



**USAID**  
DARI RAKYAT AMERIKA



IKAT US COMPONENT 1 – POWER

# THE SUCCESS AND THE BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Between State Policies, Political Parties  
and Women's Movement





IKAT US COMPONENT 1 – POWER

# THE SUCCESS AND THE BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Between State Policies, Political Parties  
and Women's Movement



**Partnership for Governance Reform (Kemitraan)  
Jakarta, May 2014**

## **The Success and the Barriers to Women's Representation in Southeast Asia**

Between State Policies, Political Parties and Women's Movement

### **Author:**

Ruth Indiah Rahayu

### **Co-Author:**

Adisti Ikayanti

### **Editor:**

Maria Hartiningsih

### **Contributors:**

Ramlan Surbakti & August Mellaz

*"Women's Representation in the Parliament as Result of Different Electoral Systems: A Comparative Study in Five Southeast Asian Countries"*

Phillips Vermonte

*"The Increased Number of Female Members of Parliament: Identifying Its Origin and Obstacles in Indonesia, the Philippines and Timor-Leste"*

Ani Soetjipto

*"The Role of Parliamentary Women's Caucus in Promoting Women's Participation and Representation: A Case Study in Indonesia and Timor-Leste"*

Adriana Venny and Ruth Indiah Rahayu

*"Patriarchal Barriers to Women's Political Participation in Southeast Asia: Lesson from the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia and Timor-Leste on Patriarchy and the Rise of Women's Participation in State Politics"*

### **Illustrator:**

Deni Ganjar Nugraha

### **Layout:**

ASTANA communication

### **Publisher:**

Kemitraan Bagi Pembaruan Tata Pemerintahan

ISBN: 978-602-1616-09-3

Copyright © the Partnership for Governance Reform/Kemitraan Indonesia, 2014. All Rights reserved. Portions of this work may be reproduced and/or translated for non-commercial purposes provided the Partnership for Governance Reform/Kemitraan Indonesia is acknowledged as the source of the material and is sent copies of any translation. "This E-Book is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the sole responsibility of the Partnership for Governance Reform and do not necessarily reflect the view of USAID or the United States Government"

## [ FOREWORD ]

*“When women are empowered, all of society benefits”*

(UN Deputy Secretary General Asha Rose Migiro)

**K**emitraan believes that the more women are elected to public offices, the more beneficial those policies are to the public. Kemitraan has been assisting women political activists in their efforts to increase women political participation and representation in parliament as well as the broader public decision-making processes. Aside from helping the potential women candidates in acquiring skills in competing with their male counterparts, we are also providing the elected members with the necessary knowledge to enable them to perform better in their position in parliament. In supporting women movement in Indonesia in general, Kemitraan has been conducting variety of research ranging from the issue of environment, corruption to gender issues. Some of the research was the regional research conducted under the USAID-funded programme of IKAT-US Component 1.

Under the IKAT-US Component 1, Kemitraan formed a partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Indonesian Women’s Coalition (KPI), Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (EMPOWER) from Malaysia, the Women’s Caucus from Timor-Leste, the Cambodian Center for Human Rights (CCHR), and the Center for Popular Empowerment (CPE) from the Philippines. The partnership works together on the issue of promoting and to ensuring equitable women’s political representation in Southeast Asian.

Regional research conducted under this programme became the source for the development of this publication addressing the obstacles that women have to face in the political arena. Those classical barriers included cultural/patriarchal, political party, electoral system, etc. The research has been done by prominent

thought leaders on the particular issues with invaluable contributions from the five countries regional partners of IKAT-US Component 1.

Kemitraan hopes that this material will enrich the discussion and understanding on the issue of women's political participation and representation. Kemitraan also hopes that this publication will serve as resource for Kemitraan's work in Indonesia or the five countries above. Last but not least, this publication will also serve as reference for the political party and civil society leaders who have been working on increasing women's political participation and representation, either for further research or advocacy.

Kemitraan would like to thank the USAID for supporting this initiative under the IKAT-US Component 1 programme and for their continuing supports in advancing democracy throughout Southeast Asia. Kemitraan would also like to thank the above-mentioned regional partners who have contributed to the success of the programme.

Jakarta, May 2014

**Wicaksono Sarosa, Ph.D**

Executive Director of Partnership

## [ ACKNOWLEDGMENT ]

This publication of **“The Success and the Barriers to Women’s Representation in South East Asia *Between State Policy, Political Parties and Women’s Movement*”** is materialized because of the idea to have one publication that analyzed the four regional research done under IKAT-US Component 1 Programme. The idea came from discussion among the IKAT-US Component 1 Project Team (Mutiara Pasaribu, Poppy Luciana and Merita Gidarjati), DSG/Democratic and State Governance Programme Team (Setio Soemeri, Agung Wasono, Nindita Paramastuti, Utama Sandjaja and Agung Djojoseokarto) and KRC/Knowledge and Resource Center Team (Inda Loekman and Heri Sulistio). Kemitraan is grateful for their idea.

A debt of gratitude is owed to the authors of the publication: Ruth Indiah Rahayu (main author) and Adisti Ikayanti (co-author). Thank you note is also owed to the editor for this publication, Maria Hartiningsih. Kemitraan also would like to thank the researchers of four regional research Prof. Ramlan Surbakti, August Mellaz, Adriana Venny, Phillips Vermonte, and Ani Soetjipto and staff of the regional partners Renato A. Llorin (Philippines), Sabrina Laya Lichongco (Philippines), Nizam Nazreen (Malaysia), Lau Shu Shi (Malaysia), Antoneita Thomas de Graca Maya (Timor-Leste), Maria da Costa Exposto (Timor-Leste), Chor Chanthya (Cambodia), Sri Zul Chairiyah (Indonesia) who have become invaluable contributors for one of the regional research. Without them, this publication would not be existed. Aside from that, we would like to thank the peer reviewers of two workshops for regional research: Sri Eko Wardani, Didik Supriyanto, Edriana Noerdin, Ruth Indiah Rahayu and Syamsudin Haris.

Finally, Kemitraan gratefully acknowledges the support of the USAID (United States Agency for International Development) for providing funding for this important project. Kemitraan also would like to thank those who have supported women’s political participation and representation program or projects in the five countries included in this publication.

# [ ABOUT ]

## PARTNERSHIP FOR GOVERNANCE REFORM (KEMITRAAN)

**K**emitraan is a multi-stakeholder organization established to promote governance reform. It works hand-in-hand with government agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, and international development partners in Indonesia to bring about reform at both the national and local levels. Kemitraan brings together the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, with civil society and other stakeholders to sustainably promote good governance in Indonesia. Because of our national ownership, Kemitraan is uniquely positioned to initiate programs that need Indonesian partners in positions of authority.

Kemitraan was first established in 2000 following the successful first free and fair election in Indonesia in 1999. The election produced a more credible government following decades of authoritarian rule by the Soeharto regime. Kemitraan was initially set up as a program funded by multi-donor and managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The main motivation of the establishment of Kemitraan was to create a multi-stakeholder platform which becomes the core supporter of the Indonesian society in navigating complex, long and often difficult process of governance reform. Kemitraan became an independent legal entity in 2003 and was registered as a not-for-profit civil law association, while retaining its status as a UNDP project until December 2009. Over the last eleven years, Kemitraan has grown from a UNDP project into a trusted, independent and prominent Indonesian organization.

Kemitraan has a mission to disseminating, advancing and institutionalizing the principles of good and clean governance among government, civil society and business, while considering human rights, gender balance, the marginalized and environmental sustainability.

We are effective in our mission when:



- Our stakeholders seek to continue program development with us and recommend us to others.
- Our innovation and efforts are transformed into improved governance in Indonesian government and society.
- Our influence engenders increased commitment to governance reform from governments at all levels.

Learning from the difficult process of reform in Indonesia, often resisted by vested interests, and the challenge of setting the right course of change, Kemitraan has discovered a unique approach in governance reform: building capacity from within and applying pressure from without - our multi faceted reform approach. It involves working on several fronts – initiating reform within government agencies, empowering civil society to advocate for reform, and empowering communities to push for demand-driven development plans and public services.

Throughout its 11 year existence, Kemitraan has accumulated experiences in managing USD 100 millions grants from various development partner countries including Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, from international organizations including the Asian Development Bank, the European Commission, the International Organization for Migration, the UNDP, and the World Bank and from the private sectors including AXIS and Siemens.

Since 2000, Kemitraan has been working in 33 provinces in Indonesia in cooperation with 19 central government agencies, 29 local government agencies, 162 civil society organizations, 11 media organizations, 33 research institutes and universities, nine independent state agencies and five private institutions. Kemitraan has also been working with international organizations such as: TIRI-Making Integrity Work, Nordic Consulting Group (NGC), UNDP, UNODC, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in the implementation of projects, and has been working with Chemonics, Coffey International, GRM International, RTI and ARD in program design and development.

Kemitraan's success in implementing the above is due to the trust we have earned from various stakeholders (communities, corporations, NGOs,

government agencies]. We have been successful in facilitating public policy reform (the formulation of new laws and regulations or the revision / amendment to the laws and regulations), bureaucratic reforms, judicial and democratization reform, anti corruption laws, national strategies and the establishment of the Commission for the Eradication of Corruption, creating the Governance Index, promoting and facilitating environmental and economic governance and ensuring that all genders are represented.

