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Gender Mainstreaming in Infrastructure Development : A Case Study of the Klaten–Prambanan Toll Road Project

Abstract

Infrastructure is often associated with the concept of development and seldom with the concept of social justice such as gender equality. This study seeks to analyze gender inequality in the construction of the Klaten-Prambanan toll road by presenting the experience stories of the affected women. In theory, this study adds to the few empirical studies on gender mainstreaming in infrastructure development in Indonesia, and in practice, adds to the body of knowledge on making development planning more gender-just in Indonesia. This qualitative case study is based on in-depth interviews, limited observation, document analysis, and thematic analysis. Some of the adverse impacts, including increased domestic work due to environmental degradation, loss of informal economic opportunities, lack of access to project-related jobs, and exclusion from project planning and decision making, are disproportionately borne by women. The aspirations of women seem to be channeled through male intermediaries instead of being directly solicited and responded to in a systematic manner. However, gender mainstreaming suffers at project level and the paper concludes there are real policy gaps between gender equality norms and practice in infrastructure development. By focusing specifically on women's experience, this study furthers a growing literature that recognizes that gender-responsive infrastructure is a necessary condition for achieving gender equality and also for sustainable development, and it highlights the importance of prioritizing women-centered participation and equitable, gender-sensitive remuneration in research.

Keywords: gender inequality; infrastructure development; women's participation; gender mainstreaming; toll road

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Introduction

Infrastructure development has been a prominent part of Indonesia's economic development strategy, increasing the interconnectivity of different regions and domestic goods movements. Large infrastructure projects such as toll roads, airports, seaports, dams and telecommunications infrastructure have been pursued to reduce the cost of transportation, improve access to markets and increase competitiveness. This brings up the question of the extent that infrastructure development leads to social justice and gender equality for women who live in directly impacted areas undergoing the infrastructure development.

Infrastructure is not gender-neutral. Women are not merely users of infrastructure, but rather their lives, livelihoods, and domestic labor are shaped by the construction of infrastructure projects and the socio-environmental impacts and conditions infrastructure creates. The gendered patterns of infrastructural inequalities take a wide variety of forms, including exclusion from infrastructure planning and control, domestic impacts from environmental degradation, lack of access to economic opportunities created by infrastructure, and low representation in public deliberative space. All of these factors have the potential to block transformation and secure structural inequalities when gender is not genuinely engaged in infrastructure development.

Based on the national level data, Indonesia's Gender Development Index (GDI) increased from 91.63 in 2022 to 91.85 in 2023. Indonesia's Gender Empowerment Index (GEI) increased from 76.59 in 2022 to 76.90 in 2023. However, aggregated measures can obscure gendered inequalities at the local level. For example, Indonesia's infrastructure and inequality literature finds trade-offs between economic flow efficiency and the deepening of spatial and social inequalities that often disproportionately affect specific groups (Nurdina, 2021). Likewise, the international literature provides examples of the lack of equity outcomes, when social considerations are insufficiently integrated into the design and execution of infrastructure projects (Estache & Wodon, 2014).

This included consequences for women informal traders after roads were built in Kalimantan, who saw a loss of repeat customers due to decreased accessibility. Most employment for the road-building project was allocated for men (Ainur et al., 2024). These findings supported fears that the biases surrounding infrastructure projects, (favoring men and formal economy jobs) were also sidelining the preferences of women informal traders working within household economies.

Theoretically, the GAD approach suggests that development should not treat women merely as passive beneficiaries, but should challenge the unequal power relations that exist in social and economic relations (Moser, 1993). In the area of policy tools, the GAD approach reaffirms the theory's support for gender mainstreaming, which is the systematic consideration of gender perspectives in all stages of the policy process, including planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (UN Women, 2015).

Indonesia's commitment to gender mainstreaming has led to its incorporation in national development planning, including the Medium-Term National Development Plan (RPJMN). Nevertheless, other empirical evidence supported the existence of a substantial gap in implementation, as gender issues were still considered secondary to physical output targets in infrastructure projects (Purnama & Bestari, 2016).

Studies on participatory development planning in Indonesia have also found that women are merely present through tokenistic inclusion in networks and meetings, and that their perspectives are rarely taken into consideration during decision-making (Setyawan et al., 2026). This reflects Cornwall's (Cornwall, 2001) concept of participatory exclusion, whereby participatory spaces for policy-making are created without the involvement of historically marginalized voices in the stakeholder network. Here, factors such as class, education, and occupation interact with gender to create differential vulnerabilities, and poor and less-educated women are impacted more negatively than higher-income and more educated women (Crenshaw, 1989).

Despite the growing literature, gaps remain regarding the impact of infrastructure projects in Indonesia. First, while there is literature on the macroeconomic impacts and spatial inequality of infrastructure projects, there is little on the impact for women at the project level (Nurdina, 2021; Estache & Wodon, 2014). Second, gender studies on development mainly focus on health, education, and labor, without investigating other fields such as infrastructure that have a potentially high impact on social relations. Third, gender studies in the field of development have focused on gender mainstreaming in norms and regulations, leaving the implementation of policies and their impacts on the population underexplored. Finally, intersectionality is rarely applied, and the empirical analysis doesn't really unpack variations among women's demographics, class, and occupation.

