also prepare the expenses budget,that consists of raw materials, human resources and wages for the foremen and construction workers. This is important to control the future resources and costs. Finally, we add some margins as bases to set the prices (Mrs I).

Site monitoring is performed by site supervisors who have an obligation to report to Mr N (the director) on the conformity between the budgeted and the actual resource usage. The next step is the review of the report by Mrs M and Mr K. For Mrs M, incentives must be explicitly linked with individual performance. For example, there are some incentives if the employees can meet project efficiency standards and schedules. This policy is communicated transparently to all employees. It is important to note that, despite collective efforts and mutual help as required, the performance measurement is more individual than collective (group-based performance). As stated by Mrs M:

> All employees are assessed based on their individual performances, in terms of how well they perform their tasks according to the job description I gave beforehand. I evaluate them based on the duties they have performed. For example, I will assess the performance of administration employees who are responsible for preparing financial reports by checking the transaction documents. I want to check the accuracy of their calculations to make sure that there are no mistakes in the reports.

At the end of each year, she gives annual bonuses to all employees if the actual profit exceeds the targeted one. The bonuses are distributed as follows: 25 per cent to chief engineers, 20 per cent to foremen, 5 per cent to logistics staff, 20 per cent to architecture planning employees, 10 per cent to administration division employees, and the remaining 20 per cent are divided at the owners' discretion. Although the total amount of the bonuses is the prerogative of the owners, the employees fully accept the policy. There has never been a case where the decision was questioned or challenged by the employees as long as the distribution percentage followed the predetermined guidance. This reveals the power of the company's cultural control under which the employees fully accept Mrs M's authority in the implementation of the result control.

The assessment of individual productivity enables Mrs M to link the company's objectives to individual performances. Hence, masculine characteristics (i.e. individual performance, quick-result orientation, impersonality and economic rationality) are paramount in the result control. However, the performance criteria exclude important feminine competencies such as cooperation, mentoring and teamwork. This is contradictory to the reality mentioned in the previous section where employees often help each other to meet their respective deadlines. Such feminine competencies are not visible or explicitly elaborated under the existing masculine performance indicators. No matter how important the relational competencies are, they are not assessed. In other words, the result control gives high value to masculine characters without considering feminine characters. Thus, gender bias is hidden behind numbers that appear to be neutral and objective.

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## Discussion

This study responds to Parker's (2008) call for a need to study the impact of gender on management control and decision making. In doing so, the researchers investigate how gender discourses are produced in societal context; shape the mind and attitudes of leader and follower; and are reproduced in organisational processes via leadership and MCS. Hence, this study asks three research questions:

*RQ1*. What are the gender experiences of an Indonesian female business leader and how do the experiences shape her gendered personal values?

*RQ2*. To what extent does her leadership style reflect the gendered values?

*RQ3*. To what extent is the gendered leadership style translated, produced, and reproduced in the MCS? What are the consequences of the gendered MCS on organisational life?

Turning first to the gender experiences and personal values of a female business leader, our findings support the statement of Efferin and Hopper (2007, p. 249) that a leader's values are imbued from childhood by his/her parents and from daily experiences in his/her specific community. The New Order State has created a gender ideology (*State Ibuism*) stating that women have divinely assigned roles (*kodrat wanita*) to perform (Suryakusuma, 2011). Hence, feminine characteristics have become domesticated, whereas masculine characteristics have become the model for public affairs. This gender ideology is adopted by Indonesian families, including Mrs M's parents. Her family education and daily experiences were the most important mechanism to internalise the gender ideology. Consequently, Mrs M considers feminine characters as weaknesses that need to be corrected in public affairs.

However, our study reveals that a leader is not a passive agent. He/she can also challenge or modify values imposed on him/her. For Mrs M, a mere housewife is a weak woman. She has challenged such gendered oppressive situations by developing her capacities and partially accepting the gender ideology, i.e. she reserves *kodrat wanita* for private family affairs and develops her masculine character for her business. Therefore, in a gendered society, a woman may still have opportunities to resist the prevailing situation by adopting the core gendered values of the society while making use of the space left to fulfil her ambitions. The effect of societal sex-based discrimination can be lessened by reconciling societal demands with personal aspirations.