Kemitraan is governed by two bodies: The Partners and the Executive Board. The Partners (Teman Serikat) is the highest decision making body within Kemitraan. Their role is to set the overall strategic agenda of Kemitraan, to endorse the annual report and workplan, ensure that the affairs and assets of Kemitraan are properly managed, and appoint the Executive Director. The Executive Director implements Kemitraan's annual workplan and provides overall leadership to the staff. He also develops a common vision of the overall role of Kemitraan and communicates this vision to the government, non-government and international community with a view to building a constituency for governance reform.

**Kemitraan :**

Jl. Wolter Monginsidi No.3 Kebayoran Baru

Jakarta Selatan 12110

Phone: 62 21 727 99 566

Fax: 62 21 7205260

Website:

[www.kemitraan.or.id](http://www.kemitraan.or.id)

# [ CONTENT ]

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENT</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>ABOUT PARTNERSHIP FOR GOVERNANCE REFORM (KEMITRAAN)</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER I THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION</b>	
<b>IN PARLIAMENT</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Why is Women's Participation Crucial?	7
1.2 Benefits of Women's Representation	12
1.3 Support System for Women's Representation outside Parliament	14
<b>CHAPTER II STATE POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION</b>	<b>19</b>
2.1 Political Representation System and Women's Quota Policy	19
2.2 Electoral Systems and Women's Representation	23
2.3 Political Parties and the Recruitment System of Women Candidates	28
2.4 Institutional Barrier to Women's Representation Patriarchal Systems and Barriers to Women's Political Participation	31 35
<b>CHAPTER III PATRIARCHAL SYSTEMS AND BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 Defining Patriarchy	37
3.2 Patriarchal Policies in Southeast Asia's Modern States	39
3.3 Reinforcement of Patriarchy in the Creation of State Female Role Models	46

3.3.1	The Paradox of Education and State Femininity Symbol	47
3.3.2	The Mass Media Paradox: Benefitting and Damaging	54
3.4	The Implementation of State Patriarchy in Electoral Systems and Political Parties	59
3.5	Perceptions of Women towards Politics and Perceptions of the State towards Women in Politics	66
<b>CHAPTER IV THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT FOR POLITICAL AFFIRMATION</b>		<b>73</b>
4.1	Political Reform and Opportunities for Women	73
4.2	Women's Political Affirmation Movement in the Course of History	75
4.3	The Distinctiveness of the Strategy of Women's Movement for Political Affirmation	82
<b>CHAPTER V CHALLENGES TO WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION</b>		<b>95</b>
<b>REFERENCES ]</b>		<b>99</b>

## [ LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ]

APBN	<i>Anggaran Pendapatan Belanja Nasional / National budget</i>
APBD	<i>Anggaran Pendapatan Belanja Nasional / Regional budget</i>
APODETI	Popular Democratic Association of Timor
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
AWS	<i>Angkatan Wanita Sedar - Women's wing of MNP</i>
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CCHR	Citizens Commission on Human Rights
CDN	National Executive Council
CEAP	Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines
CEDAW	Convention of Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CMDGs	Cambodian Millenium Development Goals
CNRP	Cambodia National Rescue Party
CNRT	National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
CPN	National Political Council
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CWS	Commission on the Status of Women
DCS	Daftar Calon Sementara / Temporary candidate list
DPD	<i>Dewan Perwakilan Daerah / Regional Representative Council</i>
DPP	Dewan Partai Pusat / Central Party Leadership
DPR	<i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat / House of Representatives</i>
DWSA	Dutch Women's Suffrage Association
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FUNCIPEC	National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia
Fretilin	Frente Revolucionaria de Timor-Leste Independente
GADC	Gender and Development in Cambodia
GMMP	Gender Media Monitoring Project

GMPT	<i>Grupo Mulher Parlamentar Timor-Leste / Women's Parliamentary Caucus of Timor-Leste</i>
HRP	Human Rights Party
IKAT-US	<i>Inisiatif Kemitraan Asia Tenggara–United States</i>
KOTA	Association of Timorese Heroes
KDRT	<i>Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga / Domestic Violence Law</i>
KPPRI	Indonesian Parliament Women's Caucus
KPU	General Elections Commission
LfDP	Lead for Democracy Party
MP	Member of Parliament
MNP	Malay National Party
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
<i>Musrebang</i>	<i>Musyawah Perencanaan Pembangunan / collaborative development planning</i>
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRP	Norodom Ranaridh Party
PAN	National Mandate Party
PAS	<i>Partai Islam Se-Malaysia / Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party</i>
PD	Democratic Party
PDI	<i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia / Indonesian Democratic Party</i>
PDI-P	<i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan / Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle</i>
PKB	National Awakening Party
PKS	Prosperous Justice Party
PPP	<i>Partai Persatuan Pembangunan / United Development party</i>
PNT	Timorese Nationalist Party
PSD	Social Democratic Party
PST	Timor Socialist Party
PWDC	Penang Women's Development Cooperation
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SEPI	Secretary of State for the Promotion of Gender Equality
SRP	Sam Rainsy Party
TCBGEIC	The Capacity Building and Gender Equality Information Center
UDT	Timorese Democratic Union
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
US	United States
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
WCI	Women's Candidacy Initiative





# [ INTRODUCTION ]

*Inisiatif Kemitraan Asia Tenggara – United States (IKAT-US) Component 1 – POWER*, is one of Partnership's projects that supports efforts to increase women's representation in the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste. One of the activities of the program is to conduct research on the success of, as well as the barriers to, increasing the representation of women. The research projects are:

1. *"Women's Representation in the Parliament as Result of Different Electoral Systems: A Comparative Study in Five Southeast Asian Countries"* - research and report by Ramlan Surbakti & August Mellaz
2. *"The Increased Number of Female Members of Parliament: Identifying Its Origin and Obstacles in Indonesia, the Philippines and Timor-Leste"* - research and report by Philips Vermonte
3. *The Role of Parliamentary Women's Caucus in Promoting Women's Participation and Representation: A Case Study in Indonesia and Timor Leste*" - research and report by Ani Soetjipto
4. *"Patriarchal Barriers to Women's Political Participation in Southeast Asia: Lesson from the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste on Patriarchy and the Rise of Women's Participation in State Politics"*- research and report by Adrianna Venny & Ruth Indiah Rahayu

The content of this e-Book is sourced from the above four research projects and is compiled to link the projects and to form a complete narration. These research papers are not only re-presented in this report, but also quoted in various parts.

Hence, the sources for this paper are the researchers mentioned above, under the project authority of IKAT-US Component 1 and therefore the names of the researchers in this e-Book are not included in the footnote and references.

With this e-Book, research data regarding women's representation in Southeast Asia can be widely circulated and easily accessed by the public, allowing it to be a source of reference for further research, education, or advocacy.

The background features a series of overlapping, organic, light blue shapes that resemble stylized waves or petals. These shapes are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall color palette is a range of light blues, from pale to a slightly darker, vibrant shade.

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF  
WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION  
IN PARLIAMENT**



## [ CHAPTER I ]

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT

**W**hy is women's representation in parliament today strongly advocated as an agenda for state politics? Has women's representation within a democratic country not existed since the 18th century in Europe, the United States and even in Southeast Asia? Why is there still a struggle for women's representation? What are the main differences between women's representation today and in the past? These are the questions typically asked by people from various backgrounds; civil society; academics; political party activists; and government officials.

Behind the questions lies the assumption that endeavors to increase women's representation in parliament would lead to discrimination against their male colleagues. The questions and assumptions are best answered by fact-based arguments that illustrate the significance of women's representation in parliament, and why it is an absolute necessity.

Twenty-five years ago, women's representation was a marginal issue, discussed only by women from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within civil society movements in Southeast Asia. At the center of these discussions were questions regarding the low representation of women in relation to the quantity (the population of women) and quality (the burden of production and reproduction as well as a sexual burden) of issues faced by women. The disproportion seemed even more unjust when the representation system was put in the context of a democracy.

Strong and relentless pressure from international civil society movements as well as the United Nations (UN) sought to ensure women's representation was taken seriously and formal state declarations for a 30 percent quota system were encouraged. While this quota represents a descriptive change, it still remains insubstantial.

The following table presents the percentage of women's representation in parliaments based on region (country average):

**Table 1. Women's Representation in National Parliaments**

Region (average)	Percentage
Scandinavia	42%
America	23.9%
Europe (excluding Scandinavia)	21.9%
Sub-Saharan Africa	20.9%
Asia	18.4%
Arab (Middle East)	15.7%
Pacific	12.7%

*Sumber: Women in National Parliament, Inter-Parliament Union, 2013<sup>1</sup>*

The table shows that the Scandinavian region has reached over 30 percent women's representation in parliament. This far exceeds America and Europe, which are widely cited as regions with developed democracies. Asia ranks fifth among the seven regions of the world, 11.6 percent short of the 30 percent women's representation quota. The Pacific region, comprising largely of countries that acquired their independence fairly recently, has the lowest representation of women in its parliaments.

Referring to the data in the above table, the percentage of women's representation in Asia calls for our particular concern, particularly when taking into account that 4 billion of the world's 6.5 billion population resides in Asia. Moreover, the women's movement which has been struggling for women's representation in general, began in the early 20th century, around the same period that democratic countries started to take their form.

