

Politics and Women's Leadership: Understanding Women's Political Participation in Public Leadership

Elly Nurlia^{a*}, Utang Suwaryo^b, Widya Setiabudi^c, Netty P^d, ^aFaculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung & Mathla'ul Anwar University, Banten, Indonesia, ^{b,c,d}Faculty of Social and Political Sciences Universitas Padjadjaran, Bandung, Indonesia, Email: ^{a*}elly16001@maill.unpad.ac.id

This study aims to explain women's political participation and public leadership. Two main points are discussed. The problem of women's political participation in public leadership is indeed full of twists and turns. Various obstacles, ranging from cultural factors, religion, and others, are still barriers for women to participate in public leadership. This study uses qualitative methods that are naturalistic and descriptive by obtaining data through various secondary sources. The results of the study showed that women were able to compete on par with men. In leadership, also between men and women, there are substantial differences. However, women have the advantage in leading because; they have the ability to persuade, have a lower level of ego, do not eliminate firmness, flexibility and considerate work ethic, and are able to lead with empathy and willingness to take risks.

Key words: *Women, Political Participation, Public Leadership.*

Introduction

The involvement of women in politics in Indonesia has significantly improved, though it is still not optimal. Women are still rated as sub-ordinate to men and play a dominant role in the domestic sphere. This perspective has deep roots in the wider community. Indonesia predominantly adheres to patrilineal culture, where men are considered leaders in all fields. The culture ultimately negates women to play more roles than expected.

Fortunately, the 1998 Reformation built public awareness of the existence of women as political entities equal to men. Women's participation in politics began to be expanded as much

as possible. The highpoint was when Megawati Soekarno Putri was appointed by the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) as the 5th President of RI, replacing KH. Abdurahman Wahid. Not stopping there, to build broader political participation of women, a policy was implemented to guarantee the active participation of women in politics. This policy is often termed the affirmative action policy.

This policy requires all political parties to provide female representation in the list of candidates for the legislature of at least 30%. This policy was first stated in various regulations, such as Law No. 31 of 2002 concerning Political Parties, Law No. 12 of 2003 concerning General Elections. In every change to political law, the clause of women's representation remains.

The involvement of women in politics does not only take place at the central level. The involvement of women also began to spread to the regions and was not only limited to members of the people's representatives, but also in competing to become regional leaders (mayors, regents, or governors). Women are now increasingly aware of their competencies and feel no need to be controlled by patriarchal culture or isolated in domestic roles. Modern women have begun to carry out a broader role transformation, namely managing community needs.

Specifically, as many as 575 members of the House of Representatives (DPR) were elected for the 2019-2024 period. Of these, 118 people, or 20.52% who were elected are women. The acquisition of women's seats has increased from only 97 people (17.3%) in the previous period. Meanwhile, 31 women were elected as head/deputy regional heads (tribunnews.com).

However, the election of women in parliament at the district and metropolis level in Indonesia remains low, and there are imbalances among regions. Data indicates that the majority (59.8%) of the 514 districts and towns have less than 15% representation of women in their DPRD. Only 26 DPRD's (5.14%) completed 30% female representation, and 177 DPRD's represented among 15% and 30% (theconversation.com).

This data indicates that, even though there may be impetus to broadly involve women in politics; there are nevertheless gaps for women in strategic positions, especially in parliament. For example, research conducted by Puskapol UI confirmed that around 40% of female parliamentarians were not involved in budgeting (Puskapol UI, 2018).

Thus, there are barriers encountered in regarding women's management in broader politics. It appears that women's participation in public management does have varied boundaries at numerous stages of the political system, organizational formation, and cultural norms. These constraints encompass male-ruled values and norms; loss of supportive organizational structure for women in politics; and shortage of organizational information for gender variations in priorities, selection making patterns, and styles (Andajani, Hadiwirawan, & Sokang, 2016).