However, a meaningful theoretical question beyond empirical gaps remains underdeveloped in the literature. Much of the gender and infrastructure literature assumes that adopting gender mainstreaming policies will contribute to more inclusive development

outcomes. However, relatively little attention has been paid to explaining why gender inequalities persist, even when formal gender mainstreaming frameworks are institutionalized within national development policies. Existing studies tend to focus either on policy commitments or gendered development outcomes, while paying less attention to the mechanisms through which gender mainstreaming is weakened, filtered, or transformed during project implementation. Recent reviews further demonstrate that infrastructure projects frequently produce gender-differentiated outcomes, and that women's participation in infrastructure planning and implementation is associated with more inclusive development outcomes (Small et al., 2023). This study therefore contributes not only by documenting women's experiences but also by examining how male-dominated participation structures mediate women's voices and reproduce gender inequality, despite formal commitments to gender-responsive development.

This study addresses these gaps by examining gender inequality in the Klaten–Prambanan toll road development. This research will explore how infrastructure development affects women's participation, domestic responsibilities, economic opportunities, and decision-making roles. The research will investigate how (1) women's experiences of toll road development are shaped; (2) women's participation and aspirations are articulated and responded to by government and project actors; and (3) gender mainstreaming policies and practices are implemented in this infrastructure project. The case study focuses on communities living in the Klaten–Prambanan toll road corridor, with a focus on women and perspectives from the local stakeholders.

Theoretically, the study contributes through qualitative case study research on women's lived experience in infrastructure projects, exposing the gap between gender-centric policies and their implementation on the ground, and employing an intersectional lens to understand the specific vulnerabilities of women. Practically, it also provides valuable insights into inclusive and gender-sensitive infrastructure planning and implementation.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: the next section describes the methodology and the data collection procedures. This is followed

by the results and discussion on the vulnerabilities, aspirations and policy responses of women in the toll road project before concluding the paper with implications, limitations and future research directions related to the key findings of this research.

Methods

This research, therefore, used a qualitative approach and a case study approach in order to provide a better understanding of gender-based inequality in the Klaten-Prambanan toll road infrastructure development. Gender issues in development can not be fully understood solely through quantitative methods, and they require a contextual understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and meanings constructed by affected women. According to (Creswell & Poth, 2018), qualitative research provides researchers the opportunity to study complex social phenomena in their natural settings, and to hear the voices of marginalized communities often not reached through large quantitative researchers' surveys. It was determined that a case study approach would be appropriate as the research is focused on a phenomenon within a single infrastructure project and looks at women's lived experiences within the social, economic and cultural context.

The unit of analysis for this research consisted of women in the communities surrounding the site of

the toll road, whether their land was directly affected or not. Informants also included other individuals applicable to the community, such as members of the village government. Purposive sampling of informants who had experience of the study subject was used in accordance with Patton's (2015) advice of selecting information-rich cases that provided in-depth information about the phenomenon of interest. In the field, the researcher selected for gender, productive age through elderly age, occupation (housewives, small traders, laborers), and social status (ordinary residents as well as local people). Therefore, from these categories, the researcher had the opportunity to collect data from various women.

There were 12 informants, of whom nine were women who lived in the village, and three were local stakeholders. The stakeholders included people from different socio-economic backgrounds, job types, and levels of awareness of and exposure to the toll road project, including women directly affected by the land and housing loss as well as those affected by changes in environment and accessibility. All stakeholder informants were village-level authorities and local community representatives, who served as gatekeepers to their communities and as contact points for the project actors. They were recruited by strata to compare women's lived experiences and socio-economic vulnerability across multiple social positions. Interviews were carried out between

Table 1. Profile of Research Informants

Code	Informant Type	Exposure Status	Occupation/Position	Age Range
W1	Woman Resident	Directly affected	Small Trader	50–55
W2	Woman Resident	Directly affected	Housewife	45–50
W3	Woman Resident	Directly affected	Factory Worker	35–40
W4	Woman Resident	Directly affected	Small Trader	40–45
W5	Woman Resident	Indirectly affected	Housewife	50–55
W6	Woman Resident	Indirectly affected	Factory Worker	35–40
W7	Woman Resident	Indirectly affected	Small Trader	45–50
W8	Woman Resident	Indirectly affected	Housewife	55–60
W9	Woman Resident	Indirectly affected	Informal Worker	40–45
S1	Stakeholder	Community Representative	Village Official	50–55
S2	Stakeholder	Community Representative	Neighborhood Leader	45–50
S3	Stakeholder	Community Representative	Village Authority	50–60

Source: Authors' elaboration based on primary interview data (2025).

[Month, Month Year]. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. Most interviews were conducted at the participants' homes, while those with stakeholders were conducted at village offices or at other locations convenient to the participants. The interviews were later transcribed verbatim after they were recorded with the participants' permission.

Data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, which allowed data collection to be open to emerging patterns while still addressing the key research topic areas. The semi-structured version of the interviews used sub-indicators for the different key areas of focus, covering the impact of construction on household labor, access to economic opportunities, involvement in development forums, aspirations, and opinions on government policy and response. The strength of this method is that it is well-suited to drawing out the subjective views of informants, and Rubin and Rubin (2012, 4) state that interviews provide details of lived experiences that surveys cannot access.

Some participant observation and document analysis was also conducted in the areas surrounding the project itself, looking at alternative road access, housing conditions, and informal work. Document analysis also confirmed the interviews, as gender mainstreaming regulations, project reports, and secondary data from both the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) and international organizations on gender development indicators were utilized. This triangulation of the methods was considered important in improving the validity of the findings and is consistent with (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) who state that triangulation offers enhancements in the credibility of research.

Table 2 presents an overview of the documents consulted and the purpose for which they were analyzed in this analysis.

Data from document analysis were used to triangulate interview data, to contextualize gender analysis in the design, consultations, compensation, and implementation of projects, and to compare existing documentation against insights gleaned from interview data and observational data related to women's participation, policy responsiveness, and implementation of gender mainstreaming practices.