Why, then, is the percentage of women's representation in Asia still far below 30 percent? The question was discussed in a research paper conducted by the Partnership<sup>2</sup>, with case studies from the Southeast Asia region, specifically

1 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>, downloaded on 3 April 2013

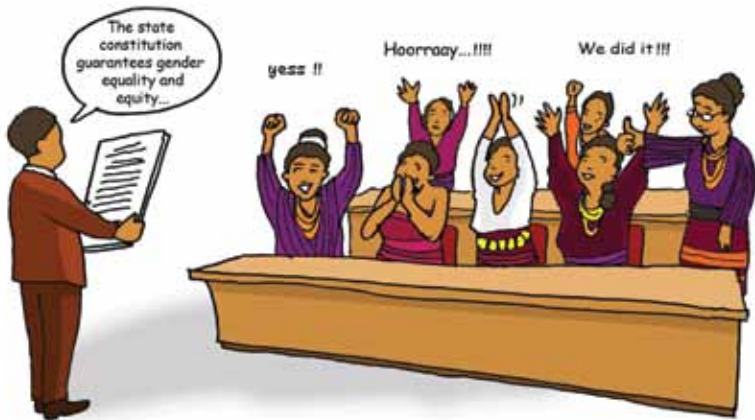
2 Research Projects under IKAT-US Component 1 - Power, Kemitraan

Cambodia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste. The purpose was to understand why women's representation in Southeast Asia in general remains below 30 percent? What the barriers to participation by women are as well as identifying the opportunities to increase participation? The research projects in the five Southeast Asian countries describe the correlation between women's representation and each state's political systems – the electoral system, political parties and the parliamentary women's caucus, as well as the patriarchal barriers to women's participation in politics.

## 1.1 Why is Women's Participation Crucial?

To explain the significance of women's representation, the arguments presented here are categorized into three; the first argument is based on a legal stand point, especially from a human rights view; the second is the theory of representation voiced by feminist thinkers; the third argument is based on an impact or benefits approach.

From a legal standpoint, women's representation in parliament and other state institutions is warranted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights released by the UN in 1948. The declaration attests that anyone (man or woman) has the right to participate in the governance of their country, to access the public services of their country, and to use their rights to elect/be



elected in a universal and equal election for all [Article 21].<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) developed the initial drafts for international conventions related to women's rights, such as the Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1953, which was the first international legal instrument to recognize and protect the political rights of women.<sup>4</sup>

In 1963, efforts to unify standards for women's rights pushed the UN General Assembly to ask CSW to prepare a Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which the UN General Assembly later ratified in 1967. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is also a legally binding document prepared by CSW and approved by the General Assembly in 1979. The conventions were declared applicable in 1981 and countries which have been subsequently ratified by the UN have 30 days to ratify the conventions. This declaration was the most rapid among human rights conventions ever made, and the climax of UN efforts to formulate comprehensive international legal standards for women.<sup>5</sup>

The rights of women to vote in the election and to have equal public position as men do are ensured by CEDAW. The countries that have ratified CEDAW are obliged to enact national implementing legislations, or that CEDAW is used as a reference in adopting laws and legislation.<sup>6</sup>

Today, CEDAW has been ratified by nearly all countries in the world, however this does not mean that it has immediately been worked into every country's legal framework to ensure that it is implemented, as evident in the examples of the five countries presented in this study. All five countries have ratified CEDAW, however the Malaysian government is the only country that has not translated the convention into its laws.

---

3 United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>, downloaded on 5 November 2013

4 A Brief History of the CSW, United Nations, [www.unwomen.org/en/CSW/brief-history](http://www.unwomen.org/en/CSW/brief-history), downloaded on 13 Maret 2014

5 Short History of CEDAW Convention, [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/history.html](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/history.html), downloaded on 13 Maret 2014

6 United Nations, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>, downloaded on November 5, 2013



From the perspective of women and politics, Hanna Pitkin (1967) suggests two fundamental views on women's representation: descriptive representation and substantive representation. Descriptive representation views that parliament should reflect the characteristics of voters. The efforts to increase the number and proportion of women in parliament are efforts to tailor the parliament for it to resemble the composition of voters that consist of both men and women. Therefore, voting in women as members of parliament (MPs) is a symbolic gesture of fulfilling the gender equality principle demonstrated by the current political system.

Meanwhile, substantive representation acknowledges that men and women are exposed to different experiences, which influence them and affect how they prioritize different issues and shape their perspectives on political matters. Substantive representation would embed the distinct perspective and interests of women in political issues, as women have largely been perceived as the marginal group in parliament. With substantive representation, the increase of women's representation in parliament is expected to have a positive correlation with political policies that accommodate women's interests.

Anne Philips (1995) criticizes the view that places too much emphasis on descriptive representation. Women's representation is not merely a formality to fulfill the ideals of equality and democracy (political representation). According to Philips, descriptive representation overlooks the principal question of the work of legislative members in carrying out their political duties.

The presence of women in parliament is not solely to ensure women's representation; women legislators are crucial members of parliament who voice women's issues that are often ignored during parliament's public agenda discussion. The voices of women members during the decision-making process in parliament greatly contribute to the redefinition of political priorities, and introduce gender-related issues in the political discussion. Moreover, women in parliament bring new perspectives to the discussion of political issues, shaping an agenda that accommodates women's interests.

Drawing on the views of Pitkin and Philips, we may establish the basis of our argument that women's representation is a political necessity for several reasons, (1) because voters comprise men and women; (2) women experience life differently than men and face different issues, which results in different perspectives on political issues; (3) beyond being merely a democratic formality, women's representation is important for redefining political priorities and formulating discussions and decision-making that protect women's interests.

However, in general, women's representation around the world, especially in parliament, is still well below 30 percent. The 30 percent ratio marks a moderate demand to increase the representation of a group that has long been marginalized and has a different starting point to men. The demand, cited as affirmative action, is a transitional policy for the recovery and compensation of the long-standing discrimination against women.

This subject was conferred during the Fourth Women's International Conference in Beijing in 1994, held by the UN, and later set forth in the action agenda for all participating countries in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). BPfA states that the representation of women is non-existent in almost all government organs, especially ministries and other executive bodies. It is a situation that is also present even in countries with more advanced democratic systems.

Evidently, an advanced democracy does not necessarily translate into a 30 percent representation of women in parliament or the legislative, executive, and judicial bodies<sup>7</sup> - an ironic circumstance considering that the quality of a representative democracy would certainly be improved if women were represented fairly in parliament. Without the participation of women or significant attempts to incorporate a gender perspective into a state's decision-making process, equality in the form of women's representation will remain far from realized.<sup>8</sup>

The third approach views women's representation from the aspect of its impact on development. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women,

---

7 United Nations, *Beijing Platform for Action*, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>, downloaded on 5 November 2013

8 United Nations, *Ibid*

in her speech in Helsinki (2011)<sup>9</sup> enunciated that women's participation in politics, which includes women's representation in parliament, is the right of each and every citizen, and that everyone should have equal rights to political opportunity and to take part in the social-political arena. Women's representation is therefore inherent in every woman.



In the context of democracy, referring to Bachelet, women's participation is a prerequisite in order to accomplish peace and sustainable development. Data has demonstrated that countries with preeminent gender equality, such as Scandinavian countries, have a per capita gross domestic product that is higher than other countries with low gender equality.

A notable representation of women in parliament translates into legislation that ensures equality, which extends to budgeting and social initiatives that benefit women and children. Hence, women's representation is paramount, as it marks the manifestation of women's rights to help shape democracy and their country's social welfare.

9 Speech delivered by Michelle Bachelet, UN Women Executive Director, regarding *Women Political Participation at the Old Town Hall in Helsinki, Finland, 11 October 2011.* – downloaded from <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2011/10/women-s-political-participation#sthash.Khp5qLTI.dpuf>, on 15 Januari 2014

## 1.2 Benefits of Women's Representation

Through UN Women, Bachelet has implemented numerous programs to improve women's representation globally and has empirically seen positive results in the changes of state policies concerning women.

In essence, women's representation is not limited to membership in parliament, but can also be seen in other political aspects, such as in the development planning through local and central governance mechanisms, or in employment. This study indeed focuses on women's representation in parliament, however this section will briefly scrutinize women's representation in other fields and its positive impacts. Herewith we shall examine studies that evaluate the benefits of women's representation. In the *Panchayat Raj System* (Kadam 2012)<sup>10</sup> in India, the development directives were altered to sensitively acknowledge the needs of women, which essentially derive from the aspiration to improve the living quality of their families and eventually lead to family and social resiliency.

In Indonesia, the development planning mechanism, through which people's aspirations are channeled, is called *Musyawarah Perencanaan Pembangunan* (collaborative development planning - Musrembang). However, the vague concept of representation also hinders women's representation in the development mechanism.

In general, women's representation inside and outside parliament generates a positive impact on women themselves. This can be seen in Rwanda (Powley, 2006) where the daily role of women is as the 'mother' who oversees activities in the household, their presence as a 'mother' in parliament was also fact effective in transforming the masculine mindset in politics, which used to disregard regulations for improving social welfare, especially for children. Driven by the participation of women members, Rwanda's Parliament finally passed legislation concerning food security, the environment (ecology), housing and the improvement of family livelihood.

---

10 The study was conducted by (Kadam 2012), *A Study on the Grama Panchayat Women's Member Participation in Developmental Initiative*, (International Journal of Advance in Management and Social Science: ResearchGARPH Publication, 2012)

The Parliament of Timor-Leste, the only country in Southeast Asia that has managed to achieve a 38.46 percent representation of women at its last election, also exhibits some success stories. A young country, Timor-Leste is inevitably facing complex issues. However, interestingly, amid all these complexities, women's interests are not neglected.