A women's discernment is indeed unique and is usually required to be able to perform multiple roles. For women to fully dedicate themselves to public management is often conflicted with home interests. Assumptions, marriage conventions, poverty and low levels of schooling additionally limit women's participation in leadership (Evans, 2014); (Parawansa, 2002); (Parawansa, 2005); (Shvedova, 2005); (Suryakusuma, 1996). Interestingly, when women hold the reins of leadership, they have priorities that are not a concern for men. Women tend to give priority to social welfare, countrywide security, children, and fitness problems. (Andajani-Sutjahjo, S., Chirawatkul, S., & Saito, 2015); (Setiawati, 2010); (Shvedova, 2005).

The above facts also show the importance of women's political participation. Women's political participation can be interpreted as the active involvement of women in decision making or involvement in the policymaking process and having a role in determining the direction of state policy. Women's political participation indicates the democratic process, because democracy upholds gender equality and participation for every citizen.

This research aims to observe women's political participation in public leadership and what is in Indonesia now, regarding the portion given to women's representation in politics. That also includes political leadership at the local level. However, that does not mean women's political leadership and women's political participation does not encounter obstacles. These obstacles are quite diverse, ranging from family issues, religious, cultural, and community perspectives of women who are active in the public arena.

Discussing the political participation of women in public leadership is, in reality, thrilling due to; first, in reality, there are limitations that prevent the extensive involvement of women in politics, particularly associated with the position of nature, and so on (Anshor, 2008; Retnowati, 2015). Second, the enlargement of ideological discussions that assemble equality among males and females, not only in the dialogue of feminism research but also within the discourse of postmodernism (Nuryati, 2016). Third, what is crucial in this study is the desire to speak about the political reality of women's participation in political leadership, regarding various issues.

Method

This study uses a qualitative research approach with a naturalistic and descriptive technique. The emphasis is not based totally on proportion (statistics), but substantively on describing the real, genuine, natural, and holistic elements. Information gathered through literature studies via analyzing data from documents, media, journals, and books. The information analysis is achieved via interpretation of the data, to present the conclusion.

Results and Discussion

Women's Political Participation

According to H. Mc Closky, political participation is a voluntary interest of citizens wherein they participate in electing rulers, at once or circuitously within the manner of public policy formation. In line with Huntington, political participation is most uncomplicated as a citizen activity (personal citizen) aimed toward influencing decision making, by way of the government (Huntington & Nelson, 1990). Level of political participation typically comes from a person's socio-political base. Consequently, political participation is trendy and is a collective act of citizens (Gaffar, 1998).

Understanding concerning political participation is not partial and does not apply to a particular gender. Those who follow politics applies to all women and men. In this context, people who are regarded as citizens and who live in a certain place, have equal rights in the country's regulations.

Consequently, women are required to participate in politics actively and contribute to solving numerous countrywide and national issues. Women's political participation should replicate in various bureaucracies; along with occupying political or administrative positions, looking for political or administrative positions, being an active member of a political agency, being a passive member of a political agency, being an energetic member of a semi-political agency, becoming a member - passive or semi-political agency, participation in public meetings, demonstration of participation in casual political discussions, public interest in politics, and no longer apathetic in the direction of political activities (Budiardjo, 2008).

Therefore, the world over, on account that in 1975 was declared International Women's year of by the United Nations, has placed women on a global-magnificence political timetable. This attempt additionally expanded the position of women and the need for women to take part significantly in decision making (Nuryati, 2016).

Encouragement for women to participate in public leadership is healthy. Leadership is not a private area that belongs to men alone. It is what has been fought for so that everyone has the same opportunity to lead. As long as a person has the ability, capacity and capability to lead, it is appropriate for them to get a public position.

Information provided within the introduction above, associated with the role of public positions held by women, suggests that positions of public office are not entirely held by women. The number of women occupying public positions still has a way to go, and still does not occur in 2/3 of the regions in Indonesia. There are many reasons for this.

From the view of feminism, numerous situations prevent women from competing within the public sphere, particularly in gaining public office, and consist of first, globalization that has forced women to become commodities (domestic workers, migrant employees and other). Secondly, the state continues to develop gender-biased regulations, which tend to negatively affect women. Third, access to various public facilities consisting of education, health, underlying assets of lifestyles, in particular for women, is confined. Fourth, a conservative understanding of religion so that it sets women as the sub-ordinate of men, and fifth, the dominance of men in policymaking, particularly in political affiliations. (Launa & Fajar, 2009).