Fieldwork was conducted over an extended period in order to fully appreciate the social context of the community, and all interviews were audio-recorded with the interviewees' knowledge and consent and transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis based on the guidelines of Braun & Clarke (2019) was utilized to analyze the data. Thematic analysis can support the researcher in identifying themes in the data while providing flexibility in categorizing themes to suit research objectives. Transcripts were read multiple times. Next, participants' initial codes were grouped to identify the categories and themes. As a result, five themes emerged: gender differences in participation, domestic responsibilities, economic access, aspirations and policy interventions, and the implementation of gender policies in infrastructure projects. Data validity and reliability were ensured through several strategies. First, source triangulation was conducted by comparing the data from women, local leaders, and official documents. Second, member checking was conducted by confirming the interview results with selected participants to ensure the accuracy of the interpretations. Third, the researcher maintained reflexivity, that is, critical awareness of

Table 2. Documents Reviewed

Document Type	Analytical Purpose
Presidential Instruction No. 9/2000 on Gender Mainstreaming	Assess formal gender mainstreaming commitments
RPJMN and related planning documents	Examine policy integration of gender perspectives
Project socialization and consultation records	Assess participation mechanisms
Land acquisition and compensation documents	Examine compensation processes and affected groups
BPS Gender Development Statistics	Contextualize gender development indicators
UN Women reports and gender mainstreaming guidelines	Benchmark gender-responsive infrastructure principles

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the reviewed documents (2025).

their social position during the research process. As (Berger, 2013) emphasizes, reflexivity is crucial in minimizing interpretive bias, particularly in gender research where power relations can influence data collection.

The study was guided by ethical principles that are recommended for social research (Israel & Hay, 2006), that is justice, non-maleficence, and respect for human dignity. While conducting the interviews, in order to respect its participants' dignity, we let them know that they were able to refuse to respond to particular questions or terminate the interview at any time. The methodology that was chosen forms not only the technical framework of this research but also to design the research as a whole. The conception of the research design is focused on making women's voices heard and to make structures and unequal power relations visible in order to demand changes in policies. Feminist theory, gender mainstreaming, and intersectionality are combined with an empirical perspective, for example, in the qualitative case study design with thick descriptions of the operationalization of the infrastructure policies and gender inequalities at the local level. Hopefully, this can contribute to the literature on gender and infrastructure development in Indonesia, which is still lacking, and provide practical policy recommendations for inclusive and gender-responsive infrastructure development in the future.

Results and Discussion

Women's Vulnerabilities in Infrastructure Development:

Infrastructure investment is often seen as a driver of economic development and of inter-regional connectivity. In practice though, infrastructure can also create new vulnerabilities for certain groups, particularly women. The case study of the Klaten–Prambanan toll road shows that on the individual levels, women are more vulnerable than men regarding social, economic, health and psychological aspects. This vulnerability is a result of the masculinity of development itself and the patriarchal social and cultural values, which prevent women from being mobile and participating in activities in the public space.

The most blatant example of health and environmental risk is the impact of dust and noise from construction on women informants, which disrupted their daily lives and affected their health, particularly that of children. One informant, Atun, described how she and her grandchild experienced the conditions: “Yes, it was disturbing... From the very beginning when they started building, the sound of the equipment was loud and the dust was overwhelming. My grandchild often coughed, her breathing was disrupted. “ As women are typically responsible for family healthcare, these burdens often fell on them. Women also had twice the workload since they were required to clean the house more often due to the dust, and care for sick family members.

Road rerouting or road closure made it more difficult for residents, especially women, to travel to and from their houses. A village head named Entik explained: “Accessibility has become more difficult. . . near the river the bends are sharp, there is no lighting, and no fencing. “ In particular women felt vulnerable if they had to travel (for work or other reasons) at night. Sri Prihatin confirmed: “Yes, there are challenges, especially when I need to go out at night. I think twice about taking the alternative road. “ This non-material sense of vulnerability is unique to women.

There was psychological evidence of vulnerability too. Toll road construction sometimes caused people to be displaced, lose land or adjust to a different lifestyle. Reni said: “We had to move. . . eventually we had to adapt to a new environment, which is not easy. “ When women are forced to relocate, both socially and psychologically, because the circumstances separate them from families and communities in which they are strongly enmeshed (Ismani: “My economy is disrupted, my psychology is disturbed (more stress), and my social life has changed”). In short, infrastructure projects influence the physical environment and mental health, and women are among the most affected.

Economic vulnerability was another theme. Many women lost sources of income as customers no longer came regularly or markets were inaccessible. According to trader Sri Prihatin, “After the toll road was built, people became confused about which way to go... customers decreased compared to before. “ Mawarti said, “My income decreased because my

working hours were cut. “ Unlike the men, who were offered an opportunity for formal employment with the construction of the road, women were not offered employment. Atun said, “No, only men worked there. “ Dwi Rahayu said, “For women, no... mostly men, because project work is heavy. “

Some women were able to find informal work selling food to construction workers. Reni said: “Women opened stalls to sell coffee and food. I also sold coffee, instant noodles, and bread door-to-door. “ Work such as this was unsustainable because the women were dependent on the construction workers to be present to buy food. Other women, however, made no gain, and suffered decreased income. This is in keeping with UGM (2023), who found land conversion and toll road projects increased risks for rural women depending on agriculture or small businesses, and decreased their income-generating opportunities.

The economic and health impacts were compounded by women’s under-representation in decision-making spaces, and their hesitance or lack of confidence in putting forward their aspirations. Reni said: “Most of the speakers in forums were men, because women were not confident”. Titi Mulyani said: “In forums, women rarely speak, but among ourselves we discuss a lot”. Patriarchal norms limit women’s voices, despite them being most affected: this, paired with exclusion from decision-making bodies, is what is known as political vulnerability.