The most prominent achievement of the women's movement in Timor-Leste is the state's Constitution that guarantees gender equality. With the Constitution as the foundation, women's participation in politics, including their representation in parliament, becomes the center of the state's political agenda. The results are reflected in the significant level of representation in Timor-Leste and the success of women members to legislate Anti-Domestic Violence Law (Law No. 7/2010) and Election Law (Law No. 7/2011). Currently, women members of parliament are advocating a bill regarding compensation for victims of violence of the political conflict that the country endured with Indonesia between 1975-1999, where women were victims of systematic sexual violence.

The benefits of women's representation in parliament are also apparent in Indonesia. After the quota system for women in Parliament was implemented in the 2004 election, which effectively applied a quota policy for women in the electoral system, elected women members of Parliament (MPs) pushed for the passing of the Domestic Violence Law (*Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga* - KDRT) on 14 September 2004. The KDRT bill was proposed by the women's movement, supported by the National Commission on Violence Against Women (*Komnas Perempuan*) and the Minister for Women's Empowerment (Munir 2005). Nearing the 2009 election, women MPs, who are members of the Parliamentary Caucus, and the above groups, were able to include provisions that underline political affirmation into the Political Party Law and Election Law.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly in the Philippines, the Reproductive Health Bill was finally passed during the government of President Benigno Aquino III in December 2012. It took 14 years of advocacy to pass the law. The persistence of women who stood for reproductive health, both in political parties and in Parliament, eventually

---

11 The 30% quota system for women is stated in Election Law No. 12 of 2003. The amendments to the Law in 2008 state that a woman candidate in the candidate list should be assigned with number 1-3, 3-6, and so on.

succeeded in pushing the reproductive health issue through as a priority in Parliament. The Reproductive Health Law ensures that poor women have access to modern, healthy contraception devices and abortions, and that sex education (from the perspective of reproductive health) is be taught at schools.<sup>12</sup>

The positive impacts of women's representation in parliament in general, translate into a positive impact in terms of development planning. Unfortunately, it has not been able to encourage a wide participation of women in the political processes and mechanisms, especially by poor women. Yet, the experiences of Timor-Leste, Indonesia, the Philippines, and other countries clearly demonstrate that increasing women's representation in parliament can be optimized in order to change policies and generate laws that would benefit the interests of women and children.

### **1.3 Support System for Women's Representation outside Parliament**

Women's representation requires institutional supporting apparatus, which are understood to be political parties, the electoral system, and the Women's Caucus. These institutions enable women MPs, from different parties, to advocate important issues in parliament. The characteristics of political parties and electoral systems in Cambodia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste will be discussed further in Chapter II, while this section shall focus on the role of the Parliamentary Women's Caucus in improving participation and representation in the caucus itself.

Of the five Southeast Asian countries in this paper, only Indonesia and Timor-Leste have established a Parliamentary Women's Caucus. Theoretically, the Parliamentary Women's Caucus has a strategic role on the government's political processes. The Caucus is able to influence political agenda by shifting initiatives into ones that address women's needs. The members of the Caucus may take the lead as advocates for women issues in Parliament as well as in the media, and may also oversee the forming of regulations and their implementation. Through the Parliamentary Women Caucus, communication

---

<sup>12</sup> CNN, *Philippines House passes reproductive health bill*, see <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/12/17/world/asia/philippines-health-bill/>, downloaded on 7 November 2013

with women's movements and women constituents should be more effective, enabling them to work together toward common goals.

The Indonesian Parliament Women's Caucus (KPPRI) was established by women MPSs from the national House of Representatives in 2000, after the election of 1999 marked the beginning of political reform in Indonesia. In its initial stage, the Women's Caucus was formed to realize equality of access and control between men and women MPs. As it developed, the Women's Caucus recognized the need to empower women legislators to carry out their political duties in Parliament and in other political functions. The current challenge is that the Caucus has not been formally acknowledged as an organ of the People's Representative Council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat - DPR*). This creates challenges, as consequently the Caucus is not entitled to parliamentary facilities, such as a budget and supporting staff. To fund its activities, the Caucus collects mandatory membership fees and organizes various events such as bazaars at the DPR, to raise funds.

Today, the Women's Caucus strives to strengthen coordination with MPs at the local level. The Caucus encourages the establishment of caucuses at the sub-national parliaments at the provincial and district level. The national and sub-national caucuses interact by exchanging ideas and information to update local parliaments. The Caucus' central-local network is vital for ensuring that women's interests are accommodated when devising the national budget (*Anggaran Pendapatan Belanja Nasional, APBN*) and regional budgets (APBD).

Aside from the shortcomings that the Caucus still experience, we can already see its positive role in advocating for Domestic Violence Law as well as the the passing and amendements to the Election Law and Political Party Law that now recognize a quota system for women. The Caucus is also a strategic forum for disseminating knowledge from a gender perspective and women's issues, to other women members in the legislative bodies.

The Parliamentary Women's Caucus in Timor-Leste's (*Grupo Muhler Parleментар Timor-Leste, GMPTL*) was established in 2007. The idea was first introduced in 2002, with the aim of bridging communication between women MPs and women's groups outside Parliament and the Government. In 2004, the establishment of an Ad Hoc Commission for gender equality and children was proposed, however it was denied during a vote at the Parliament's plenary session.

The decision-making process is based on the decision of the factions (based on political parties), this discourages women members from voting for women's issues that contradict the decisions of their respective parties. Furthermore, if the head of a faction objects to a proposal, women members have no choice but to follow the decision of their party. It is commendable that, despite its initial failure, women MPs continued their efforts and returned with the proposal to establish a permanent (as oppose to ad hoc) Parliamentary Women Caucus.

Facilitated by the UN Development Program (UNDP), and after a series of intensive discussions with Swedish Parliamentarians through the network of the Portuguese-speaking parliamentary community, the design for the caucus was developed. In its ratification resolution in 2007, the Timor-Leste National Parliament approved the establishment of a Timorese Group of Parliamentary Women and committed to providing a budget to support the Caucus' operations.

Amidst the situation in Timor-Leste, that is still unfavourable to women's participation outside Parliament (Ikayanti & Thornley 2013), GMPTL strongly supports the political work of MPs. As of today, GMPTL has been a successful driver behind a number of legislations such as the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, the Election Law that includes affirmative provisions, and the amendment to the Health Law to reduce the rate of maternal mortality. However, in spite of the high level of representation in Parliament, the achievements of women legislators individually in the Government or in other areas has not been significant.

Nevertheless, women's representation in Timor-Leste's Parliament after the 2013 election remains the highest (38.46 percent) compared to the Philippines (27.8 percent) following the country's election in the same year; Indonesia following the 2009 election (18.2 percent); Malaysia's 2013 Election (10.41 percent); and the election in Cambodia in 2013 (20.33 percent).<sup>13</sup> The high proportion of women's representation in Timor-Leste's Parliament reflects assurances in its Political Party Law concerning the need to increase women's participation and the inclusion of a quota system, especially by assigning women to party organs as well as management of the political parties.

---

13 Sourced from a Focus Group Discussion of researchers and academics in the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Timor Leste on women's representation in Southeast Asia held by IKAT-US Component-1 on October, 30-31, 2013 in Kuala Lumpur



The background features a series of overlapping, organic, light blue shapes that resemble stylized waves or petals. These shapes are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall color palette is a range of light blues, from pale to a slightly darker, vibrant shade.

**STATE POLITICAL  
SYSTEMS AND WOMEN'S  
REPRESENTATION**



## [ CHAPTER II ]

# STATE POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

This research identifies a number of institutional factors that influence the level of women's political participation and representation. This chapter discusses the political institution of the state as the primary factor that determines the path for women into politics. There are five institutional aspects that are related with the increase of women's representation in Southeast Asia. First, the political representation system implemented by the five countries. Second, the electoral system applied to elect members of the political representatives (lower house and upper house) in the five countries. Third, the number of women who are represented in the institutions with political representation in each country. Fourth, the policies adopted by each country to increase women's representation in political representative institutions. Fifth, the commitment of political parties to realize gender equality.

### 2.1 Political Representation System and Women's Quota Policy

The first institutional factor is the political representation system, which comprises two models i.e. unicameral and bicameral. In essence, under the unicameral system, there is only one legislative institution with the authority to formulate laws, while the bicameral system has two legislative institutions that have authority. However, there are countries that apply the two-chamber system (lower and higher), yet are not categorized as bicameral. In the bicameral system, it is imperative for both chambers to hold legislative authority and for members of the chambers to be elected through general election.

In this discussion, we will examine the relation between the representative system and the state's policy on the women's quota in five Southeast Asian countries. A state's policy to implement a quota system to ensure women's

representation, would determine whether a unicameral representative system, a bicameral system, or both, allows – or hinders – women's participation.

Cambodia has a total population of 14,952,665 million people, consisting of 7,717,966 women and 7,234,699 men. Cambodia's Constitution adopts the bicameral representative system. Its Lower House has 123 members who are directly elected in a general election, while the Senate has 61 members – 59 of who are elected indirectly (elected by the Local Representative Body and the Lower House) and two are appointed by the King. However, legislative authority and the right to appoint a Prime Minister are held by the Lower House.

The government of Cambodia is committed to increasing gender equality through the Cambodian Millenium Development Goals [CMDG]. The objective is to eliminate gender inequality in public institutions, by enhancing the proportion of women in government and administrative institutions. The 30 percent women's quota policy in the Lower House and the Upper House is expected to be fulfilled in 2015, while the representation target for *Sangkat* (local representative council) is set at 25 percent. However the 25 percent target for *Sangkat* is not easy to meet. These targets are specified in various official documents of the government and public institutions, such as *Neary Rattanak I-II* and National Strategies Plan I-II. Both policy documents also provide highly detailed guidelines on how to improve the fulfilling of the women's quota, including activities, monitoring indicators, executing institutions, and resources required to improve gender equality.

