

ALIGN REPORT

Indonesia: women's political engagement and gender norms

PART 2: How political parties engage women voters and members during electoral campaigns



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Table of contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Key terms | 4 |
| Key findings | 5 |
| Introduction | 6 |
| Women's political participation in the region and in Indonesia | 8 |
| Gender norms and women's engagement in political activities | 10 |
| Methodology | 12 |
| Data collection | 12 |
| Ethical considerations | 14 |
| Limitations of the study | 14 |
| How gender norms shape women's participation | 14 |
| Motivation and the importance of women in politics | 16 |
| Women's low representation and 'money politics' | 17 |
| Party support for women candidates | 19 |
| Campaign strategies targeting women voters | 21 |
| Summary of findings | 24 |
| Implications for policy and research | 24 |
| References | 26 |

Key terms

Breadwinning norms: Perceived norms that men are responsible for earning income and that women's main responsibility is to provide care for their children and family.

Demand-side explanation: This term refers to the factors that influence voters' preferences and behaviours and that shape the political landscape. It focuses on how societal values, economic conditions, and cultural norms drive the demand for certain political candidates or policies.

Injunctive norms: Perceptions of what other people consider appropriate, or expectations about what people should do (Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change, 2019).

Kodrat: The perceived biological traits of men and women, which are often used in cultural and religious contexts in Indonesia to describe the traditional roles and responsibilities attributed to men and women.

Money politics: A term used to describe the influence of wealth and financial resources on political processes such as elections, and policymaking. It can have a profound impact on democratic systems, as it can create an unequal playing field for candidates and parties, and lead to policies that favour the interests of wealthy individuals and corporations over those of the general public.

Social norm: Beliefs about which behaviours are appropriate within a given group of people. They are informal rules, often unspoken and unwritten, that most people absorb, accept, and follow (Learning Collaborative to Advance Normative Change, 2019).

Supply-side explanation: This term refers to factors that influence the availability or success of candidates in the political arena. It examines how political parties, institutions and structures shape the types of candidates who run for office and the strategies they promote.

Key findings

- Gender norms continue to wield influence over three stages of women's political participation in Indonesia.
 - First stage, when women decide to run for office, norms affect the decision that they often say is driven by male family members and political parties.
 - Second stage, when parties nominate women as candidates, they give very limited support. Lists of candidates shown on the ballot sheets (list position) are dominated by those who are already incumbent, who are popular and who have financial capacity. This leaves out women from the grass roots and, in the long run, poses risks for representative democracy.
 - Third stage, when voters get to cast their vote, women candidates face challenges linked to gender norms that position them as less popular candidates for public office.
- The Government could consider addressing the way in which it abides by the rules for the conduct of fair elections, which include a commitment to uphold gender equality and transparency.
- All political parties could consider developing comprehensive cadre formation that promotes the training of male and female party members on leadership and politics.
- Groups working on women's political participation could consider conducting training for female politicians and for women who are interested in politics.
- There is a need to promote platforms for representative democracy that enable voters and politicians to connect during policy-making processes.
- Lastly, there is also a need for further research to understand the mechanisms that enable gender norms to shape political participation.

Introduction

More than 205 million people in Indonesia went to the polling stations on 14 February 2024 to elect their president, vice president and members of parliament (MPs) for the country's national and local legislatures. In this Muslim-majority and young democracy, the elections that take place every five years offer a unique opportunity to observe women's participation in the country's electoral rallies and campaigns.

Women in Indonesia – as in many other parts of the world, are under-represented in politics. There has been some progress, however. In the last two decades, and in line with global trends towards the adoption of a legislated gender quota, women's parliamentary representation in the Indonesian Lower House (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat/DPR*) nearly doubled from 11.4% in 2004 to 20.5% in 2019 – reaching its highest level since its independence (Prihatini, 2022). Women's share in the DPR reached a new record high of 22% this year, as 127 female MPs were sworn in among 580 lawmakers on 1 October 2024 (Prastiwi, 2024).

In addition to the quota approach, efforts to increase women's parliamentary representation in Indonesia have also been pursued through a series of affirmative action policies, particularly since the fall of former President Suharto's authoritarian regime in 1998, which inaugurated the *Reformasi* era (Prihatini, 2019a). These policies include Law No. 31 of 2002 on Political Parties, which encourages parties to ensure at least 30% of their party board members are women, but does not sanction non-compliance.

Law No. 12 of 2003 on General Elections was the first to require parties to ensure at least 30% of their candidates for the 2004 elections were women (Siregar, 2010; Soetjipto, 2017). This policy was reaffirmed by the General Election Commission (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum/KPU*) through its regulations that disqualify parties for failing to meet the 30% quota – a practice that was implemented in the 2014 and 2019 Elections (Subarkah, 2023). There was a setback during the 2024 elections, however, when the KPU allowed parties to compete even though they had not met the quota requirement.

While women in Indonesia are under-represented in terms of elected candidates, they are politically active in terms of voting – doing so in significant numbers. In the recent presidential and legislative elections, they comprised more than half (50.04%) of the country's eligible voters – 103 million in all (Hayati, 2023). Given their substantial contribution to Indonesia's democratic process, women should be in a position to create better representation at the parliamentary level and to contribute to decisions about who should run the country. Yet, their presence in the political arena remains notably low, with only meagre growth over the years.

What, therefore, are the factors that contribute to their under-representation in politics? Scholars have identified three stages of the political recruitment process that present obstacles for women (Krook and Norris, 2014). First, women's decision to stand for election as candidates. Second, the nomination of aspiring candidates by political parties. Third, the election of candidates by voters. At every stage, women are expected to encounter higher obstacles than men to their political representation (Ono and Endo, 2024).

A growing body of research is looking closely at this issue in other parts of the world, including research studies in Europe (Beauregard, 2017; Junk et al., 2021); in the United States (Pyeatt and Yanus, 2017; Bos et al., 2022) and the UK (Teele, 2014). Research has also been conducted in Africa (Arendt, 2018; Clayton and Tang, 2018) and in Asia (Bhalotra et al., 2018; Iyer and Mani, 2019).

Researchers have analysed the supply- and demand-side explanations of women's presence (or lack of it) in the political domain, where supply-side refers to women who are interested in running

for political office and demand-side refers to the willingness of elites or voters to select female candidates. There has, however, been a lack of systematic observation on women's motivations for joining political parties and their experiences of engaging with them as members or supporters at national and sub-national levels in Asia (Khan and Naqvi, 2020; Liu, 2022; Panday, 2013). The lack of women in the political landscape of Indonesia, as in many other young democracies, weakens the quality of democracy as political elites do not reflect the diversity of the population but are, instead, overwhelmingly male, wealthy and old (Prihatini, 2019b).