Gaining Public Leadership

Discussions about leadership to this day are still fiercely debated. The discourse of leadership has many dimensions that affect various issues, including political, social, economic, and cultural. In the discourse of leadership, it is also associated with power and resources. Therefore, leadership discourse is also a significant issue in political dialog.

Leadership is a synergy within members of a group. A leader is someone who can make important changes. Thus, each leader's lives can influence others rather than the other way around. Leadership arises when one organization member modifies the inducement or competence of other participants within the institution (Koontz & O'Donnell, 1994). In other words, leadership is a procedure to persuade people or agencies to obtain ordinary dreams.

Leadership activities has been studied intensively for decades. For some time, the emphasis on studying the traits of leadership were inclusive of masculinity, femininity, and androgyny. Many adjectives explain the behavior of leaders: autocratic, authoritarian, communal, concerned, expressive, participatory, inventiveness, instrumental, and others. The terms "communal," "attention," "expressive," "expressive," and "participatory" have generally described (no longer usually undoubtedly) female leadership behavior. This leadership behavior, however, is now taken into consideration to be perfect (Del Sesto, 1993); (Fernstein, Lowry, Enghagen, & Hott, 1988); (Diaz & Umbreit, 1995)

So, what distinguishes male and woman leadership? Some research says that women tend to undertake a more democratic leadership style. Men use styles that are based on control and command. They are based more on the formal authority function as a basis for the leader to exert impact (Eagly, 2015), Bierema, 2016).

Some explain that leaders who emphasize relationships and familiarity that women tend to have, results in a leader who can empower all participants, and emphasize organic shape. Whereas leaders who emphasize reputation and independence, traits that tend to be owned by



of men, allow these leaders to undertake hierarchical systems, specialties, and orders (Tannen, 1995).

Leadership, whether or not performed by men or women, mainly has the same purpose, specifically the welfare of society. So, it turns counterproductive if what is recommended is because of physical issues. Consequently, leadership is a shape of dominance based on private capacity which could inspire or invite others to do something; based on attractiveness/popularity by the organization and specialized knowledge suitable for particular states of affairs (Kartono, 2012).

Bass (1990) and Klenke (1996) discuss the phenomenon of glass ceilings for women to reach leadership positions, and the presence of these limitations that are invisible or transparent. However, these aspects preclude the right of entry to women and other minorities to the pinnacle of leadership. Bass, Avolio, and Atwater (1996) observe that men typically display transactional leadership more than women. Conversely, women show more significant transformational leadership than men. Carless observed that female managers use transformational leadership more than male managers (Faraz, 2013).

Components from the different styles or characteristics of male and woman leadership, show how far is necessary to go to construct and expand women's political participation. This is so that not only is the number of women in politics is increased, but also excellence of leadership is pursued, so that women can compete in public leadership. One factor that can contribute is strengthening political participation by political parties.

However, it is not easy to change issues of political participation in political parties because of numerous barriers (Notosusanto, 2009). First, the development of political party programs that lack a schedule associated with women's politics. Coupled with the low degree of women's political socialization that is considered secondary, and no longer has an impact on women being actively concerned with political parties. Second, men's dominance in party control also impacts the assessment of decisions that men tend to dominate. Those consist of nominating local heads, for instance, who frequently prioritize men as candidates.

Third, the accessibility of limited economic assets for women in political parties. This problem is triumphed continuously by the reluctance of political parties to help women candidates improve funds. Fourth, women's political solidity tends to lose, so that it is not sufficient to provide them a significant bargaining role for their interests.

All of this is indeed a big challenge for women to achieve public leadership. The various obstacles above are also influenced by the teachings of religion, culture and social status. Considerable effort is required to change the political situation so that it is no longer gender



biased. In principle, all people, not the specific gender of men or women, should have the same opportunity to achieve public office.

Women and Excellence in Leadership

Women's political participation is indeed stepping up to enter and is an extra concern in politics, including in attaining public leadership. Participation is needed to implement and unfold affect leadership. Influence is also a crucial and leaders must have fans, folks that agree with and obey how their leadership is carried out.

Balda refers to Peter Drucker, claiming that a leader is a person who has followers (Balda, 2010). However, to get followers, a person must have influence, while Saxena quotes John Maxwell, who defines leadership as a power - nothing more, nothing less (Saxena, 2009).