The Philippines, with a population of 103,775,002 million, has 51,813,935 women and 51,961,067 men. The Constitution of the Philippines adopts a bicameral political representative system that consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate – both are elected by the people and hold a legislative function. The Senate has 24 seats which are occupied for a six-year period in office, while the House of Representatives hold 287 seats with a three-year term in office.

The constituency for Senators is the entire territory of the state; in other words, a Senator does not represent a certain electoral district. Political parties or coalitions and independent candidates may propose a candidate for a Senator position. Half the members of the Senate may be re-elected or replaced every

three years. Each voter may cast a vote for 12 Senate candidates or less, but not more. The successful Senate candidate garners the highest vote.

The Philippines has no specific policy concerning a women's quota. The policy depends on political parties or individuals, who put themselves forward as independent candidates. However, the Philippines have sufficiently comprehensive political instruments that encourage women's participation which increase the level of representation. In addition to CEDAW, the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines (article II, paragraph 14), states; *“the State acknowledges the important role of women in national development and the commitment to ensure equality for women and men through the state's laws and regulations.”*

In addition to this, we also need to note that there are some important factors that can not be ignored. The Philippines applies a party-list system that was adopted as the mechanism for elections (Republic Act 7941). Before that, women's representation was determined by the President. The other instrument is the 2009 Magna Charta (Republic Act 9710), which recognizes women's participation and representation, including the policy for preferential treatment in all fields of governance. Furthermore, there is an instrument to ensure the role of women in Nation Building and Development (Republic Act 7192), while the Local Government Code 1991 (Republic Act 1760) on decentralization and local democracy assures women's representation is accommodated in representative institutions at the provincial and city level.

Malaysia's population is 29,179,952 million, composed of 14,368,241 women and 14,811,711 men. The Malaysia Independence Constitution adopts the bicameral system, although, members of the House of Representatives (Lower House) are elected directly in the general election and hold a full legislative function. The Senate (Upper House) has the authority to formulate laws and the majority of its members are appointed by the King or proposed by the Prime Minister.

Malaysia does not have a quota policy to increase women's representation, and the state relies on individual party policies to determine men or women as candidates to compete in the general election. Assurances for the participation of women in politics and their representation is only provided by CEDAW and

the 1994 BPfA. Even though there have been more women in governance and other public sectors, and the appeal of adopting a 30 percent quota policy in the national Parliament as well as at the state level has increased, it has yet to be translated into a law. Political parties also do not apply internal policies to increase women's representation.

Indonesia has a population of 248,645,008 million, the largest population of the five Southeast Asian countries in this research. The population consists of 124,645,008 women and 124,300,531 men. The country's Constitution has been subject to four amendments (1999, 2000, 2001, 2002) and Indonesia adopts an 'almost bicameral' political representation system. It has the House of Representatives (DPR) that represents the people and Regional Representative Council (DPD) that represents regions. It is 'nearly bicameral', as full legislative authority is held jointly by the DPR and the President, while the DPD has legislative power but is not able to take decisions. Members of both the DPR and DPD are elected directly by the people through general elections. During DPD elections, Indonesia applies a regional equality principle in the provinces, meaning each province is made up of the same number of DPD members regardless of the size of its population.

The policy for a women's quota and gender equality in Indonesia has been translated into Election Law No. 12 of 2003 and Political Parties Law No. 23 of 2003<sup>14</sup>, which went into effect as of the 2004 elections. The women's quota policy is applied to political parties as explained below: First, every political party must have at least 30 percent women in the structure of the party at national level. This is a requirement for obtaining the legal status for participating in elections. Second, in terms of a candidacy policy, political parties must propose at least 30 percent women as candidates in each constituency. Third, the quota policy also applies among the ranks of the candidates. Parties are required to propose at least one woman for every three candidates or ranks. The policy is enforced robustly by the General Elections Commission (KPU), as the state institution that organizes the elections, Political parties that fail to fulfill the requirements, especially in terms of 30 percent women quota, may be sanctioned by KPU and may not be allowed to participate in elections in that constituency in the next elections.

---

14 The Law of Political Party was amended in 2008

Timor-Leste is a young country with a population of approximately 1,143,667 million people comprising 568,502 women and 475,165 men. Timor-Leste's Constitution adopts a unicameral representative system, called *Parlamenta Nacional* (National Parliament) with 65 members elected through general elections for a five-year term.

The policy in terms of increasing women's participation and representation has been translated into a gender-sensitive Constitution. At least 25 women representatives, or around 27 percent participated in formulating the Constitution in 2001. As a result, there are three clauses that ensure the representation of women in politics. First, paragraph 16, which contains a clause on the equal and non-discriminatory treatment for all citizens before the law. Second, paragraph 17, which stipulates gender equality between men and women. Third, paragraph 63, stipulates that equal participation for men and women in politics is a fundamental element in a democracy.

Furthermore, even though women's participation in politics is ensured by the Constitution, the 30 percent quota policy has not been included in the Election Law formulated in 2001. This issue is addressed through internal party policies that support 30 percent women's candidacy and nominate women candidates. Political parties are also offered incentives, such as longer campaign periods and trainings for women candidates. These efforts have made Timor-Leste the country with the highest percentage of women's representation among the five countries of this research.

## 2.2 Electoral Systems and Women's Representation

Studies on elections reveal that there is a close relationship between the electoral system adopted by a country and opportunities for women to enter parliament. Countries where a proportional system prevails consistently show a significant increase of women's representation in the parliament compared to countries that choose to adopt a majoritarian electoral system (Rule & Zimmerman 1994). Of the five countries in this study, three of them, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste adopt a proportional system, with variations in its implementation. Malaysia's majoritarian system uses the electoral formula of 'first past and post', while the Philippines applies parallel system – although

some experts cite it as combination of proportional and majoritarian (Shugart 2001).

In the three countries with a proportional system i.e. Cambodia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste, women have a higher probability of being elected compared to women candidates under the majoritarian system in the Philippines and Malaysia. This is because the number of seats available in each constituency, in the three proportional system countries, are quite substantial – an average of six seats in Cambodia, seven in Indonesia, and 65 in Timor-Leste. The more seats available in each constituency leads to a higher probability for political parties to secure a seat.

In Timor-Leste where there are 65 representative seats in one constituency at national level, there is ample opportunity for political parties to secure a seat, as they only need at least 1.14 percent valid votes. In comparison, the 560 seats in Indonesia are spread across 77 constituencies with each constituency allocated between of 3-10 seats which break down to an average of 7 seats per constituency. Similarly, Cambodia establishes its constituency based on province. Each constituency is allocated an average of six seats, this translate into political parties needing to garner at least 10.71 percent valid votes to secure one seat.





Aside from the total seats available in each constituency, the probability of women being elected is also influenced by the size of a party and the number of seats the party is able to secure in each constituency. A large party reflects a high number of seats secured and the probability of women candidates securing seats increases. In countries that apply a proportional system, each party will do its best to secure seats, including proposing women candidates, to increase its probability of gaining votes.

In addition to the size of constituencies, candidacy pattern also contributes to the probability of women representation, especially if accompanied by the commitment of political parties' leaders to realize gender equality. If the candidacy pattern uses a party-list system, party leaders internally implement a quota for women legislative candidates making up a certain percentage and the opportunity of women being elected increases. This is evident in Timor-Leste and Cambodia. There were 20.3 percent women elected in the Lower House in Cambodia, which shows not only that party leaders in Cambodia proposed a large number of women candidates, but also assigned a small number for women in the candidate list.

The size of the constituency in Timor-Leste is larger than in Cambodia, therefore the proportion of women representatives in Timor-Leste's far exceeds Cambodia's. In addition to constituency size, Timor-Leste also uses a proportional formula devised by D'Hondt<sup>15</sup>, which tends to benefit major parties. Consequently, major political parties will predominate the seats in a constituency. The 2012 elections in Timor-Leste resulted in the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT) securing 30 seats, FRETILIN securing 25 seats, while the Democratic Party secured 8 seats and *Frenti-Mudanca* secured 2 seats, with the remaining 11 parties failing to garner enough votes. If women candidates are supported by the major parties, the probability of them winning is substantially higher and it is an effective method of increasing women's representation in parliament.

---

15 This method was devised by a mathematician from Belgium, Victor d'Hondt, in 1878. The method calculates the highest average to allocate seats in the party-list rank in a proportional system.

Cambodia on the other hand uses the Hare<sup>16</sup> method, where surplus seats are distributed to parties based on the remaining majority of vote. This formula tends to favor smaller parties, and seats in constituencies tend to be distributed among many parties. Secured seats for political parties in the Lower House tend to be distributed among many parties. The 2008 elections resulted in five parties securing membership in the Lower House; CHEA SIM (Cambodian People's Party - CPP) with 90 seats; Cambodian National Rescue Party (Sam Rainsy Party - SRP) with 26 seats; SAO RANY (Norodom Ranaridh Party - NRP) with 2 seats; Human Rights Party (HRP) with 3 seats; and the National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC) with 2 seats. If all political parties assign small numbers to the party list, it is highly probable that it will boost women's representation.