This study

This study of the impact of gender norms on women's engagement in political activities builds on the literature that investigates the persistent barriers to women's political participation. These barriers include socioeconomic, political institutions, and cultural/ideological factors (Prihatini, 2019c; Aspinall et al., 2021). This study uses a gender norms lens to understand how perceptions of women's role in the family shape their political interest and engagement.

It focuses on male-breadwinning norms, which are rooted in the interpretation of *kodrat*, a concept of traditional gender roles linked to a perceived natural trait or biological disposition that leads most women to prioritise their roles as wives and mothers over their roles as workers (Ford and Parker, 2008). These norms have been linked to women's limited participation in the economy and in the public sphere.

This research explores how women perceive these gender norms in relation to their engagement in political activities, including political rallies run by presidential candidates. Existing literature indicates that gender norms often curtail women's participation in the labour market (Altuzarra et al., 2021; Kabeer, 2021). However, their caregiving responsibilities may be less of a constraint when it comes to taking part in public events where their spouses share similar values, including political activities (Halimatusa'diyah and Prihatini, 2021).

This study provides insights into how women perceive their caregiving responsibilities while volunteering in activities or attending political meetings, with a focus on the 2024 presidential and legislative elections. The type of political participation matters for two reasons. First, with domestic responsibilities strongly embedded as part of *kodrat*, women may perceive attending political meetings to be too demanding in terms of their time and commitment. Second, women's participation in campaign activities sheds light on whether they are improving their political knowledge and becoming well-informed voters who could, ultimately, run for office. This is essential for the improvement of an inclusive, representative democracy in Indonesia – a democracy in which women participate on an equal basis.

About this report

This report is the second of two reports presenting findings on key norms around women's engagement in political activities in Indonesia. The first report (Setyonaluri et al., 2024) summarizes the findings of a quantitative survey of 1,059 women attending 2024 presidential campaign rallies in four major urban areas of Indonesia. The quantitative analysis finds that women's adherence to conservative gender norms on men as breadwinners, seems to increase their political participation and reduce the likelihood that they will participate purely for money.

This second report uses a qualitative approach to present the findings from interviews with politicians and party representatives on the experiences of women who have run for political office and participated in presidential campaigns. It is hoped that these findings can help parties to

adopt more effective strategies to involve women in political meetings as a route to better political participation and the enhanced quality of representative democracy.

This report is structured as follows. The following section outlines the key literature on women's political participation in the global and regional contexts, including an exploration of gender norms and women's political activities at the grass roots level. It then sets out the methodology for qualitative data collection and further analysis. The following sections present the findings. A concluding section provides policy recommendations and further research avenues.

Women's political participation in the region and in Indonesia

Background

Indonesia was ruled by an authoritarian government under President Suharto between 1966 and 1998. The post-Suharto era is known as *Reformasi* (English: Reform) and has been characterised by a more open and liberal political-social setting. There has been a series of reforms, with four amendments to the Constitution generating important changes. These include the restructuring of the country's national Parliament which became a bicameral legislature in 2004 with the creation of the *Dewan Perwakilan Daerah* (DPD) as the Upper House which consists of four members from each province. This is an addition to the existing *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* (DPR) as the Lower House.

Indonesia has made substantial democratic achievements since 1998, with significant political and media pluralism and peaceful transfers of power. However, significant issues remain, including systematic corruption, discrimination and violence against minority groups, conflict in Papua, and the politicisation of defamation and blasphemy laws. In 2024, Freedom House labelled Indonesia as a partly free country with a score of 57 out of 100 – one point lower than the previous year, with a notable decline in political pluralism and participation. Freedom House has also highlighted the ruling of the Constitutional Court, then headed by a relative of President Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo, to create an exception to an election law to allow one of the President's sons to run for the office of vice president in 2024 (Freedom House, 2024).

Unlike the recruitment for DPR, which requires a party's nomination, people who wish to compete for a seat in the DPD can stand independently. However, DPD is often perceived as less prestigious than DPR because of its relative lack of power and influence in legislation and overseeing mandate. In addition, the selection and recruitment process for DPR has been far from being transparent and accountable. Parties reportedly ask for money (called 'dowry money') from aspiring candidates in exchange for giving them first place on the ballot sheets (Prihatini, 2020).

This list position has been critical in winning legislative elections. Statistically, more than 80% of lawmakers are ranked first or second on party tickets. Women's chances of winning in the 2014 elections, for example, were reduced by 63% because they were consigned to lower ballot list positions (Prihatini, 2019b). This pattern is linked to voters' perceptions that list position is a signal from parties that 'the best candidate must be at the top of the list' (Naufal, 2024).

Of the 18 parties participating in the 2024 elections, almost all failed to meet the criteria of having a minimum of 30% female candidates on their lists. This occurred despite the Election Law No. 7 of 2017 Article 245, which stipulates that there must be women's representation of at least 30% in the party tickets in each electoral district, rather than as a national total.

Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS: Prosperous Justice Party) was the only party that met the requirement by nominating a minimum of 30% of women on its candidates list across 84 election districts. Other parties did not approach these levels:

- *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa* (PKB: National Awakening Party) is the party with the most deficiencies with 29 electoral districts (34.5%)
- *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan* (PDIP: Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle) with 26 electoral districts (31%)
- Partai Demokrat with 24 electoral districts (28.6%), and
- *Partai Golongan Karya* (Golkar: Party of Functional Groups) and the *Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya* (Gerindra: Great Indonesia Movement Party) with 22 electoral districts each (26.2%).

An election activists' group, Netgrit, generated a public outcry by demanding the disqualification of parties that failed to meet the gender quota requirement. Netgrit also called for the General Election Commission (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum/KPU*) to be held accountable because its approval of parties' tickets has made it a complicit in violating the legislated gender quotas (Netgrit, 2023).

Women's engagement in formal politics in the region

Studies have shown that levels of interest in politics tend to differ between men and women (Fraile and Sánchez-Vitores, 2020; Heck et al., 2021). A systematic comparison of the gender gap in political participation in 13 East and Southeast Asian (ESA) countries, including Indonesia, finds that men and women overwhelmingly vote at an equal rate in elections, yet major gender gaps persist in other types of political action (Liu, 2022). Women are, for example, 4% less likely than men to participate in political campaigns. They are also 2% and 5% less likely than men to engage in protests and collective action, respectively. Indonesia, China, and Cambodia are the only countries observed where gender differences are consistent across all modes of political actions despite individual-level controls (i.e., marital status, age, and employment) (Liu, 2022).