We now proceed to the second research question, i.e. the implication of gendered values on leadership style. Mrs M has demonstrated that by displaying a masculine leadership style, she gained legitimation from her subordinates as an effective and respected leader. As stated previously, cultural consensus among organisational members is a social capital that strengthens the ties between leaders and followers in family business (Efferin and Hartono, 2014; Pearson *et al.*, 2008). We enhance this perspective by showing that in an Indonesian family business, the cultural consensus is based on gendered-familial values. A leader has to express dominant masculine characters (e.g. control, strictness, domination, aggressiveness, independence, objectivity, rationality, confidence, ambition and impersonality) associated with some feminine characteristics (to a lesser degree) in order to create family-like bonds just like Indonesian parents do with their children. This kind of leadership matches the cultural expectations of the followers, giving rise to their strong followership. Thus, the leaders' and followers' common gendered-familial norms will result in leadership and followership that support each other (see Figure 3).

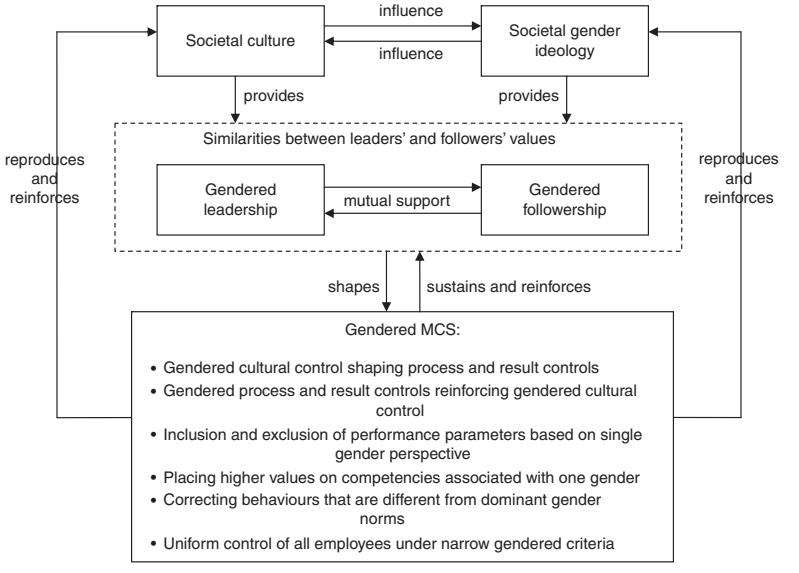


**Figure 3.**
Gender, leadership and MCS

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Proceeding to the third research question, this study finds that Mrs M's masculine leadership style produces a gendered MCS that, in turn, creates masculine employees. Although she fully understands the dilemma women face when working, she perceives those conditions as internal weaknesses of women that need to be corrected through MCS. Her sympathy and support for her female employees aim to motivate them to be masculine in their work. In cultural control, the core values are fundamentally masculine, emphasising an obedience towards the leader, discipline, fulfilling deadlines, performance assessment, productivity and commitment to work above personal matters. The values reflect children's obligation to their parents in traditional Indonesian family: the family's interests must be put above individual's interests and children's obedience towards their parents is sacred. Such values shape the process and result controls of the company. In the process control, constant monitoring and enforcements are used to ensure the conformance of employees' actions to a set of behavioural standards that favour centralisation, detailed monitoring and minimum empowerment. In the result control, individual performance, quick-result orientation, impersonality, and economic rationality make up the core of performance evaluation.

Hence, our study contributes to conventional MCS literatures by revealing how gendered-familial leadership is translated, produced and reproduced in MCS. This is consistent with Parker's (2008) statement that gender bias depends on organisation culture and context; it emerges in organisational actions and processes rather than in structural factors (p. 626). Our study reveals that gendered MCS is based on gendered cultural control that shapes the design and implementation of process and result controls. By understanding the cultural foundation of MCS, one can understand why process and result controls work in certain ways. The cultural control justifies various components of the other controls, including their philosophy, purposes, tools, priorities, performance parameters and forms of reward/punishment. In turn, the gendered process and result controls support the gendered cultural control of the company.