Within the proportional system, Indonesia has a lower representation of women in terms of percentage than Cambodia and Timor-Leste, yet the largest in terms of numbers. Why? Indonesia implements several elements in its proportional electoral system, such as a multi-member constituency, political parties as electoral participants, candidacy pattern based on rank, and a proportional electoral system. However, Indonesia also applies a majoritarian system, where voting is made directly for the candidates, and candidates are determined based on the majority of votes garnered.

To be explicit, Indonesia applies an inconsistent proportional electoral system. This can be identified by two aspects: First, candidacy is proposed by political parties based on a party list, yet voters cast their ballots for a candidate; Second, the votes are transferred to the candidates but elected candidates are determined based on his/her rank in the list. The Constitutional Court later annulled the second inconsistency on 23 December 2008, forcing KPU to determine elected candidates based on the majority of votes. However, this decision in fact created a new inconsistency, where the candidacy is made based on rank on the list, yet elected candidates are determined based on the majority of votes. Consequently, the Court repealed candidacy based on rank.

The increase of women's representation in 2009 was driven by three factors. First, multi-member constituencies were applied and on average there were

---

<sup>16</sup> This method was devised by Thomas Hare, determining that the remainder of votes are transferred to another candidate based on the party-list system (candidate within the same party)

7 seats; second, candidacy pattern used party-lists; and third, the election adopted a proportional formula with a quota method. Candidacy pattern based on party-lists proved to be valuable, even though the Constitutional Court practically annulled the system, it was valuable considering the voting behavior in Indonesia, where voters tend to cast their votes for candidates in small numbers. Therefore, even though the rise of women's representation in parliament in Indonesia was impeded by the annulments made by the Constitutional Court; it was nonetheless bolstered by the behaviour of Indonesian voters.

In Malaysia and the Philippines, the majoritarian system theoretically limits the probability of women's representation. With a single-member constituency and a majority formula to determine seats, political parties need to put forward their most powerful candidates to compete against other parties, especially if the competitor is the incumbent. This situation is present in both Malaysia and the Philippines, but it tends to be more intense in Malaysia. The opportunity for women to be proposed as candidates in Malaysia solely depends on the internal policy of political parties. The lack of concern from party leadership significantly diminishes probability of women being proposed as candidates. This leads to low the representation of women in Malaysia, which remained around 10.86 percent between the 2008 and 2013 elections.

In contrast, the probability of women candidates being elected in the Philippines is higher compared to Malaysia. The Philippines implements majoritarian electoral system, but combined with a proportional system and multi-member constituency for 20 percent parliamentary seats out of the total national seats (58 seats), with a candidacy pattern based on party-lists. Under this system, the 2010 legislative elections in the Philippines resulted in 41 elect women members out of 229 MPs based on the majoritarian system, and another 24 elect women members out of 58 elect MPs based on proportional system.

There are also more women elected as MPs within the majoritarian system in the Philippines, compared to Malaysia. This discrepancy reflects that party leaders in the Philippines are quietly more committed to gender equality, aside from the strong influence of dynasty politics by a number of the wealthiest families in the Philippines. Other records show that it is more probable for women to be nominated through the majoritarian system compared to

proportional system<sup>17</sup>. Examining the results of 2013 elections, there were a total of 80 elected women MPs through majoritarian and proportional systems. Today, women's representation in the Philippine Parliament has risen to 27.8 percent, or closer to 30 percent quota.

The above discussion illuminates an understanding on the influence of the electoral system on women representation. However, it is also important to observe that political party leadership is also a significant contributing factor in determining efforts to accomplish gender equality. As discussed, even though an electoral system supports women's representation, women's candidacy will not be effective without the support of political parties that lack gender awareness. The role of political parties as the initial access point for women entering politics is one of the key elements that determine the success of women in election.

### **2.3 Political Parties and the Recruitment System of Women Candidates**

Entry through political parties is an effective way of increasing women's participation in politics. Political parties play a strategic role in nominating women candidates at the national and local level, to fill positions in parliament and government. Hence increasing or decreasing women's representation in parliament relies greatly on the policy of political parties regarding the quota system and the system of recruitment for women candidates. According to Pippa Norris (1995), barriers that inhibit women's access to politics are greatest during recruitment phase. In general, the existing recruitment system already presents difficulties for men candidates, with party elites with prior experience in politics tending to dominate candidacy. From a gender perspective, the challenges that women need to overcome to enter into politics are significantly higher.

For the sake of this section, data is limited to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste. Further research is required on Cambodia and Malaysia and therefore is not discussed here.

---

<sup>17</sup> A factor that differentiates the Philippines with other four countries is 35% women in the Philippines are holding positions in the government and at management level – among the highest percentage in the world.

The Philippines implements a multi-party system, which enables access for independent candidates nominated by various elements in society (20 percent of the total seats in the House of Representatives are allocated for elements of the public). Although the quota system is not set forth in its laws, the Philippines introduced a unique system termed a 'voluntary quota' to political parties.

There are two political parties that implement this quota system, the Gabriela Women's Party and the Democratic-Socialist Party of the Philippines (Akbayan Party). Gabriela applies a party-list system that represents 250 women organizations. In the 2004 elections, Gabriela gained 3.7 percent votes. Since its opposition against former president Marcos in early 1980s, Akbayan has encouraged political participation by women.

Currently, Akbayan is the only political party in the Philippines that adopts the 30 percent quota of women in its constitution. Subsequently, Akbayan applies a 30 percent quota for the party's management and leadership from central level to the lowest unit, as well as for candidacy in the general elections. Akbayan also initiated a recruitment program conducted every three years to prepare women candidates for competing in elections. Prior to the party's congress, Akbayan's central committee establishes a committee to select competent candidates, 30 percent of which are women. In addition, Akbayan also recruits women from the women's wing of the party.

Another party, the Liberal party, has not devised a recruitment mechanism for women. The Liberal party only started to broaden its reach to various sectors, including women, in 2011 when it established a women's wing in the party to recruit women candidates.

However, this is not to say that the Philippines is free from issues. The recruitment system for women candidates is often suppressed or overtaken by the predominance of political dynasties that are masculine in nature. The dynasties strive to preserve their political power and women in the families are mobilized to this end.

Indonesia is also a country with a multi-party system; nine political parties secure almost an equal number of seats in the DPR. In contrast with the Philippines, political parties in Indonesia implement a quota system to recruit

women candidates, as required by the Election Law. Internally, even though some of these political parties have a women's wing, they do not formalize the quota system for women.

Furthermore, even though parties are required by law to apply the 30 percent women's quota, only three parties in the 2004 elections adhered to this requirement, namely National Mandate Party (PAN), National Awakening Party (PKB), and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). In the 2009 elections, it was PKB, the Democratic Party (PD), and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) that had the highest number of women representativeness in the DPR.



The main challenge in Indonesia is that the quota system for women only applies during election periods. It is not formally embedded as a policy by the parties, not even the women's quota for party management or leadership. Moreover, internal competition in parties to secure top positions in the party-list is dominated by senior, elite men. Seniority of elite male politicians is one of the fundamental obstacles that women who want to take part in politics have to face.

A multi-party system is also implemented in Timor-Leste and the majority of the existing parties played a part in the history of the nation's independence. CNRT and the Democratic Party have a recruitment mechanism for both men and women called the National Political Council (CPN). This decision-makers platform determines candidates who will participate in the elections. CNRT's nomination process combines a 'top' and 'bottom' approach, resulting in two candidate lists. The first list is proposed at the national level and the second list is compiled from the party's branches at the district or sub-district levels. Both lists are discussed by the CPN and the National Executive Council (CDN). The CPN and CDN announce the outcome of their deliberations, which is finalized by the party leader. It is important to mention that the candidates may be non-CNRT members. The Democratic Party employs a similar system to CNRT, but limits the nomination to its party members, the party's women's organization and the party's youth wing. In contrast, CNRT allows for non-party candidates such as academics and professionals, including women. This provides the opportunity for non-party candidates to run for election. Candidates from CNRT's own women's wing however, are prioritized.

## 2.4 Institutional Barrier to Women's Representation

Drawing on the research in the five countries studied, we may see that each country essentially has the political will and favors increasing women's representation in parliament. However, the degree of this political will differs when it is actually put in to practice through policie and various factors contribute to the extent the political will is adopted, including the influence of the state (executive function) and political parties. Another significant factor is the women's and social movements, which will be discussed in Chapter IV.

In terms of the state, political will for increasing gender equality and in particular in terms of women's representation, can be seen in the form of political statements (e.g. in the Constitution or Republic Act), laws (e.g. administered in the Constitution and enforced through laws), and national programs (e.g. Cambodia Millenium Developmetn Goals).

However, only Indonesia explicitly stipulates a 30 percent quota system in its Election Law. Interestingly, women representation in the national parliament

is lower than in the Philippines and Timor-Leste, where the women's quota is not included in any laws including election laws. A question arises: why? To answer, we can not simply criticize the political system applied by the state and concentrate on two opposing views, such as majoritarian vs. proportional; bicameral vs. unicameral; Hare vs. d'Hondt; presence of legal framework for quota vs. public policy (political policy) for gender equality; multi-party vs. single-party; Parliamentary Women's Caucus vs. absence of Parliamentary Women Caucus; or women's political party vs. non-women's political party.

The finding of this research shows the fundamental element that influences the effectiveness and obstacles to policies is political parties. Political party is the key to enabling women's representation. Why? Because political parties are the main drivers of democracy through their presence in representative systems and election systems. Political parties affirm state policies to increase women's representation in parliament and the main instrument that they implement is the quota system when recruiting women into party.