Political socialisation remains gendered. Women are often discouraged from engaging in public affairs and are less likely to be asked for their political opinions, resulting in their lower level of political participation (Verba et al., 1997).

Women's interest and participation in politics in Indonesia

Women's low political participation in Indonesia is the result of multiple factors, including lack of resources, the prevalence of patriarchal beliefs, and persistent structural disadvantages (Jakimow et al. 2023). Political parties, for example, perpetuate gender norms in their selection process with very few women involved as the heads of selection panels, which means that the nomination process remains a gendered 'black box' in the recruitment process (Sherlock, 2004).

Voters' patriarchal attitudes towards female candidates are crucial. White et al. (2023) use the term 'political patriarchy' to describe a context where voters see women as less suitable and capable

as political leaders. Building on the growing literature on the correlation between religion and the low levels of women's political representation in Indonesia (Prihatini, 2020; Robinson, 2008; Soetjipto, 2017), White et al. (2023) conclude that religion is a strong predictor of political patriarchy, while higher levels of education can reduce this barrier: those who have university degrees tend to be more gender-egalitarian. To overcome the barrier of political patriarchy, female candidates often leverage their 'homosocial capital' (Bjarnegard, 2013) – the connections, mutual understanding, and trust that develop between individuals of the same gender in social settings – by engaging with women's groups, community groups and networks such as Qur'an recital groups (Aspinall et al., 2021).

Gender norms and women's engagement in political activities

Gender norms are the implicit and informal rules that prescribe how people are expected to behave based on their gender (Harper et al., 2020) – rules that are embedded in institutions and reproduced through social interaction. Gender norms shape the access of women and men to resources and freedom, affecting their voice and power in exercising their agency (Marcus, 2018).

Traditional or conservative¹ gender roles have been shaped by the notion of '*kodrat*', which differentiates the roles of women and men based on their perceived natural biological traits. This concept positions women as child bearers and, because of that, they are responsible for caring for their family and children. *Kodrat* was introduced during the 'New Order' regime² and portrayed women as primarily responsible for bearing children and taking care of the family and children (Robinson, 2008). The notion often referred to as 'state ibu-ism' ('ibu' meaning mother in Bahasa Indonesia) propaganda emphasised that women had a dual role: they were allowed to work outside the home but they were expected to be subservient, obedient, and pleasing to their husbands and families (Suryakusuma, 2011; Utomo, 1997).

The notion of *kodrat*, initially imposed by the state in an effort to suppress the introduction of more egalitarian norms through education, has been internalised by many women and hampers their aspirations to participate in the public domain.

The gender norms that confine women to their role as caregivers can limit their time, resources and opportunities to engage in political activities. In a setting of strong traditional gender norms – as seen in Indonesia – the level of women's political representation and their participation in civic activism is likely to be low. Political engagement is seen as a male domain in such setting (Paxton and Kunovich, 2003; Inglehart and Norris, 2003) or as an activity that conflicts with women's 'feminine' roles (Osawa, 2015). The social structure within a traditional gender-norm setting also hinders women from participating in politics as it creates inequality in wealth, assets, income and networks, leading to different risks associated with joining political activities for women and men (Liu, 2022).

Gender norms and societal expectation have an influence that goes beyond the participation of women and men in politics to create disparities among women of different classes (George et al., 2020). These norms also result in gender inequality in the ownership of assets and other sources of finance, which are vital when running for office. This economic disparity makes political involvement more costly for women and creates a situation where economic inequality benefits elite women who have more assets and better access to financing than women at the grass roots level. Harper et al. (2020) found, for example, that the rise of women politicians often leads to 'elite capture': meaning

¹ The terms traditional, conservative, and patriarchal gender norms are used interchangeably in this report. These terms refer to norms that uphold male domination in the participation in the public space and formal employment.

² Instituted by former President Suharto from his rise to power in 1966 until his resignation in 1998, the "New Order" aimed to achieve political order, including the removal of mass participation in the political process. It featured a strong political role for the military, the bureaucratisation and corporatisation of political and societal organisations, and repression of opposition.

that politics becomes dominated by an exclusive group, such as women who have familial ties with politician elites or with strong financial or monetary resources, limiting broader representation for women in politics.

Pervasive traditional gender norms also create bias in voters' attitudes to women politicians. They create feminine stereotypes that lead voters to see female candidates as lacking experience, strength and authority (Schneider and Bos, 2014). Such stereotyping could affect voter decisions, although this depends on whether voters have more explicit information about female candidates that confirm the stereotypes (Bauer 2015). However, Schwarz and Coppock (2022), summarising 67 studies on voters' bias against women candidates in developed and developing countries, found that voters do, on average, vote for women and that voter bias, therefore, does not explain low female representation in politics. Instead, their study suggests that supply-side factors, such as gender differences in political ambition, party structures, donor preferences, candidate recruitment and unequal opportunity costs of participating in politics may have a stronger effect on lower votes for female candidates (Thomsen and Swers, 2017).

Indonesia's election regime – an open-list proportional representation (PR) system – can also exacerbate women's under-representation. An open-list PR system relies on strong individual personalities, which makes political competition fiercer. In addition, women with less access to financial sources than men often find the system prohibitively expensive (Prihatini, 2019b).

Despite affirmative action, such as gender quotas, women candidates tend to compete from lower list positions and for 'hopeless' constituencies. A regression result shows male candidates are 2.5 times more likely to be nominated by parties to compete in competitive constituencies (NIPoRe, 2023). In terms of electability, female nominations might yield results that are similar to those for their male counterparts. However, women candidates face the challenge of the 'electability' factor, which is determined by political parties based on the ability of candidates to finance the campaign – a factor that favours men.

With regards to the economy, although norms continue to emphasise men as the primary breadwinners, Indonesia's rapid economic growth has expanded work opportunities for women. Economic challenges, such as poverty and job insecurity, are leading more women to enter the workforce, even though traditional social norms persist. Indonesia also continues to face gender inequality, despite its improving performance in every component of the Gender Gap Index: education, health, life expectancy and political empowerment (Cameron, 2023).

Violence against women, for example, persists. A nationally representative survey on violence against women in 2016 found that 33.4% of women aged 15–64 ever experienced violence throughout their life (Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, 2017). Although it has declined somewhat, its prevalence was still high in 2021, with 1 out of 4 women having ever experienced violence (Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection, 2023). The persistent prevalence of violence against women is reflected in adherence to the country's social norms. Indonesia's Demographic Health Survey (DHS) in 2017 found that 32% of women aged 15–49 justified wife-beating by husbands, while the share of young women who agreed with male violence was even higher (40%) (BKKB et al., 2018).