Saxena also referred to Warren Bennis's definition of leadership, which centered on the character capabilities of leaders. He stated that leadership is a feature of knowing oneself, having a vision which is properly communicated, constructing trust among colleagues, and achieving powerful motions, to understand one's leadership capability (Hejase, Haddad, Hamdar, Massoud, & Farha, 2013).

Women's leadership in numerous researches indicates something specific compared to men. Aside from the controversy over assessment, it is exciting to reveal a touch that is particular in women's leadership.

Studies have shown that women leaders are approachable, have specific appreciation for proper ways, and hold the distinction of subordinates by treating them equally (Bass, 1981; Del Sesto, 1993; Rosener, 1990). Women also have better task involvement than men (Blau & Boal, 1989), emphasizing existing tasks that are extra than to men, which should match the hospitality operations concerned with a satisfactory guarantee (Diaz & Umbreit, 1995).

Women are more likely to end up existential leaders with their potential to communicate. They could balance issues with people and provide fact-based understanding. Their capability to concentrate is not only rooted in social subordination but also the substance in their ethical positions for others. The analytical listening capabilities of women leaders can bridge the dichotomy among the principal consciousness and challenge for people. Women are more empowering than authoritative (Brownell, 1993); (Helgeson, 1990).

The diverse leadership characteristics that women possess are also a trademark of the significance of women in politics. The presence of women in political office has symbolic significance. Consistent with Johnson, Kabuchu, and Vusiya (2003 in Hughes, 2009), the

assessment enhances the perspectives of women and men on women's capacities, aspirations, and self-esteem. Women politicians focus on one kind troubles than male politicians do (O'Regan, 2000; Swers, 2002 in Hughes, 2009), for instance, domestic violence and reproductive rights (Gratton, 2011). Women's leadership is crucial to enforce women's issues and inspire more women to enter the political sphere (Budiatri, 2011).

The significance of women's leadership is to have a substantial effect on community problems, including issues of welfare, education, health, violence against women, and the environment. Women can overcome all this if they are included with in the policymaking process. The experiences and issues of women in these matters, set them apart from men who still dominate the political sector. It is not easy to expect male participants in parliament to deal with women's interests and desires, as they have never understood and experienced the same factors that women do (Andriana et al., 2012).

Women's leadership is an acknowledgement and acceptance from the society that women are also competent in occupying top positions in an organization. However, the role of women in organizations is quite a dilemma. On the one hand, women strive hard to accomplish and maximize their capacity. However, on the other hand, they must also convince others that women have the same rights, and their abilities are appreciated. (Meizara, Dewi, & Basti, 2016).

What is exciting about women's leadership? There are five traits that women leaders have (Fitriani, 2015); Yulianti, Putra, & Takanjanji, 2018):

1. Capacity to persuade. Women leaders are commonly extra persuasive than men. They tend to be bolder than men in persuading others to say "yes" and this can grow confidence and provide satisfaction. Furthermore, the social, feminine, and empathic nature does not disappear.
2. Proving wrong criticism. Women leaders have a lower level of ego power than men. It means that they can still feel the pain of rejection and criticism. However, their high levels of courage, empathy, flexibility, and kindness allow them to recover quickly, learn from their mistakes, and move forward with a positive "I'll prove it" attitude.
3. Teamwork spirit. Great women leaders tend to adopt a comprehensive leadership style when it comes to solving problems and making decisions. They are also more flexible, considerate and helpful to their staff. However, women still have a lot to learn from men in terms of thoroughness when solving problems and making decisions.
4. The leader. The exceptional woman leader, commonly has a robust aura, as does a man. They are persuasive, assured, and feature a robust will to perform obligations and are active.
5. They dare to take risks, no longer in secure areas. Women leaders dare to break rules and take risks, much like men, while giving equal interest to details. They speculate outside the



agency's barriers and do not wholly accept the present structural rules (organisational policies).

The advantages that women have in leadership opens up possibilities for competition with men. Susan Blackburn states that women are independent and can be empowered, so long as the route and possibilities for affirmative action is laid out for them. If not, access to emerging as a leader is only a figment of imagination (Mauliyah, 2016).