Responses to the project from its managers and governmental authorities were limited, and complaints from women were often passed to women forums for their neighborhood rather than addressed. As Atun noted, “I often asked the project implementers whether there would be compensation, but the answer was always no. “ Sri Prihatin also felt unrecognized. “I submitted a request for additional compensation, but it was not approved. “ The village head’s proposals for safety measures, including fencing, also went unfulfilled. “We already requested fencing. . but until now there has been no follow-up,” said Entik. The lack of institutional response heightened women’s vulnerabilities by leaving their grievances unresolved.

The analysis indicates that disadvantages based on gender do not manifest uniformly, but are

associated with particular socio-economic conditions, levels of exposure to land acquisition-related processes, and forms of dependence on livelihood. Women whose families were displaced reported pressures to relocate, loss of social networks, and negative psychological impacts from trying to adjust to new places. Women from non-displaced families were especially impacted by environmental effects, such as dust and noise pollution, and loss of access to goods and services. Different occupations also led to different vulnerabilities. The switched traffic patterns and reduced foot traffic reduced small traders’ incomes. Commuters faced longer journeys and higher fares, and there was an impact on working hours, with factory workers suffering more acutely from their reduction. Housewives, however, were left with the extra burden of dealing with the consequences of the environmental damage, including cleaning, tending to sick family members, and fixing the home.

The findings suggest that women from poorer households had fewer opportunities to absorb the livelihood shocks that came from the project. Those from wealthier households may have been better able to absorb short-term income shocks or disruptions to mobility, particularly those working in informal sector. This shows that the different impacts of these infrastructure projects cannot just be understood through a gender lens but must be understood through the interplay of gender and socio-economics.

From an intersectionality perspective (Crenshaw, 1989), these gendered vulnerabilities of infrastructure expansion are not uniform for all women (see also: social intersectionality). Intersecting social categories of gender, poverty, livelihoods and land acquisition lead to intersectional and differentiated vulnerabilities at different social locations as elaborated in the sections below. Women engaged in informal economic activity lost higher incomes and displaced women suffered increased trauma and social accommodation difficulties. Thus, infrastructure projects may entail layered forms of disadvantage, in which gender and its intersection with class and economic status produce differentials in capacities to cope with post-project disruptions.

The vulnerabilities observed in toll road development reflect the paradox of infrastructure-

driven growth. On the one hand, toll roads are promoted as instruments of economic growth and social welfare by enhancing connectivity. However, such projects marginalize specific groups, particularly women, who should also be beneficiaries of development. In the absence of gender-sensitive planning and implementation, infrastructure risks reproducing structural injustices.

Subsequent field results established that women were the most vulnerable social group affected by the Klaten-Prambanan toll road's construction, experiencing strengthened domestic labor, new threats to health and safety, economic losses, political disempowerment, and inadequate institutional support. These findings traced local women's experience of infrastructure to feminist critiques of infrastructure as a masculine development that prioritized physical targets and macroeconomic indicators without regard for social functions and women's everyday lives.

A more gender-sensitive development model has to be pursued, in order to go beyond technical efficiency, and also include social protection, women's participation and equitable distribution of benefits. In the absence of such a development model, the risk of continuing to expose women to vulnerabilities, and exacerbating the gender inequalities within communities remains.

Aspirations and Government Responses to Women's Grievances

Development is not merely a physical and macroeconomic success in the construction process but must also be a means for people affected by the project to voice their aspirations and aspirations. In the case of the construction of the Klaten-Prambanan Toll Road, the study found that the aspirations, especially of women, were only sometimes, unevenly, or unsatisfactorily met by the government and the toll road project implementers. This reflects the unmet needs of the community and the lack of gender-responsive participatory and grievance mechanisms in the development policies.

Most of the women did have some complaints during the construction of the project, whether dust, noise, lack of access roads, or inadequate

compensation. Very few women sought assistance with their complaints from someone outside of the official hierarchy, such as neighborhood leaders (RT/RW) or the village head. In practice, this meant that women's voices never reached the project managers or local government representatives. Atun reports: "I often asked the project implementers whether there was any compensation, but the answer was always that there was none. " Atun's view of her experience was that her concerns were initially brought forward, but no alternatives to compensation were brought up.

According to other informants such as small business owner Sri Prihatin, the compensation offered 'was a pittance' and did not meet her losses. She stated, 'I had applied for higher compensation, but it was not approved. ' Grievances could be lodged but the process was top-down. The residents had no say in the matter and were left to accept what the authorities determined on their behalf, even when they had applied to improve their situation.

Even the heads of villages were not spared. Entik said, "We proposed the construction of safety fences. . . but until now there has been no further information about its realization. " Requests for safety measures (fences, street lighting) were a big priority to protect residents, especially women and children who traveled on dangerous routes. Such formal submissions, however, were slow to produce results, if they did so at all, and indicated the limits of institutionalized channels of representation.

Other women were apprehensive or did not have the confidence to complain; one woman, Titi Mulyani explained: "No, because I didn't dare. At most, I only complained to my neighbors. " This shows that women faced psychological and cultural obstacles when they wanted to complain to the project officials or government when their interests were threatened. Unfortunately, they chose to articulate those concerns among their peers, never reaching decision-making bodies. This meets (Sabates-Wheeler & Kabeer, 2005)'s analysis on voice and agency, where the reason for women's inability to articulate their interests is attributed not only to their spatial exclusion from decision-making but also to a lack of self-efficacy, both of which are supported by patriarchal social structures.