Women also continue to be over-represented in low-paid jobs in Indonesia's informal sector. Around 64% of women worked in this sector in 2023, compared to 55% of men, and the share of women working as unpaid family workers accounts for the largest share in terms of job statuses (BPS, 2023). The gender pay gap in Indonesia continues to be wide, with an average monthly wage of IDR 3,840,084 (around \$235) for men, and IDR 2,454,023 (around \$150) for women (ILO, 2020).

Methodology

This research used a mixed methods approach, to understand how perceptions of women's role in the family – and the male breadwinning norms rooted in kodrat in particular – shape their political interest and engagement. Accompanying report: Setyonaluri et al. (2024) focuses on gender norms, identities and associated values shape women's interest in engaging with political activities. This report focuses on the strategies used by politicians and parties to gain women's support. It is based on interviews with female legislative candidates and campaign teams representing presidential and vice-presidential hopefuls. Analysis of the qualitative data derived from these interviews presents an in-depth observation on the challenges faced by women when they attempt to win political contests (or the so-called supply-side explanations). The qualitative research was conducted after the quantitative survey data (summarised in Setyonaluri et al., 2024) was finalised to identify the questions to be asked during the interviews.

Data collection

In-depth interviews were conducted with 22 respondents from January to May 2024, primarily with female politicians and party board members with different levels of experience in politics. Some have been in Parliament since 2009, and others are in their 20s and running for the first time. This wide range of participants allows this study to capture the intersectionality and diversity of women who are active participants in Indonesian politics. To complement the study's observation, academics and a former election official were also interviewed.

The questions were developed to focus on issues such as institutional support for female party members, gender stereotypes and norms, work-life balance and how other contextual factors (economic status, religion and ethnicity) have affected women's engagement with political parties.

In all, the respondents represent 10 out of the 18 parties competing in the 2024 elections. The researchers also interviewed five representatives from presidential candidates' campaign teams (either campaign spokespersons or campaign managers).

Table 1 shows information on key informants, categorised by their background, such as party affiliation and position.

Table 1 Information on key informants

| Code | Party affiliation | Position |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| 1-PAN | Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) | National legislative candidate |
| 2-Golkar-Campaign2 | Partai Golkar | National legislative candidate and campaign team member for Prabowo-Gibran |
| 3-NP-Campaign3 | No-Party | Campaign team member for Ganjar-Mahfud |
| 4-Buruh | Partai Buruh | Provincial legislative candidate |
| 5-Ummat | Partai Ummat | National legislative candidate |
| 6-NP-Campaign3 | No-Party | Campaign team member for Ganjar-Mahfud |
| 7-PKB-Campaign1 | Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB) | Campaign team member for Anies-Muhaimin |
| 8-PSI | Partai Solidaritas Indonesia (PSI) | Provincial legislative candidate |
| 9-PKS | Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS) | National legislative candidate (Incumbent) |
| 10-NP-Academic | No-Party | Law professor |
| 11-NP-Academic | No-Party | Political science professor |
| 12-PDIP | Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDI Perjuangan) | National legislative candidate (Incumbent) |
| 13-NP-Former Official | No-Party | Former election official |
| 14-PPP | Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP) | Provincial legislative candidate |
| 15-Demokrat | Partai Demokrat | National legislative candidate |
| 16-PPP | Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP) | District legislative candidate |
| 17-Gerindra | Partai Gerindra | Provincial legislative candidate |
| 18-PSI | Partai Solidaritas Indonesia (PSI) | Provincial legislative candidate |
| 19-PKS | PKS | District legislative candidate (Incumbent) |
| 20-Gerindra | Partai Gerindra | Party member |
| 21-Golkar | Partai Golkar | Member of the party's foundation |
| 22-NP-Campaign1 | No-Party | Campaign team member for Anies-Muhaimin |

Given the limitations on time and space, all sessions were conducted virtually using an online video call platform. All interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and were recorded and transcribed for further analysis. Some key quotations were translated into English for the purpose of writing this report.

Ethical considerations

The study received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Committee at LPEM FEB UI and obtained a research permit from the Ministry of Home Affairs and from the local authorities in the four cities where the quantitative research was conducted (Jakarta, Medan, Surabaya and Makassar).

The interviews were audio-recorded. To ensure the confidentiality of the informants and data protection when storing material, number codes and pseudonyms were used for respective informants.

Given that the study employed transcribers and research assistants, all informants were anonymised prior to the transcription processes. All transcribers and research assistants signed a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) before providing access to the recording and the verbatim.

Limitations of the study

Initially, the selection of informants aimed to provide a balanced representation of political parties in Indonesia. However, given that some of the targeted informants did not respond to the invitations, the opinions and views presented may not represent the majority of female politicians in Indonesia, and are not, therefore, generalisable. Nevertheless, the interviews offer insights into the experiences of women when they decide to participate in politics, as well as the strategies and policies used by parties to promote gender equality in the political sphere, to reveal patterns that can be further researched.

How gender norms shape women's participation

As political recruitment is party-driven in many countries (Piscopo, 2019), including Indonesia, it is critical to understand the strategies that parties use to increase women's interest to participate in politics. It is equally important to examine different types of struggles that women face in garnering votes and how they perceive 'money politics'.³

Interviews with political contenders clearly show that gender norms continue to present significant barriers for women in political parties. One informant under the age of 30 highlights her experience in facing conservative gender norms imposed on women in politics. As a young woman campaigning for public office, she has faced a double burden when it comes to persuading prospective voters.

The general public tend to perceive young women as incompetent because they have not yet finished with their life and not yet 'owning their own kitchen'. As a former teenage singer, people quickly assumed that I ended up entering politics because I have left the entertainment industry.
(8-PSI)

³ This is of particular relevance to the quantitative findings, which reveal that monetary incentives are the strongest driver for the participation of female voters in political activities (Setyonaluri et al., 2024).

She is confident that this situation is shared equally by women across parties. Jokes about women and the objectifying of women are commonplace in politics, particularly if the person is pretty and young. Reflecting on her own experience of being invited to an event, she recalls that some men who were 20-30 years older than her asked her to go for a coffee with them. 'This is not a normal thing, but people are treating it so casually', she says.