Overall, gendered leadership shapes gendered MCS that, in turn, sustains and reinforces the leadership.

According to Parker (2008), gender perspective in management control must avoid the temptation to associate control with sexual identity, "it is the blending and relative balance or imbalance between masculine and feminine characteristics of the processes that requires investigation" (p. 622). Our findings support the statement by showing that gendered MCS does not necessarily discriminate employees based on sex, but it includes and excludes performance parameters based on single gender perspective (see Figure 3). Masculine MCS directs the attention of organisational members to focus on certain masculine parameters such as the employees' submission, task completion, individual achievement, productivity, discipline and work commitment; and to disregard feminine parameters that could be at least equally important for the achievement of organisational objectives (e.g. teamwork building, affection, empowerment, empathy and good communication). Masculine competencies are considered as the only ones with value. Feminine competencies, no matter how significant their contribution might be, are merely considered to belong to the sphere of personal matters and are not seen as belonging to the sphere of valued core competencies. Thus, masculine MCS becomes the system to promote uniformity where males and females are controlled under narrow masculine parameters.

Furthermore, gendered MCS has implications on broader society. If the MCS contains some of the society's gender biases, its practices will reinforce and reproduce the biases into work norms and methods. In turn, the multiplicity of MCS practices from different companies in various locations may repeat, imitate and support one another, gradually strengthening gendered practices in a society. People will then tend to associate work and professionalism with masculinity. A vicious (re)production cycle of gender ideology is created: from macro-context (society) to micro-context (organisation) back to macro-context and so on. Thus, MCS is more than just an organisational technology for achieving organisational objectives; it is at the centre of the reproduction and reinforcement of gender biases that prevail in a society.

## Conclusion

This study has explained the interconnectedness among societal gender ideology, culture, leadership and MCS. The findings have enriched the understanding of gender aspects of MCS and their roots in Indonesian society. MCS is able to temporarily transport female employees from their actual world and daily problems by integrating them into the masculine organisational life. However, the integration is never complete since they are constantly overshadowed by possible challenges from the broader society and their families. MCS is not neutral since it can potentially sustain and enhance gender bias unnoticeably. Hence, in a company where MCS is masculine, female employees may have little prospect of pursuing their careers. Unfortunately, this situation is considered as normal in a gendered society.

The use of etic and emic analyses as proposed by Efferin and Hopper (2007) is useful in identifying gendered aspects of MCS since it can identify and analyse a rich mosaic of factors. However, some precautions must be taken when using this method. First, the method may also capture many issues irrelevant to the topic of the research. Hence, the case selected should be suitable to the topic. For example, the company selected in this study has a strong gender dimension, whereas the company used in the study of Efferin and Hopper has a strong ethnicity dimension. Having selected a suitable case, a researcher should ensure that the focus of his/her data collection is consistent with the

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research topic and questions. A logical coding system that combines emic and etic views needs to be applied carefully. Second, the researcher may be tempted to produce a quick result by unconsciously framing the interpretation of data according to his/her prior objectives. Hence, triangulation should be used intensively to minimise the researcher's possible biases.

Furthermore, this study has some limitations that warrant further research. Masculine and feminine characters are both needed in order to achieve organisational objectives. The study does not examine specifically the potential value of including feminine measures in MCS. We support Parker's (2008) suggestion that future endeavours need to recognise "the potentially critical role of feminine concepts and approaches to the strategic management process" (p. 626). To support those efforts, MCS literatures need to explore the strategic advantages of having feminine characteristics in the system. We share Parker's view that future research should develop a new MCS model containing creative measures, measurement processes, forms of reporting and use of the reports in order to develop feminine competencies in organisation.

Finally, although we have suggested that MCS plays an important role in the reinforcement of gendered practices in a society, the process is not explored in the study. Therefore, another important next step is to examine the patterns of the gradual reinforcement processes and their magnitude in strengthening the biases beyond organisational boundaries (e.g. in professional and industrial practices). Such studies will enhance our understanding about the interplay between gendered macro- and micro-practices.

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