For some residents, neighborhood units were the main contact point for filing complaints. Dwi Rahayu said: “We once reported the dust and noise issues to the neighborhood unit. . . if I’m not mistaken, there was some compensation money given. “ But the responses the neighborhood units gave were ad hoc, sporadic, and unsystematic. The small supplementary payment may not have been enough compensation for the increased unpaid care work and health risks women were exposed to. The project also had a fragmented response to these concerns, highlighting the absence of institutionalized social protection.

The general conclusion is that in spite of efforts by communities (especially women) to express themselves, the response by the government and the project was lackluster. One of the main characteristics of good governance is responsiveness, that is, the capability of public officials to listen to and act upon the people’s concerns. In this case, however, the responses were largely symbolic, and the complaints would be acknowledged with some regularity, but action rarely taken.

Men also played a more prominent role in meetings and voicing concerns, while women used intermediaries. Mawarti explained that “Through village deliberations and by visiting the village office. The village then communicated the aspirations to the district government. “ As such, while formal methods were used, these methods were still reliant on men or village office holders communicating women’s issues. This meant that women were no longer able to talk about their own lived experiences.

From the government and project perspective, complaints were often reframed as a technical problem rather than a rights-based or social justice issue. Responses to requests for compensation or supporting services were often fixed and mechanical, and never addressed women’s specific needs such as safe access to public roads, relief for increased domestic burdens, or compensation for the loss of customers unable to reach their stalls.

Using the gender and development approach of (Moser, 1993), the evidence shows that women’s practical gender needs were not integrated into infrastructure developments. Women had practical gender needs with respect to mobility safety,

compensation for additional burden of domestic work, and economic alternatives. However, these were not responded to as grievance mechanisms were broken and development priorities were solely focused on achieving the physical targets of the toll road scheme rather than the everyday social impacts for the families concerned.

This fits in with (Cornwall, 2001) participatory exclusion, where communities appear to be included in formal participatory processes, but in practice the voices of marginalized groups are not heard or acted upon. In the toll road scheme public consultations have been held, but only through representatives that have been selected by men. Women were omitted from these forums, meaning that concerns and needs of women were absent and not reflected in the responses.

In sum, the women raised many diverse and valid concerns, and the government or project response was typically modest, slow, or altogether absent, and the interactions between the two were often uneven. Such an imbalance indicates that these participatory tools were not gender responsive and were implemented in a non-inclusive manner. The Klaten to Prambanan Toll Road project is a technocratic example of local development, where the people are regarded as passive receivers of decisions.

It is concluded therefore that the interests of women in the toll road project have not been accommodated. Responses from the government and the project were partial and formalistic, and did not address root problems. Thus, the absence of gender mainstreaming from Indonesian infrastructure development suggests that infrastructure projects and implementation can reinforce structural inequalities, particularly for women, if their concerns are not taken into consideration. Therefore, participatory approaches must be used to ensure that women are able to speak out on issues relevant to them, and their concerns and aspirations have been followed up, rather than being mere bureaucratic formalities.

Implications of Infrastructure Development for Women’s Socio-Economic Life

Although the government documents defined the development of Klaten-Prambanan Toll Road as a plan for promoting regional connectivity and

transport access as well as stimulating economic development, our ethnographic work found in the field that the effects on the community were not the same for everyone, especially women, not only in the household but also in daily-life socialization activities and economic productivity activities. The majority of climate change impacts will negatively affect women and exacerbate inequalities, though some may offer opportunities.

In economic terms, the toll road had mixed effects for the women, however: not many of them were able to use it to their advantage and create sources of income. “Some of the mothers opened stalls to sell coffee and food. I also sold coffee, instant noodles, and bread door to door,” explains Reni. Some large-scale projects create temporary informal markets for women by generating demand for services to construction workers. However, as in this case, the market opened by the project may not be sustainable, since it ends when the project ends. There may have been short-run benefits for women from the extra income, but these were too limited to considerably affect household welfare.

Women, whose economic activity often centres around micro-businesses and whose working hours are fixed, were generally left with less income. Sri Prihatin noted, “After the toll road was built, people became confused about which road to take... my customers decreased compared to before. “ She, like other local business owners, saw a large drop in patronage once the local roads were disconnected. Mawarti reported that “My income decreased because my working hours were reduced” due to longer commutes and waiting times, showing how infrastructure can disrupt local economies and increase the precarity for women workers unable to travel far from home.

In some cases, the toll road has compensated for land and/or property. Ismani for example claimed: “Yes, I did gain some economic benefits by selling my land and house”, but this compensation was still not enough for the actual value of their assets and the cost borne by the family. Sri Prihatin stated, “I once applied for higher compensation, but it was not approved. “ This produced discontent and anger among people, especially women, who depended more on land or houses for most families’ livelihoods. Overall, the

economic impacts of toll road development were unequal; a small number of women profited from the development, while most suffered losses.

While the most common effects were negative, many women engaged in the temporary economic opportunities created by the construction of the road. A few of the women informants benefited from opening food stalls, selling drinks, or providing other services to the workers along the sections of the road under construction. For these women, the project offered income that did not previously exist for a short period. Households may have received payments for lost land. Women living in compensated households reported using the money from compensation temporarily to improve their household’s economy, for example, by building or repairing their home, buying a productive asset, or putting money into small income-generating activities. Some also saw the increase in the market value of land in the project area as an economic benefit. Not all women benefitted equally, though, with socio-economic factors and their previous status impacting their ability to adapt to the offer. Women with productive assets and entrepreneurial experience, or who received compensation funds, were more likely to uptake the offer. Those with more dependent livelihoods in local informal economies, day labour, or household-level livelihoods were less able to adapt to these changes.