Conservative gender norms, where men are perceived to make better political leaders than women, often prevent women from having their own agency in terms of their political decisions. Although this quantitative study (Setyonaluri et al., 2024) finds that 63% of the women respondents can make decisions themselves about attending political campaigns, they continue to seek approval from their husband and/or father before competing in a political race. A husband's blessing has a significant influence on women's likelihood to compete in legislative election:

I worked for three years to get female legislative candidates and it was just so hard. We have to get the husband's permission, we also need to have the family's approval. The next question that female aspirants always ask is 'How much do we have to pay?' And I just don't have the answer to it, really.

(1-PAN)

The importance of a husband's approval and influence could have an effect on a woman's decision to run for political office in two ways. On the one hand, if her husband is not inclined to support her participation in political engagements (such as running for Parliament), it is nearly impossible for her to obtain the access, support and funding she will need. On the other hand, if her husband is also actively engaged in politics with a presidential campaign team, for example, then she could also volunteer for the same team. In other words, a husband's participation in politics can reinforce a woman's interest in joining political activities. Therefore, her decision to attend rallies or volunteering could be driven by both monetary incentives and her spouse's existing political activism.

In my observation, women in our presidential campaign team have flexibility with their time. Some female volunteers are married to another volunteer, or she is a widow, or unmarried. If their spouses won't allow women to go, I don't think they will be actively volunteering with us.

(22-NP-Campaign)

Another informant echoes this assertion, reflecting from meetings held at her party branch (20-Gerindra). Where 15 participants attended, about 4 to 5 women were there too. However, given that most of the female attendees are married and have husbands and children, it is difficult for them to stay for the whole meeting. With most meetings held in the evening until late at night (around 11 pm), women will either not attend or join for only part of the time. Men, in contrast, have all the time and space to participate fully in party meetings.

Even for women with years of experience working as a politician, traditional gender norms and caregiver duties remain key challenges for women in politics. As one said: 'If a woman wants to build a political career, she must first take care of the family' (9-PKS). In her account, caregiving duties present an unavoidable barrier to female politicians, as they do for their participation in any other type of industry. Her testimony strongly resonates with studies on how women's role as a primary caregiver in the family continues to be the biggest hurdle in reducing the gender gap experienced by working women (Setyonaluri et al., 2021; Prospera et al., 2023).

As a result, all parties face the challenge of the 'supply' side of representation: finding enough women to run for Parliament. Most parties in Indonesia do not have strong cadre systems and campaigns can be extremely costly, resulting in a lack of high quality and resourceful female politicians who are willing to come forward. Even if there are women who are interested in participating in legislative

elections, they often live in the capital city, Jakarta (15-Demokrat). Therefore, parties have to navigate this by nominating female board members at the national and local levels.

In my research in Indramayu district (West Java), parties were recruiting the wives of village heads. This is because women with this type of background are typically active in the community, well-known, so she can excel in local parliament elections. Yet, this achievement is not due to the party's effort, instead it is more about women's work and their networks.

(11-NP-Academic)

The findings confirm the dynamics between women's interest in standing for public office and the support they get from parties in terms of nominating women (supply-side) and voters' interest in electing women (demand-side). Given voters' significant pragmatism in taking part in political campaigns (as shown in Setyonaluri et al., 2024) women are less likely to compete in elections. This is because the cost of politics is too high for women who often have limited access to financial resources. The long-serving parliamentarians in this qualitative study also claim that they are considering not re-entering Parliament in the next election if voters continue to be this pragmatic.

Motivation and the importance of women in politics

Participants in this study believe that women's interest in participating in politics is affected by both internal and external factors. The internal factors include their personal experience, peer groups and socioeconomic status. Meanwhile, affirmative action policies in the form of legislated gender quotas serve as an external aspect that plays an important role in motivating women to run for office.

Clearly, personal experience with politics shapes women's motivation in entering the political arena. In particular, familial background becomes a starting point for their engagement in political activities. The respondents mentioned both male and female figures in the family as inspirations for their decisions to run.

My aunt is also active in legislative elections, she ran but lost in her bid to become a representative for a local parliament. So I am already familiar with the nuances of politics. My mother actually has a background in health, but we both really like stories and the political atmosphere.

(20-Gerindra)

After graduating from college, I have joined the Party's youth section. The background to this is because my father has served as a legislator representing the party. He is among the party's first generation; hence I have been very familiar with political activities since many years ago.

(19-PKS)

Women are also, however, interested in joining politics to create substantial changes in legislation and policy. This motivation was stated by both those who are both supportive towards and critical of the current government. The latter include a former lawmaker and a female activist who has been very engaged with the issues of the urban poor. Political dissatisfaction stimulated their interest in joining the 2024 legislative election.

I did not come from a family of politicians, instead my family background is business. Hence, we never had any contact with politics, as no one in our family are party officials or anything related to politics. I am interested in politics because I like discussing and learning new things. In addition, I am interested in politics because there are many laws that do not yet represent women's interests.

(2-Golkar-Campaign2)

I am very disappointed with the current government, and this drives me to rerun for office. Because when I was in the DPR (1999-2004), I had a lot to fight for. (I have helped create) laws for the benefit of religion and for the benefit of the poor.

(5-Ummat)

Initially, I had no interest in becoming a legislative candidate. However, after understanding that there are still a lot of problems in the society that have not yet been resolved, I decided to take part in the party's nomination process. I was confident that my experience in helping the poor in Jakarta will help me with gaining votes.

(4-Buruh)

Another type of motivation combines the parties' need to nominate female candidates and their own familial political connections. This can be seen in the multiple cases in which parties nominate women who are connected to party members by blood or marriage.

In previous legislative elections (2014 and 2019), I was helping different parties. This year, I am supporting the PPP and was encouraged by several friends and the party to run for the district level because the Election Law requires a 30% quota for women's participation.

(16-PPP)

I come from a family where my father can be said to be the man behind the scenes for a party. He is not a politician; he is very involved with helping the party in legislative elections. He encouraged me to run because the party needs to nominate female candidates, and I personally see that the party provides them with space and support.

(17-Gerindra)

Women's low representation and 'money politics'

The variety of motivations for entering politics shapes the supply of women as potential legislators and politicians. In general, all participants in the interviews suggest that voters today are increasingly pragmatic and expect direct monetary or financial incentives. This finding reiterates this study's earlier quantitative survey analysis (Setyonaluri et al., 2024), which suggests that financial benefits are the strongest motivation for female voters in attending political campaigns.

The envelope (with money inside) is now normative, no longer political. It becomes a new custom, a new rule. If you want people to vote for you, you have to give them an envelope. Voters perceive the envelope as a given right and this is just crazy.