What kind of political party is then required to encourage increased representation of women in parliament? Irrespective of a multi-party or single-party system, a regular system for the recruitment of party members with a 30 percent quota for women is a prerequisite. The Philippines and Timor-Leste have showcased the correlation between the party recruitment system and women's representation. This fact highlights the weakness of the 30 percent quota system for women stipulated in election laws such as in Indonesia, which are not embedded in internal party policies.

Unfortunately, this research is unable to present data to identify whether the 30 percent quota system and women's representation are policies adopted formally by political parties in Malaysia and Cambodia. In Chapter III and IV, we will discuss briefly how Malaysian political parties are indeed void of any policies (or regulations) for increasing women's representation in parliament, and see how such facts correlate with the low representation of women – the lowest among the five countries of this research. Women's representation in Cambodia, based on the 2008 elections was 21.95 percent, which is higher than the results of Indonesia's 2009 election which was 18.2 percent. Again, this shows the weakness of a formal quota system policy in the election laws.






Furthermore, political parties are also the key institution that might pose a threat to or oppose women legislators when formulating laws centered on women's interests. In parliament, political parties are represented as factions. Timor-Leste's experience shows that the decision of a faction could be more powerful than women's interests voiced by women legislators. However, in the Philippines the situation has been different and a women-oriented law (Reproductive Health Act) has successfully passed with the support of political parties, through the factions. Therefore, it is more important to have political party policies, with political directives to legislate laws for women, than to have a Parliamentary Women's Caucus when the Caucus does not have the support of political parties.

The extensive discussion regarding state policy and political parties and their influence on women's representation has answered the question posed at the beginning of Chapter I: why women's representation, advocated since the birth of democratic countries in Europe, America, and Southeast Asia in the 18th century, remains relevant today.



The background features a series of overlapping, organic, light blue shapes that resemble stylized waves or petals, creating a sense of movement and depth. The colors range from a pale sky blue to a slightly darker, vibrant cyan. The overall effect is clean, modern, and professional.

**PATRIARCHAL SYSTEMS  
AND BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S  
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**



## [ CHAPTER III ]

# PATRIARCHAL SYSTEMS AND BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

### 3.1 Defining Patriarchy

Theoretically, patriarchy is widely evident. It is easier to learn rather than to discern the patriarchy in our daily lives. Even among women politicians, the term patriarchy may not be familiar to all, apart from those who have been involved in the Parliamentary Women's Caucus, or who have attended training on gender awareness. Kamla Bhasin (1993:3) defines patriarchy as rules controlled by the 'male figure' or patriarch. The word patriarch was initially used to describe characters in male-dominated families where women, children, slaves, and domestic workers were under the domination of the male figure. Today, the term patriarchy is widely used to describe male domination and power in relationships between male and female.

However, not all fathers, or the men, bear patriarchal characteristics and purposefully subordinate the women. We can recognize patriarchy by its manifestations, such as acts of discrimination that result in various forms of disparities in education, inheritance, work opportunities and strategic career path, salaries and wages, etc.

In other circumstances, the presence of patriarchy is more pronounced such as in sexual and physical violence against women, including pornography, sexism in language and the visual arts, etc. Meanwhile, political manifestation of patriarchy is seen in men's control over women's bodies and sexuality, their control over women's political aspirations, and women's freedom. By identifying the various manifestations of patriarchy, we can see that patriarchy has experienced a systematic extension of meaning; it has expanded from its lexical meaning of 'male figure' and into a system.

Sylvia Walby (1990:92), a feminist academic, affirms that through a long historical process, patriarchy has evolved into a system with local or regional variations. Walby defines patriarchy as a "system and practices that shapes

the social structure where men, dominate, oppress, and exploit women.” It is important to underline the concept of patriarchy as a system to avoid a biological definition. However, it may not be haphazardly concluded that the patriarchal social structure is an absolute throughout history.

As a society-constructed system, patriarchy disperses and is molded differently by different historical eras, social systems, classes, and races, yet maintains a universal principle of operation. That principle emphasized by Bhasin is the male control over females in all aspects of economy-politics and social-culture, through religious institutions, households and families, the judicial system, political system and institutions, the media, and the education system.

Walby (Walby, Patriarchy, 173) offers a more detailed explanation. Walby separates patriarchy into private and public domains. The distinction is made within the following context: first, the relationships in private and public structures and, second, relationships in institutions in the respective private-public structures. Walby’s contrast is based on her analysis of the patriarchal strategy that excludes women in the private domain and segregates women in the public domain. In the private domain, patriarchy is found in the household, where the patriarch exerts direct control over women both in terms of the reproductive process (biological and social) and the household’s domestic environment. Meanwhile, in the public sphere, patriarchy finds its footing in structures, yet without abandoning the patriarchal control within the household.

Evidently, institutions other than the household are an extension of the patriarchal structure in the household. Patriarchy in the private domain is represented by men as fathers or husbands. By subordinating women, they gain economic-political and social-cultural benefits. However, it does not imply that the household is the only patriarchal structure, without the support of other patriarchal structures that similarly exclude women from the public domain. The exclusion of women in other areas could not be sustained without the patriarchal structure in the household. Public patriarchy opens access for women to enter the private and public domains. However, bereavement or control over women’s resources is done collectively instead of individually by the patriarchs. In the public domain, the subordination of women occurs in all situations and levels, formal and informal (Walby, Patriarchy, 173).

Within today's modern society, the entry of women into the public domain is embedded within the subordinating structure. At the workplace, aside from the separation of work type, women also receive different salaries to men, and do not have equal career opportunities. Even, a woman's marital status often sparks normative and moral debate regarding employment. In terms of salary, married women, who bear the double burden of working outside and inside the house, are still regarded as single persons and are exempted from employee benefit packages such as child care, education, and children's health benefits. Moreover, there are numerous companies that lower the access of employment for married women or expecting mothers. On the other hand, single women experience stricter controls over their behavior, especially with respect to their morality. Women workers who leave the workplace at night are subject of false preconceptions and are often mistaken for sexual workers. At the same time, sexual violence against women in both the public and private domains is growing.

In other words, women have entered the public domain but under unfair circumstances. Women are contributing in the workplace, and in state and cultural institutions, but remain inferior. Women are specifically subordinate in terms of domestic work distribution, sexual practices, and as being the target of men's violence. The patriarchal practices in the private and public domains are connected by a continuous line; they are not separate and the relationship is reciprocal.

To explain patriarchal systems in Southeast Asia, this research uses historical descriptions of formal political policies applied in society and state governance. A historical approach is preferred, as it may present objective views on patriarchy reflected in public and state policies that are rooted in history. Periods of history presented here are relevant to today's modern society and state governance. The introduction of women's representation in politics in Southeast Asia generally began towards the end of the colonial period in each country during the struggle for a modern independent state

### **3.2 Patriarchal Policies in Southeast Asia's Modern States**

Patriarchy in Southeast Asia relates to changes of the mobility of women from the private domain to the public domain. In the five countries being researched, the origin of this change can be traced to the colonial era. Prior to colonialism,

Elizabeth Eviota (1992:34) explains that patriarchy operated through an extended kinship group structure, which positioned women within the private structure, as a means of trade by marriage transactions, and were treated as family property. The patriarchal families in Southeast Asia have their roots in wet-field agriculture and therefore the patriarchal tradition follows agrarian-communal lines.

The arrival of European merchants in Southeast Asia, which eventually led to colonization, was not related to rice agriculture. Initially, merchants were seeking non-food commodities and extracting raw energy resources. Tracing the history of the Philippines, when Spain colonized the territory in 16th-17th century, Eviota discovers that Spanish missionaries from the Catholic Church rearranged the family structure, gender relations, and state relations. Extended family structures were changed to nuclear family structures to simplify its relation with the state. Although the interest of colonial governments was only to mobilize workers in the production process of commodity plants, the Church reorganized family structure to instill new values and morality based on Christianity.

The Portuguese employed similar methods during its colonization of Timor-Leste in the early 20th century, although according to John Taylor (1998:21-23) the “Portugueseization” only touched the surface of society. However, persistent Church leaders, especially the Dominicans, successfully reorganized the family structure as the foundation of a parochial society structure that blended with local traditions.

The rearrangement of the family structure, from an extended family to a nuclear family, impacted gender relations in the family. Studies by Eviota in the Philippines, Cecilia Ng and Maznah Mohamed (1988:52), in Malaysia, and Ann Stoller (1995) in Indonesia, show how men and women were mobilized into the public sphere as paid workers in colonial plantations, yet the public structure was built on gender segregation. Male workers were paid to work in colonial plantations, while female workers were mobilized as family members of the male workers. The colonial government of Spain in the Philippines connected the position of men with colonial government institutions. Adult males were obliged to labor for 40 days in one year, performing colonial public works. Women as individuals were not bound by similar obligations, but as members of society they were forced to work as unpaid laborers in order to



fulfill production quotas (Eviota, Political Economy of Gender, 39-40). In Java Indonesia, from the mid-19th century to the 1930s, women were mobilized to plantations in Deli (Stoller, Capitalism in Sumatra's Palantation, 14-25) and Suriname. They went as wives of male workers (contract laborers) and mothers of children who, upon adulthood, would work in the plantations. Women were also employed, receiving wages far lower than men's.