The findings suggest that infrastructure development does not create universal positive or negative impacts for women, rather distinct opportunities and constraints depending on women’s socio-economic resources, livelihood strategies and household characteristics. The research highlights the importance of understanding infrastructure development as processes redistributing risks and opportunities for different groups of women differently.

On the basis of a gender and development perspective, the findings show that women in the study area should not be regarded as passive victims of infrastructure development. While many were affected negatively, other women were able to negotiate the changing economy and find new income-generating activities. The important point is, therefore, not whether or not infrastructure development leads to benefits but whether the benefits reach the most

disadvantaged women. It is important to develop gender-sensitive infrastructure development policy to provide greater opportunities for the most disadvantaged women and to prevent benefits from being concentrated in the hands of people with economic and social capital.

On a social level, the toll road had an important impact on women's daily lives. One of the most important changes was that they had more domestic work. Dust and noise from construction made households dirtier and noisier. Dwi Rahayu said that "A lot, for example, the dust. We had to clean the house repeatedly. . . it also became noisy and accident-prone". The extra labor required to maintain a home impacted women in that it increased the amount of time spent on housework, reducing the time available to work outside the home or do extra work to earn money. In many cases, this extra work was not compensated by the project or local government.

Another major social effect is the disruption of local community structures and relationships. Some women lived in the project area and had to move elsewhere and adapt to a new environment. As Reni described, "The environment-we had to move. . . in the end, we had to adapt again in the new place. " Relocation destroyed the social relations, support, and stability that had been built in, sometimes over many years. The move also carried the psychological cost of having to adjust to the new neighborhoods, especially for women, who spent the most time in the area.

The replacement routes were rather more narrow, farther away and poorly lit. As a result, the women would often feel unsafe, especially at night. Sri Prihatin said, "Yes, there were obstacles, especially when I needed to go out at night. I had to think twice about using the replacement road. " Entik, the village head, noted, "Accessibility became more difficult. . . near the river, the road curves sharply, has no lighting, and no safety fences. " All of these conditions contributed to women's diminished sense of safety, limited mobility, and further domestic isolation.

From the perspective of gender responsive development theory, in socio-economic aspect, the Klaten-Prambanan Toll Road development did not include the practical gender needs of women in the policy formulation. Practical gender needs according

to Moser (Moser, 1993) are the everyday needs of women to reduce their burden at home, improve their security and access to sources of income. However, these needs were overlooked, resulting in a project that disadvantaged women and had a large impact on the representation of women, eroding women's presence in the public space. In fact, many informants said that they were afraid to speak up in formal meetings, and preferred to complain among themselves. As Titi Mulyani said, "In formal meetings I don't dare, but among neighbors, yes, we often talk. " Reni said "Mostly it's the men who speak in meetings because women are not confident. " Thus, infrastructure development affected not only the economic and household level, but also women's social exclusion from the public sphere. Furthermore, equal representation is important to ensure women's needs are acknowledged, yet women were absent in the production of this particular film.

These socio-economic effects can also be understood through the lens of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989); poor women, women factory workers, and small-scale traders lost their livelihoods, but they also bore the brunt of the burden of domestic work, and lost their social capital because they were forced to move from their homes. Gender and class therefore intersected.

The toll road paradoxically achieved its goals in terms of infrastructure and an improved regional network, but the experiences of the women in the study revealed a decline in the quality of their economic, social, and psychological well-being. These findings also stand in sharp contrast to the scant feminist critiques of masculinist infrastructure development that prioritize macroeconomic growth over the everyday needs of at-risk everyday people from poor communities.

This adds to existing intersectionality work about gender and infrastructure in that infrastructure does not affect women as a homogenous group and instead affects women differently according to their position in social and economic hierarchies. This acts as a reminder to researchers that rather than treating men and women as binary categories, attention should be paid to differences among women to understand how development projects create vulnerability for some women and opportunities for others.

In summary, the socio-economic impacts of the construction of the Klaten-Prambanan Toll Road on women were at best equivocal, but mostly negative. Though some women gained economic opportunities in the short term, the majority lost opportunities, access and income, and faced increased domestic and psychological burdens. In social terms, the project caused women to be physically pushed out of public space and made them afraid to venture outside. Without a gender responsive approach to infrastructure development which ensures more equitable distribution of infrastructure benefits and women's participation, infrastructure projects will continue to reinforce gender divides and fuel women's vulnerability at the local level.

Gender Policy Implementation in Infrastructure Projects

Another dimension of development is in the extent to which policies are implemented to cater for the interests of various social groups, including women. Field observations of the construction of the Klaten-Prambanan Toll Road in Central Java show that gender perspectives in both planning and implementation are extremely weak. No policies have been instituted to reduce their burden, to increase women's share of the economic benefits, or to promote women's participation in the development process on an equal basis.

Normatively, the Indonesian government has established regulations and commitments for the implementation of gender-responsive development such as Presidential Instruction No. The first instruction, Inpres No. Presidential Instruction No. 9/2000 on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development (Instruksi Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 9 Tahun 2000 Tentang Pengarusutamaan Gender Dalam Pembangunan Nasional, 2004) obliges all sectors, including infrastructure, to apply gender perspectives in all aspects of the policy process (planning, implementation, and evaluation). In the construction of the Klaten-Prambanan toll road, this has not been applied.

The identification of gender in a review of project documents showed that gender and development considerations were poorly integrated.