(12-PDIP)

A former member of the Election Supervisory Board (*Badan Pengawas Pemilu/Bawaslu*) asserts that voter pragmatism does not emerge spontaneously. It is influenced by economic realities and by the candidate's campaign strategies. Political contestants, both legislative and presidential, contribute to this pragmatism as they tend not to compete on the basis of ideas or programmes. In all, five presidential and vice-presidential debates have been criticised for lacking a space for the genuine exploration of candidates' ideas and innovations. As Hurriyah, the Executive Director of the Center for Political Studies at the University of Indonesia has said: 'The time the panellists spend picking up the balls (where a piece of paper with a question is placed) and the moderator opening the envelope is longer than the time the candidates spend presenting their ideas' (Reliubun, 2024).

Meanwhile, regulations concerning elections have been very clear about money politics and the role of political parties to educate voters. Yet, in reality, the implementation of the rules has been weak and sometimes those who are supposed to act as a referee tend to cherry pick and extort candidates for handing out cash or gifts.

(13-NP-Former Official)

This official further argues that 'envelope democracy' systematically erodes the voices of women with idealism and a strong record of social activism. This will further deteriorate the quality of Indonesia's democracy because candidates with limited financial resources will never be elected, despite the country's notable social and political investments. A grass roots candidate with years of experience in supporting urban poor communities expressed her disappointment when her beneficiaries did not support her during a provincial legislative election.

It is now clear to me that years of struggles in helping the poor did not make a difference. Voters underestimated me because I am a woman, and I don't have money. I was defeated because of money politics where other candidates can pour money and cooking oil.

(4-Buruh)

These findings reiterate those of previous studies suggesting that women's low political representation in Indonesia is the result of prohibitively expensive elections (Prihatini, 2019b) and the persistence of political patriarchy (White et al., 2023). Others assert that gender quotas have been ineffective because parties tend to nominate women in less winnable positions in their tickets (Hillman, 2018; Perdana and Hillman, 2020).

The main reason why only few women in politics today are political parties' paradigmatic issues. They don't have an adequate understanding of gender, and their orientation is solely power. Hence, they created political cartels: they aim for as many votes as possible. They don't have any values at all, let alone values regarding gender equality. Parties tend to consider cadre formation for women and providing gender training as giving no benefit for them.

(10-NP-Academic)

Scholars have argued that a lack of the money required is the most important element in women's decision not to contest. The need to obtain, spend and possibly lose a lot of money has been seen as unavoidable, discouraging women who would otherwise be excellent lawmakers (Harahap et al., 2023). As a result, and despite gender quotas, parties constantly complain that they struggle to find female candidates who are willing to formally stand and who have the strong potential to win. This issue is, however, rooted in the absence of meaningful efforts by parties in conducting political training and caderisation programmes for women who are interested in joining politics.

A young respondent from PSI sees this as 'a classical problem that all parties need to address' (18-PSI). She further argues that political parties fail to prepare female politicians to run and to win in legislative elections because their only concern is winning seats, regardless of who ends up sitting in Parliament (male or female). With this perspective in mind, parties treat women merely as a prerequisite to their right to compete in political races.

Respondents claim that women with a strong potential to win legislative elections are becoming fewer in number because of the high cost of campaigning and because of the money politics practices that they see as rampant. The substantial cost of gathering people to attend a public meeting, for example, is critical for legislative candidates. These costs include buying gifts or souvenirs for attendees, providing some pocket money to substitute their loss of income for that day, and the costs of campaign teams that are involved throughout the process.

If we don't bring souvenirs/gifts, people (simply) will not attend our meetings. So, what I did was I bought a lot of cooking oil which is about IDR 12,000 per bottle (73 US cents). If I give away IDR 12,000 in bank notes, of course many people will refuse it. But if it is as a cooking oil, mothers and women in general will be gladly accepting it.

(1-PAN)

In addition to their time limitations as a result of being caregivers, women also face financial limitations should they wish to compete in legislative elections. Because access to family finances is often dominated by men, a family's political decisions tend to support the husband's aspirations, rather than those of the wife.

In cases where the husband is running for a public office, he can force his wife to sell their house or to sell their car to finance his political bid. However, the same situation will not happen if it was the wife that wants to stand for an election. If the husband refuses to support his wife with campaign costs, for example, then most of the time the wife will not participate in the race. It is definitely not an equal playing field, but parties are not interested in understanding this.

(10-NP-Academic)

Party support for women candidates

Women's low participation in politics in Indonesia has been affected by various factors, ranging from gender norms and money politics to their position on ballot papers and their financial support. The last two factors, in particular, put political parties at the centre of the conversation about efforts to promote women's electability. Most respondents in this study assert that they have not been assigned the top spot on the ballot. And as gender quotas require parties to nominate at least one woman for every three candidates (the so-called 'zipper system'), women are often placed at every third position.

The top and second spots are designated for the head and the treasurer in the party's branch. And they tend to always succeed in legislative elections. In my case, I was assigned with the third spot. Hence, I did not have any expectation to win, because the main vote getters are those on the top two in the ballot sheet.

(20-Gerindra)

A similar reflection was shared by 14-PPP. She was listed sixth on the party's ticket. This year's election is her second time running and her expectations are always modest considering her slim chance of winning with her lower position on the list. She claims that parties tend to assign winnable spots to party branch managers, sitting parliamentarians, or public figures such as singers or actors. Parties also tend to allocate higher list positions to business people who have the required financial capital, demonstrating the intersection of gender and class issues.

In 2019, I was placed 9th on the party's list. This year, as a sitting parliamentarian, I was assigned to run as candidate number one, and I won. In terms of cost, if in 2019 I spent about IDR 50 million (\$3,062), this year I think it was IDR 350 million (\$21,440)
(19-PPS)

The respondents' experience shows that women candidates believe that list position is a critical point in women's political nomination.

Party support for campaign costs has varied in terms of the types and the amount. In general, parties provide campaign materials such as flags and T-shirts. For well-established parties like PDIP and Golkar, respondents claim that financial support has been very limited. Meanwhile, younger parties like PSI and Partai Buruh provide fresh funds in addition to campaign materials. Each party has a different approach to supporting female candidates financially, yet the common approach has been offering a so-called 'scholarship' for those with promising electability, as assessed by an internal and/or external survey.

PSI has an internal assessment which determines priority candidates. If you scored among the top 5 on this assessment, the party will not only give you basic necessities like flags and T-shirts but also fresh funds to help you with campaign costs.
(8-PSI)

This respondent further explains that PSI also provides staples, like rice and cooking oil, for candidates to distribute. This has helped priority candidates to reduce their expenses. Yet, this kind of support, also called a 'scholarship', is not received by all contestants.