Women have many possibilities to become leaders. The most extensive and demanding situations are the dearth of women's training in public leadership, and the need for women to be at home. This research shows how women are still placed and locate themselves as subordinates to men, in Indonesia (Mauliyah, 2016).

Awareness about the crucial function of women in politics is not accessible and is primarily based on humanitarian issues. However, it also supported with the aid of rational concerns by involving the ability of women and possibilities to be exploited in the political method, mainly of their involvement in policymaking and decision making.

Consequently, expanding the position and political participation of women should be a quintessential part of national development. For this reason, it must begin with the government's political will via continuously retaining affirmative regulations for women's political participation and increasing the satisfaction of women to and their significance in politics

Conclusion

In terms of political participation and public leadership, women have the same rights as men. As equal human beings, state policy must provide equal access for women in politics and public leadership. However, women also have advantages in leadership, such as having empathy to feel, dare to take risks, be negotiators, and other aspects.

The crucial problems faced by women in the political sphere are indeed still quite significant, ranging from cultural, religious, and social factors towards women who make choices to participate in the political space. To that end, the government must continue to campaign for the importance of women in politics so that it can arouse women's awareness of politics.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank to Indonesia Endowment Fund Education (LPDP) for their support on this study.



REFERENCE

- Andajani-Sutjahjo, S., Chirawatkul, S., & Saito, E. (2015). Gender and Water in Northeast Thailand: Inequalities and Women's Realities. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 16(2), 200–212.
- Andajani, S., Hadiwirawan, O., & Sokang, Y. A. (2016). Current Discussion , Barriers , and Existing Stigma. *Indonesian Feminist*, 4(1), 101–111.
- Andriana, N., Yanuarti, S., Siregar, S. N., Haris, S., Budiatri, A. P., & Amalia, L. S. (2012). *Perempuan, Partai Politik, dan Parlemen: Studi Kinerja Anggota Legislatif Perempuan di Tingkat Lokal*. PT Gading Inti Prima.
- Anshor, M. U. (2008). Tantangan Kepemimpinan Perempuan di Tingkat Lokal. *Yinyang: Jurnal Studi Islam, Gender Dan Anak*, 3(1), 81–88. Retrieved from <http://ejournal.iainpurwokerto.ac.id/index.php/yinyang/article/view/189>
- Balda, W. (2010). *Managing Turbulence: Tools for sustaining resilient organizations: Drucker, change, crisis & leadership*. Retrieved from <http://managing-turbulence.org/2010/09/04/the-“discipline”-of- leadership/>
- Bierema, L. L. (2016). Women's leadership: Troubling notions of the “ideal” (Male) leader. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 18(2), 119–136. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422316641398>
- Brownell, J. (1993). Addressing career challenges faced by women in hospital- ity management. *Hospitality and Tourism Educator*, 5(4), 11–15.
- Budiardjo, M. (2008). *Dasar-dasar ilmu politik*. Yogyakarta: PT Rineka Cipta.
- Budiatri, A. P. (2011). Bayang-Bayang afirmasi keterwakilan perempuan di parlemen Indonesia. *Jurnal Studi Politik Universitas Indonesia*, 1(2), 97–113. Retrieved from <http://jurnalpolitik.ui.ac.id/index.php/jp/issue/download/19/6>
- Del Sesto, C. (1993). Women in lodging. How far have they come? *Lodging*, 18, 26–31.
- Diaz, P. E., & Umbreit, W. T. (1995). women leaders-a new beginning. *Hospitality Research Journal*, 19(1), 47–60.
- Eagly, A. H. (2015). *Foreward*. In S. R. Madsen, F. W. Ngunjiri, K. A. Longman, & C. Cherrey (Eds.), *Women and Leadership Around the World* . Charlotte-NC: Information Age Publishing.