National legislation requires gender and development issues to be integrated into development and planning processes, but none of the reviewed project documents contained a gender impact assessment, a gender-specific participation strategy, or gender-responsive mitigation measures. The consultation and planning documents focused mainly on technical, administrative and land acquisition issues, and did not reflect any of the various ways in which women might have been affected. This confirmed the interviews' finding that there was no consistent practice of integrating women's concerns in the project decision-making process. The similarity between the interviews' findings and document review results points to the conclusion that gender mainstreaming commitments were not implemented in the project.

An indicator of this is that several women interviewees were never directly invited to the official meetings, but were informed about them through other people. As Ismani said: "Yes, I attended once but it was only very brief. . . I joined a socialization meeting but did not really understand. " This means that even when women were "included", their inclusion was purely at the symbolic level, and had no real meaning. There was no attempt to explain things to them or to include them in decisions, so participation policy remained only formal and was not realized.

Another gap is the lack of policies to create employment for women. Megaprojects, in general, create new employment opportunities. These jobs were not performed by women, especially construction which was seen as a 'heavy' job. As Titi Mulyani put it: "If there were any, it was maybe just one or two people to guard the equipment, and even then it was only men. " No attempts were made to employ women in work which was seen as more appropriate, such as administration, catering or support personnel. In other words, infrastructure investment was not translating into economic inclusion.

This gender-blindness is also a function of how compensation is arranged. Women describe it as limited, uneven, and sometimes only intended to provide temporary relief. Dwi Rahayu states, "We once conveyed it to the neighborhood head. . . if I'm not mistaken, there was some money for dust and noise issues. " In this case, compensation can be

interpreted as a sign of awareness. Compensation for women's income losses and increased domestic work, and the lack of gender-sensitive benchmarks for measuring losses incurred by affected groups, shows the nature of the projects was mainly technical and physical. The lack of social feature in the project's design is also clear.

On the social aspect, gender policy implementation was equally absent. Several informants also talked about how women's voices are still limited by patriarchal culture. Mawarti stated that this was due to the lack of women's voices in decision making. She said: "Because women's voices are rarely heard or are considered less important in forums". There must be some form of policy that can ensure safe space for women to voice their opinions. Referring to the gender mainstreaming principle, there should be a women-only discussion or at least not a discussion that is dominated by men's voices.

Considering the weak delivery of the gender policy in this project, the concept of the policy implementation gap provides a framework. Pressman and Wildavsky (Wegrich, 2015) argue that there is often a gap between what policy is formulated at the centre, and the practice on the ground. When the Klaten-Prambanan toll road was constructed, gender mainstreaming was a national policy. It was, however, not grounded in the institution in charge of the implementation of the project. The project took place following technocrat and masculine logic.

Institutional capacity at the level of local governments and contractors to implement gender-responsive interventions was a challenge. Most interventions were short-term, such as in-kind food packages and small cash compensation, with little to no effort made to promote women's empowerment. As Sri Prihatin later said, "There was no training, only food assistance. " While food aid provided immediate relief, it did not address the structural issues such as the loss of livelihoods by women as a result of the toll road construction.

In reality, gender infrastructure policies can be viewed as prerequisites to equitable and inclusive development. Gender-responsive infrastructure stresses the need for women's concerns, such as ensuring safe access to transport infrastructure, equal

representation in the decision-making process and equitable engagement in the economy, to be included in the planning process. In contrast, this study found that the toll road project prioritized completing infrastructure and macroeconomic goals over gender concerns.

Gender-blind policies contributed to a climate of resentment and distrust of government and contractors. Local women, in particular, saw projects that did not respond to their needs and aspirations and were not adequately compensated. Development was often viewed as benefiting elite or dominant male groups. The result may be increased gender inequality and reduced legitimacy of development itself.

To broaden the analytical scope, a typology can be used to differentiate between gender-blind, gender-neutral and gender-responsive policies. A genderblind policy can be defined as a policy that does not recognize, prioritize or focus on the differentiated needs, experience, vulnerability and opportunity, irrespective of the differentiated impact that development efforts may have on different groups (inspired by Moser's (1993) Gender Planning Framework, UN Women's (2015) gender mainstreaming policy and gender-responsive governance literature).

Gender-responsive policies are based on the understanding of different impacts, involve women's participation in policy or program design and implementation and include specific measures to address inequalities resulting from those impacts. Gender-neutral policies assume that development interventions will have similar impacts on women and men, even if there is no open discrimination against women. More generally, gender-blind policies ignore existing structural inequalities and the differential impacts of change on women and men.

There is no evidence that gender was considered in the project planning or implementation for the Klaten-Prambanan toll road, consistent with the approach of gender-blind policy implementation. Second, there is no evidence that the consultation processes themselves had mechanisms to ease the same level of involvement for both men and women. Third, sex-disaggregated data was absent from planning and compensation calculations. The data would have eased planners to understand the differential

patterns of impacts. Fourth, there were no specific and targeted measures identified to address the mobility and livelihood issues, the value of domestic responsibilities, or participation in community life that affected women's lives differently. Taken together, these considerations suggest that while the project did not exist in a gender-neutral environment, the gendered implications of the project were ignored and the project was therefore more accurately gender-blind than gender-neutral.

The research should differentiate between practical gender interests (such as safety, mobility, responsibilities for family/household, and economic access) and planned gender interests in regard to unequal power relations. Strategic gender interests relate to the empowerment of women to have a say in planning and decision-making processes. Moser's Gender Planning Framework (Moser, 1993) can be used to assist in distinguishing between the two aspects. The findings suggest that the project had little success in improving women's voice in the local development governance structure. Most women still needed to rely on male representatives, village elites, or village headmen to bring their issues to the project's attention. Despite formal consultation forums, women as a category were not directly involved in decisions about payment, access to infrastructure, or mitigation measures and were more often seen as beneficiaries of development outputs rather than shaping development objectives.