An informant representing Partai Buruh recounted a different experience. The party prohibits all candidates from spending their own money to pay for campaign expenses. This includes undertaking health checks and preparing the other documents required by KPU. 'They transferred IDR 20 million in three instalments. The money goes to print banners, and I have to submit the receipt', said 4-Buruh.

Some parties provide so-called witnesses – people assigned to oversee and report on the vote-counting processes starting at the polling stations all the way to the provincial level. Other parties ask candidates to provide witnesses at their own costs. Since votes are often miscalculated or transferred to other candidates, many respondents in this study mentioned the importance of having such witnesses.⁴ These witnesses also promote candidates in their networks, and 1-PAN claims that the maintenance of this group of supporters can often be a significant cost that must be considered.

⁴ Issues with electoral integrity have been a prolonged aspect in Indonesia's elections. Many studies have documented frauds in vote counting and reporting – frauds that were eventually hurting candidates' electability in general, and women in particular (see Prihatini, 2020).

Commenting on party support for women candidates, 11-NP-Academic contends that most parties do not have any special allocation from their budget. As a result, women's empowerment programmes that are held internally are often financed by the members themselves, with the chairman spending his own money to deliver training for legislative candidates or to conduct the cadre formation.

Party's fund allocation for activities in the women's wing is minimal and it is not ideal. Moreover, party finances are related to the number of votes. At the moment, the state budget for political parties stands at IDR 1,000 (6 US cents) per vote won in the latest election. Well, that is merely basic operational costs. For cadre formation activities, you have to look for them yourself. So, party support for strengthening female cadre formation is very limited. If in 2004 and 2009 elections many trainings were provided for female politicians, now very few are offered.

(11-NP-Academic)

Campaign strategies targeting women voters

In 2024, women slightly outnumbered men as eligible voters in Indonesia. Their preferences are starting to be considered and parties and presidential hopefuls position women voters as their priority. Women candidates themselves understand the need to target both men and women voters as being equally important. However, by leveraging their homosocial capital, the women participants in this study claim to get better access and better reception (see Jakimow, T. et al., 2023 and Yumasdaleni, et al., 2022). Often with the help from party connections, candidates target households' mothers or Qur'an recital groups in the electorates. Socialisation events held at people's houses are seen to be very effective in persuading potential voters. Candidates also prepare gifts like staples or *kerudung* (head scarfs) to be distributed after the meetings.

Some informants said that they held their meetings on weekends so that both men and women could attend. They provide Q&A sessions to allow the audience to share their aspirations or to ask questions relevant to their concerns. This strategy accommodates candidates who are full-time working on weekdays and can only campaign during the weekends.

Candidates representing the same party agreed to divide areas in order to prevent competition for the same voters. A case from PKS, for example, offers a unique perspective. As PKS has committed to nominate a minimum of 15% young candidates (also known as millennial candidates) and 30% women, these candidates are targeting two different niches in the populace (Feisal, 2024), with the young candidates aiming to influence young people, and the women candidates aiming to maximize women voters' support. 'Yet, I encountered young candidates campaigning in local health centres full of mothers', said 9-PKS. From the perspective of the participants, the campaigning showed that the planned division of niche voter areas does not always occur.

As an incumbent, the campaign strategy of 9-PKS capitalises on government programmes such as scholarships and living costs for students. During her sitting term, she has helped her constituents access such programmes. She asserts that there is a pattern with the help she has provided to people in order to gain their support in the election. 'If people only get help once from me, they will not vote for me. But if they receive help at least twice in a row, then people tend to eventually elect me', she says.

Campaigns can also be held in a form of open exercise, with a women audience participating in events to help showcase their political support for a certain party or candidate. Alternatively, a candidate can also organise free mass health check-ups as a way to invite local people to come and learn about her messages.

I recruited women from Family Empowerment and Welfare (Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga/PKK) as my volunteers to help me with campaigning in their communities. We focused on mothers and children because my party has a special programme, namely free food and milk. So, it really extends to mothers and children.

(17-Gerindra)

This respondent also claims to spend a relatively modest amount on her campaigns of IDR 700 million (\$42,850). She thanks her father for helping her build connections with the business sector, with companies channelling resources for their corporate social responsibility (CSR) through her team. With goods and facilities provided from companies and private donors, she said her campaign costs were dominated by paying her team, which is comprised of at least 60% PKK mothers.

Grass roots candidates like 4-Buruh focus on meeting potential voters by knocking door-to-door every day. 'This gives me the opportunity to gain their aspirations and in return I can explain what plans that I have once I get elected to represent them', she says. At the end of each meeting, she would ask participants if they understood her political intentions and if they would support the presidential candidate for whom she was campaigning.

If they agreed to support our programmes, I would take their photo and report that to the party as a show of my potential voters. With this 'rapping' (meeting people in person and door-to-door) every day, I gathered about 7,000 potential voters who said they will support me. But in the end, these commitments were unmaterialised in voting chambers.

(4-Buruh)

Similarly, a respondent who did not distribute cash or gifts during the campaign period said her genuine political commitment has failed to convince voters. She claims voters tend to appreciate and support candidates based on what voters can get immediately.

I invited about 100 people and asked them to help me as volunteers. I promised them that if I get elected, I will give them rewards and fulfil their aspirations. I will make myself available to them and promise to bring change into their life. I signed a political contract with them. Yet, our voters are not really interested in representative democracy where they can demand better policies or better public services. And even my own nephew asked for funds to renovate a roof in a local sport centre in return for his support. Of course, to this request, I refused.

(5-Ummat)

All of the informants representing presidential candidates' teams agreed on the need to acknowledge women as an important segment in their campaign strategies. Women's issues are often positioned strategically when inviting potential voters to join political meetings. Socialisation workshops for women, for example, were held by the team campaigning for Ganjar and Mahfud to ensure that women will be voting with sufficient knowledge on the pair's key programmes. Art exhibitions involving women performers are also seen as effective in inviting people to attend rallies (6-NP-Campaign3).

The campaign manifestos of presidential and vice-presidential candidates⁵ showed a significant variation in the prominence given to women's interests. The words 'women', 'woman', 'female' and 'mother' were used 40 times by the presidential and vice-presidential candidate team number one (Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar), while the second and third pairs (Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka, and Ganjar and Mahfud) used the words only 16 and 9 times respectively.