- Evans, D. P. (2014). Aspiring to leadership... a woman's world? *Procedia - social and Behavioral Sciences*, 148, 543–550. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.077>
- Faraz, N. J. (2013). *Makalah kepemimpinan perempuan*. Yogyakarta.
- Fernstein, J. H., Lowry, L. L., Enghagen, L. K., & Hott, D. D. (1988). Female managers: Perspectives on sexual harassment and career development. *Hospitality Research Journal*, 12, 185–196.
- Fitriani, A. (2015). Gaya kepemimpinan perempuan. *Jurnal Tapis*, 11(2), 1–24.
- Gaffar, A. (1998). *Merangsang partisipasi politik rakyat*”, dalam Syarofin Arba (ed), *demitologi politik Indonesia: Mengusung Elitisme Dalam Orde Baru* (Pustaka Cidesindo, Ed.). Jakarta - Indonesia.
- Gratton, K. (2011). *Pendapat Perempuan tentang Perempuan Dalam Dunia Politik Pada Era Reformasi dan Masa Depan di Kota Malang*.
- Hejase, H., Haddad, Z., Hamdar, B., Massoud, R., & Farha, G. (2013). Female leadership: An Exploratory research from lebanon. *American Journal of Scientific Research*, (86), 28–52. <https://doi.org/March, 2013>
- Helgeson, S. (1990). *The Female Advantage*. New York: Doubleday.
- Hughes, M. (2009). Armed conflict, international linkages, and women's parliamentary representation in developing nations. *Social Problems*, 56(1), 174–204.
- Huntington, S. P., & Nelson, J. M. (1990). *Partisipasi politik di negara berkembang*. Jakarta - Indonesia: Rineka Cipta.
- Kartono, K. (2012). *Pemimpin dan Kepemimpinan: Apakah pemimpin abnormal itu?* Jakarta - Indonesia: CV Rajawali Press.
- Koontz, H., & O'Donnell, C. (1994). *Management*. McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Launa, & Fajar, A. (2009). Representasi politik perempuan: Sekadar ada atau pemberi warna. *Jurnal Sosial Demokrasi*, 54(2), 4–11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6773.13217>
- Mauliyah, E. (2016). Peran kepemimpinan perempuan dalam pengambilan keputusan bisnis. *Bongaya (Manajemen & Akuntansi)*, 12(19), 57–72. Retrieved from <https://ojs.stiem-bongaya.ac.id/index.php/JIB/article/download/8/2/>
- Meizara, E., Dewi, P., & Basti. (2016). Analisis kompetensi kepemimpinan wanita. *Jurnal*



Ilmiah Psikologi Terapan, 4(2), 175–181.

Notosusanto, S. (2009). *Menjalin kerjasama antara masyarakat madani dan lembaga-lembaga politik. laporan hasil konferensi IDEA: Memperkuat Partisipasi Politik Perempuan di Indonesia*. Jakarta - Indonesia.

Nuryati. (2016). Feminisme dalam kepemimpinan. *Istinbath*, 15(2), 161–179.

Parawansa, K. I. (2002). *Institution building: An effort to improve Indonesian women's role and status*. In K. Robinson & S. Bessell (Eds.), *Women in Indonesia. Gender, Equity and Development*.

Parawansa, K. I. (2005). *Case studies: Indonesia*. In J. Ballington & A. Karam (Eds.), *Women in parliament: Beyond numbers*.

Retnowati, Y. (2015). Hambatan budaya terhadap partisipasi perempuan. *Gender and Development*, 156–167.

Saxena, P. K. (2009). *Principles of management: A modern approach*. New Delhi: Global India Publications.

Setiawati, T. (2010). *Studies on women's leadership: is a must on gender Mainstreaming*. Yogyakarta.

Shvedova, N. (2005). *Obstacles to women's participation in parliament*. In J. Ballington & A. Karam (Eds.), *Women in parliament: beyond numbers*. Retrieved from <http://www.idea.int/publications/wip2/loader.cfm?csmodule=security/getfile&pageid=14128>

Suryakusuma, J. I. (1996). *The state and sexuality in New Order Indonesia*. In L. J. Sears (Ed.), *Fantasizing the feminine in Indonesia*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Tannen, D. (1995). *Talking from 9 to 5*. New York: William Morrow.

Yulianti, R., Putra, D. D., & Takanjanji, P. D. (2018). Women leadership: Telaah kapasitas perempuan sebagai pemimpin. *Madani: Jurnal Politik Dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan*, 10(2), 14–29.