However, the project also did not include any measures to strengthen women's collective voice and leadership, or strategies to ensure women's representation on consultation, monitoring or community engagement functionalities. Thus, the existing gendered power relations were reproduced, which according to the GAD perspective implies that

empowerment and women's calculated interests were not included in the project. Structures for participation, which are already unequal, were not improved. The project reproduced power structures of public decision-making dominated by male figures. Overall, the findings show that gender mainstreaming in infrastructure development must be extended beyond practical gender needs to include women's role, voice, visibility, and influence in development processes and outcomes more broadly.

In the feminist policy analysis framework, the toll road is an example of a gender-blind policy: a policy that does not take into account the differences between men and women. Gender-blind policies perpetuate structural inequality by having women disproportionately experience the negative effects of a policy but receiving fewer benefits. Achieving this requires a gender-responsive policy approach, which considers women not merely as development objects, but as rightful development subjects who can chart their own development paths.

The results indicate that gender inequality is not only a matter of the absence of gender policies, but that the mechanism of gender mainstreaming is already formalized in national development planning and national legislation. However, as this study shows, it is the uneven translation of these mandates into local project governance arrangements that reproduces gender inequality. Female participation in development processes is not formally excluded, but mediated through male dominated institutional spaces, which limits the potential for women to influence decision making processes. The paper shows how formal inclusion and substantive exclusion expand the GAD framework by uncovering how failures in mainstreaming gender in infrastructure projects are not only due to inequitable allocation of

Table 3. Criteria for Assessing Gender-Blind Policy Implementation

Criteria	Evidence from Findings	Assessment
Gender impact assessment	Not identified	Absent
Women's participation mechanism	Limited and indirect	Weak
Sex-disaggregated analysis	Not identified	Absent
Gender-responsive mitigation	Not identified	Absent
Women's representation	Limited	Weak

Source: Authors' elaboration based on Moser (1993), UN Women (2015), and field data.

resources but are also a result of institutional processes that privilege certain voices over others. For gender mainstreaming to be effective, it must not just establish gender-sensitive policies and consultation processes but also guarantee women's direct influence on development outcomes. Our results complement the wider literature on gender-responsive infrastructure, by highlighting that gender mainstreaming is unlikely to succeed through compensation mechanisms or social protection alone. Such gendered infrastructure projects also require institutional arrangements that empower women to participate in, lead and co-decide over community-level change. In the absence of such change, infrastructure may address some practical burdens but not larger structural inequalities.

It can be concluded that the gender policy in the Klaten-Prambanan toll road project is very weak, or even not implemented at all. Women remain subordinated: their voices are ignored, their needs are neglected, and they have very limited opportunities to benefit economically. It is thus a meaningful gap between the government's normative commitments and its practice.

In conclusion, favoring gender-blind infrastructure development leads to gender inequity and risk. It is vitally important to incorporate gender perspectives throughout the infrastructure and transport planning cycle. Women should be able to participate, be paid fairly and more efforts should be made on sustainable economic empowerment. Without these, such infrastructure and physical development projects will remain nothing more than symbolic social progress, not social justice, for women and their well-being.

Conclusion

This study shows that the impact of the Klaten-Prambanan toll road construction differs for men and women, thus revealing that gender inequality persists in infrastructure development. Additionally, women are at a higher risk than men in terms of their involvement in the project, domestic responsibilities, access to economic benefits, and representation. Beyond their material effects, the findings suggest that infrastructure projects did not advance women's calculated gender interests in terms of greater engagement in decision-

making and greater autonomy from male-dominated institutional arrangements through which to raise their issues. The existing configuration of power relations and exclusion was largely reproduced rather than diminished through development interventions. Although commitments were made at the national level to gender mainstreaming, the project was implemented in a gender-blind manner, prioritizing physical and macroeconomic outcomes with no attention to women's needs.

The results have implications for interventions that could use community readiness assessments in the affected areas by ensuring gender-sensitive mechanisms of participation: women-only consultation at each stage of a project and the inclusion of female representatives in project monitoring teams. Second, compensation and mitigation policies should take into account the loss of women's unpaid domestic work and participation in informal economies. Gender-sensitive compensation plans and alternative livelihoods projects, infrastructure support such as lighting, fencing and alternative safe routes can achieve this. Third, infrastructure development should use gender responsive employment policies that appoint women to roles other than the physical construction, such as administration, catering, and community liaison.

Conceptually, this research contributes to the gender and infrastructure development literature and shows that the presence of gender mainstreaming policies does not guarantee gender-responsive infrastructure development outcomes. The Klaten-Prambanan toll road case shows that despite formal inclusion of women in development procedures, there can be contextualized implementation gaps, leading to the de facto exclusion of women from decision-making and influence over issues affecting their lives. As such, the findings deepen existing GAD and gender mainstreaming literature by highlighting the importance of participation structures as a mechanism shaping development interventions. Moreover, the study suggests that future evaluations of gender mainstreaming should include an analysis of how the modalities for participation activate or limit women's agency beyond focusing on policy adoption.

The study has several limitations, as it is a qualitative case study on a small number of informants.

In addition, respondents may be affected by recall bias or by the social norms that impose an obligation on women not to criticize individuals who are in positions of authority. Future research could expand on this through comparative analysis of multiple infrastructure projects or regions, longitudinal studies exploring how gendered impacts change over time, and using mixed methods to increase generalizability and deepen understanding of how gender-responsive infrastructure can contribute to equitable and sustainable development outcomes in different contexts.

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