Across the manifestos of the presidential candidates, childhood stunting seems to be a shared concern that was associated with women's well-being. In contrast to previous elections, the 2024 presidential candidates made the word 'stunting' a buzzword to target women. While Anies-Muhamin and Ganjar-Mahfud offer measurable targets in dealing with stunting (to reduce its prevalence from 22.6% in 2022 to under 9% by 2029), Prabowo and Gibran commodify stunting strategically as their campaign's strongest programme: 'free lunches and milk at schools'. These narratives lead to stronger voter pragmatism, given that voters tend to want immediate and tangible incentives (especially money) from their legislative and presidential candidates.

A campaigner for Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka asserts that the issues of women and children are key in their campaign messages. The elimination of stunting, in particular, has been highlighted on numerous occasions, promoting the role of women as part of the solution by improving their knowledge on good nutrition and health.

Likewise, the national campaign team for Ganjar and Mahfud argues that these presidential and vice-presidential hopefuls see women's issues as an important aspiration.

This is also why I was asked to lead a special division, called Division for Inclusion (Deputi Inklusi), which consists of female activists who have been working on human rights, environmental rights, and indigenous rights. And the division is not merely for women issues, because we also cater for people with disabilities, elderly communities, and other socially vulnerable groups.
(3-NP-Campaign3)

In sum, women voters were strategically targeted by parties, legislative candidates, and presidential/vice presidential hopefuls through their campaign strategies. Yet, by positioning stunting as one of the key messages to women voters, parties and candidates are strengthening norms which hold women responsible for family and childcare. It also stimulates pragmatic and instant solution (i.e., free lunches at school) rather than promoting a more systematic and structural reforms.

⁵ Each presidential-vice presidential pair has a vision and mission statement or manifesto which was published by KPU. The links to the documents are: (1) <https://bit.ly/Anies-Muhaimin>, (2) <https://bit.ly/PrabowoS-Gibran>, (3) <https://bit.ly/Ganjar-Mahfud>.

Summary of findings

This study has demonstrated the connection between gender norms and women's political participation in Indonesia during three stages of the nomination and election process. During the first stage, when women make their decision to run for office, male family members and parties are often referred to as the motivation for women to join legislative elections. Therefore, the presence of male allies can be a critical factor that shapes this stage. The prohibitive costs of running for election have been mentioned by all of the respondents as a reason for women's decisions not to contest. With male-breadwinner norms commonplace among families in Indonesia, women's political aspirations often depend on approval from their spouses or family.

In the second stage, when parties nominate women as candidates, they give them very limited support. The 'black box' of limited nominations and the lack of financial support both hinder women from relying on parties' institutional and structural assistance. The list position of candidates remains dominated by those with incumbency, popularity, political connections and financial capacity. This side-lines women from the grass roots level and will, in the long run, be a risk for Indonesia's representative democracy. There are also concerns about the presence of political dynasties, which pose a threat to the overall quality of representative democracy in the country.

During the last stage, when voters have the option to elect women, various challenges rooted in gender norms position women as less preferable candidates for public office. Gender norms continue to limit their interest in running for public office, as women are often perceived as being less capable and knowledgeable than men in dealing with political issues. Age is another disadvantage, with younger women perceived as inexperienced in both their personal and professional lives. Voters tend to support candidates who can offer direct financial or other tangible benefits, leaving women who have limited access to capital with a very slim chance of winning.

This study also shows that democracy in Indonesia is for sale (Aspinall and Berenschot, 2019) and is still far from its core goal: to create a well-informed society and to ensure public accountability. When financial capacity determines the success of a political bid, women will be the most disadvantaged as they tend to have less access to financial resources (Rhoads, 2012; Murray, 2023). In turn, elected office will be dominated by the rich, and representative democracy will become more difficult to achieve. With gender norms wielding a persistent influence on women's decisions to standing for political office and parties' prime focus being on the need to win seats rather than promote gender equality, it is fair to suggest that women will continue to be under-represented in Indonesia's politics.

Implications for policy and research

The study has produced several implications for policy and research.

- **First**, the Government, through KPU and Bawaslu, may wish to consider addressing the way in which it abides by the rules and regulations for the conduct of fair, free and direct elections. In particular, KPU and Bawaslu are expected to be committed to principles that uphold gender equality and transparency. Given that electoral integrity plays a central role in determining the cost of politics (a cost that often deters women from running for office), this should be the highest priority for key stakeholders. Law enforcement on money politics, for example, could be implemented in a more just manner and be applied to all participants without discrimination. Voting processes could also be made more transparent to minimise the need for candidates to hire witnesses just to oversee the votes, and this would reduce the cost of running.

- **Second**, as gender norms continue to suppress women's interest in participating in politics and gaining voters' support, all parties could consider developing comprehensive cadre formation that promotes the training of male and female party members on leadership and politics. Parties could consider changing their strategy in nominating potential legislative candidates by supporting their cadres to work on social and political investments outside election seasons. This process should be a key strategy for parties to nurture women's political aspirations, both as volunteers and legislative candidates. As parties are mandated by law to provide political education to the public, cadre formation should be central to this task. Additional support for female legislative candidates, in the form of financial and winnable list positions, should also be considered by parties in efforts to improve their electability. If parties are genuine about encouraging the election of more women, they could, for example, assign the first spots on their ballot lists to female candidates.
- **Third**, groups working on women's political participation could consider conducting training for female politicians and for women who are interested in politics. They could also benefit from developing a database on those who have the potential to become excellent lawmakers. With this database, parties could promote aspiring female candidates on the basis of strong evidence of their political capacity and, therefore, address the perceived supply side constraints.
- **Fourth**, conservative gender norms also continue to shape women's interests as voters. It is crucial, therefore, to support women by promoting platforms for representative democracy that enable voters and politicians to connect during policy-making processes and, therefore, address the demand side challenges. Women voting for women should be normalised, based on substantive alignments and preferences.

This study also highlights the need for further research to understand the mechanisms that enable gender norms to affect the profiles of political participation within a 'pragmatic' political system such as Indonesia. It is evident that female politicians must expand the leverage of their conventional approach to entering politics, which capitalises on their homosocial capital, to find sustainable sources of support to meet voters' expectations in a heavily transactional environment. Another avenue worth exploration is institutional reform within political parties – an area that remains under-researched. As political parties are the gatekeepers in nominating legislative candidates, their policies play a critical role in women's overall political presence.

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ALIGN is a digital platform and programme of work that is creating a global community of researchers and thought leaders, all committed to gender justice and equality. It provides new research, insights from practice, and grants for initiatives that increase our understanding of – and work to change – patriarchal gender norms. Through its vibrant and growing digital platform, and its events and activities, ALIGN aims to ensure that the best of available knowledge and resources have a growing impact on discriminatory gender norms.

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