Even though women were mobilized out of the private domain into the public arena, women's morals were upheld during the colonial periods of these countries. In the Philippines, as well as instilling Spanish traditions and morals, the Catholic Church also regulated boundaries for women and their ideology. The Catholic Church portrayed the Virgin Mary as a mother figure and as a female symbol for Filipino women to look up to. The purpose was to construct the holy patriarchal family (Holy Family) that ardently served the Spanish government (Eviota, Political Economy of Gender, 39-40). The Virgin Mary was depicted as a woman who was the compassionate pillar of her family, according to the New Testament, but the interpretation of her role did not indicate power, compared to narrative concerning men's roles. The position and symbol of the Virgin Mary demonstrates the condition of Filipino women today.

According to Linda P. Perez (2004) the reality even today, is that the most distinct roles expected of a woman are as a mother or a wife who dedicates her entire time to childrearing – by preparing food, bathing, and providing educational guidance and support at school and at home. This role might be true to a certain extent, as the culture and religion in the Philippines determine women's role as the primary caregiver in the household.

In relation to role distribution based on gender, Norberto Batch Natano<sup>18</sup> describes a concept in Filipino society where the term for father is *Haligi ng Tahanan* meaning the foundation of the family and one who is expected to undertake the role as the primary bread winner in order to meet the family's needs. The term for mother is *Ilaw ng Tahanan* meaning one who is expected to carry out household chores, care for the children, and teach the children manners.

Carol Sobritchea (1990) explores past beliefs that regard women as emotional, doubtful, and physically weak beings and thus unable to take responsibilities

---

18 Norberto Batch Natano, *Gender Education to Gender Sensitive Communication*,

in governmental positions. Therefore, a woman's contribution to society should only be within the scope of caregiver for her children and family.

In Timor-Leste, the majority of the population follows a patrilineal family system that is rooted in the extended family, and passed down from generation to generation, creating clans (*umakain*) as the basis of their social structure. As described by Sofi Ospina and Isabel de Lima<sup>19</sup> this social structure is still followed in Timor-Leste today. Furthermore, the clans live in different villages based on if they are from a royal clan or are commoners (outside the noble lineage).

The royal clans control political and religious affairs executed by the eldest male in the clans. As such, political and religious knowledge is passed on by the fathers to their eldest sons. Meanwhile, women, even if they are the eldest child, do not have any position of power and their participation in any decision making, both in private and public domains, is highly limited.

In some communities, women are appointed as a proxy for men (*lian nain*) to guard their homes and heirlooms (*umaluik*) together with their husbands. Women also take part in traditional ceremonies as dancers and drummers, but not as leaders of the ceremonies. The marriage system is founded upon transaction and production means between the clans, and creates categories of wife-givers (*fetosan*) and wife takers (*umane*). The transactional system in marriage is called *barlake* and is carried out through long negotiations between clan representatives, a process that builds kinship and solidarity between the clans. The transactional marriage system, the purpose of which is to create a social safety net, may in contrast put women in vulnerable situations, especially considering the customary practice of women entering their husbands' families and following the rules set by their in-laws (patrilocal system).<sup>20</sup>

Maria da Costa Exposto<sup>21</sup> describes how many parents in Timor-Leste, including hers, name their daughters 'Maria'. The Virgin Mary is a holy female symbol, a devout worshipper of God and a steadfast mother. However, during

---

19 Sofi Ospina and Isabel de Lima, *Participation Women in Politics and Decision Making in Timor-Leste* Timor-Leste: A Recent History, Unifem-Timor-Leste/Timor-Leste Program Office, 14-15, [http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au/x\\_GEN\\_D\\_P/2006\\_TL\\_Ospina.UNIFEM.REP.pdf](http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au/x_GEN_D_P/2006_TL_Ospina.UNIFEM.REP.pdf)

20 Ospina with T. Hohe in Ospina, *Participation Women in Politics*, *ibid*, 15

21 Maria da Costa Exposto, former member of the Timor-Leste Parliament, in focus group discussion on patriarchal barriers for women politicians, May 24-31, 2013 at Kemitraan, Jakarta

the struggle of national independence, both against Spain and Indonesia, a new female symbol of martyrdom was introduced. The female symbol was St. Maria Goretti, a young devout woman whose death was caused by rape. The sacrifice of St. Maria Goretti was experienced by many women in Timor-Leste, especially during Indonesian military occupation. The emergence of St. Maria Goretti as new female symbol however has not annulled the Virgin Mary's symbol of motherhood.

Did the British and Dutch colonial governments also reconstructed the extended family structure and created symbol of femininity in Malaysia and Indonesia?

The organization of the nuclear family structure in Malaysia and Indonesia differ from the Philippines and Timor Leste. Islam was introduced to the Malay Peninsula from as early as the 9th century by merchants from South Asia. According to Sylvia Frisk (2009:27-62), during the British colonial period in Malaya the already deep-rooted practice of Islam was allowed to continue, under the control of the sultanates. The orientation of British colonial policies was to introduce the prerequisites of a modern state, namely the judicial and educational systems. Islam had its own concept concerning family piety, commonly known as *sakinah*.

According to Frisk, Islamic teachings during that period did not eliminate the two extended family systems that existed in Malaya, known as *temenggong* (patrilineal) and *perpatih* (matrilineal) pertaining to land inheritance. *Temenggong* customs, which were patrilineal, even recognized land ownership by men and women, even though men were the decision makers<sup>22</sup>.

However, the surge of Islam in the 15th century realigned the principle of equality between men and women. Through concepts of the world and salvation in the afterlife, women faced contradicting positions. On one hand, women and men were described as equal in the eyes of God, yet on the other hand women were portrayed as weak, emotional, and irrational compared to men when solving everyday problems. It was based on this view that women in the family environment were thought to need men to lead them. The implication

---

22 See also Cecilia Ng and Maznah Muhamed, *Primary but Subordinated*, op.cit, 52

of this belief affects not only land and property inheritance, in which women receive less than men, but also the emergence of Muslim women as examples to follow (Frisk, *Submitting to God*, 27-62).

The situation in Indonesia was similar to what took place in Malaya. Islam spread across the archipelago at almost the same period. Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, Islamic teachings increased and spread along the North Coast of Java, South Sulawesi, and Sumatera through trade and marriage between Muslim women with local noblemen (Qurtuby 2003)<sup>23</sup>. Their children became kings or rulers of lands, who continued to expand the influence of Islam. However, even though women took part as agents of Islamic expansion<sup>24</sup>, women were deemed irrational, emotional, and lustful. This view was similar to Islamic views in Malaysia.

The creation of female symbols in Indonesia and Malaysia was also different to the Philippines and Timor-Leste, who directly referred to the Virgin Mary. In Malaysia and Indonesia, symbolization referred to ethical categorizations of 'good' and 'bad'. A 'good' Muslim woman was characterized as a woman who was able to pardon her husband's beatings and tolerate his romantic affairs outside the marriage. A good mother was one who was always present at home to prepare the family's breakfast, pack a lunch for school, prepare the children's uniforms, including shoes and ties.<sup>25</sup> Marriage became a means to romanticize servitude instead of a partnership. However, being 'good' was not enough and in the end, women also needed to show devotion to God. Pious women, in Indonesia and in Malaysia, are termed *solihah*.

Dutch colonialism which began in Indonesia in the 18th century endorsed the moral alliance between "housewifezation" that was predominant in Javanese

---

23 According to Qurtuby, Chinese communities from Canton, Cuangchou, Chan-chou, Yunan, Swatow in South China that had Islamic based had significant contribution to the spread of Islam in Java and the Archipelago in the 15th and 16th century. They traded and resided in the North coastal area of Java and some married local women. Islamization occurred through marriage with local women.

24 Qurtubi states that based on historical sources, it was mentioned that "Princess Campa" influenced the last king of Majapahit kingdom, Brawijaya V, to enter into Islam. The term "Princess Campa" is also used to refer to women who sailed to the Archipelago and later married local noblemen. The role of the "princesses of Campa" became an important historical point of the entry of Islam in the Archipelago.

25 Based on dialogues in television drama series aired in TV3 Malaysia, directed by Kabir Bathia, *Nur Kasih (Light of Love)*, 2009, for further reference [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nur\\_Kasih](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nur_Kasih)

aristocratic traditions, with European Victorian<sup>26</sup>. The moral coalition supported the *koncowingking* concept of women within the nuclear family. *Koncowingking*<sup>27</sup> is a term originating from Javanese aristocratic traditions that positioned women as the spouses of men whose functions were limited to the kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom areas to serve their husbands and children. This philosophy does not contradict the Islamic view of women being weak, emotional and irrational beings and thus needing to be led by men (Ruth Indiah Rahayu 2007).

During the French colonial period in Cambodia in the 19th century the Hindu-Buddhist tradition of the Khmer kingdom, that limited women's space and behavior, was allowed to continue. The religions viewed women as having uncontrollable sexual urges. Women were characterized by having bestial lusts, as well as strong desires for wealth and other worldly possessions. In the mid 19th century, a code of conduct called *Chbab Srey* was introduced with the purpose of controlling women's desires.

*Chbab Srey* contained guidelines for women on how to become virtuous and gentle. Women had to be loyal to their husbands, serve their needs well, and be able to cook, clean the house, take care of the children, and serve other family members including guests. *Chbab Srey* also called for unmarried women to dress well, to be demure, and act with grace and gentleness to attract men for marriage (Lilja 2008).

The experiences in the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste between the 16th and 20th century show that colonialism broke down the boundaries between public and private domains for women, although patriarchal control remained in both spheres. Women's participation in the public domain did not mean relinquishing duties in the private domain, or even personal liberation. Eviota (1992, 34-37) adds that the presence of European nations also altered relations between extended families (kinship

---

26 Moral Victorian was the moral view that prevailed during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901), ruler of England. The principle of this morality was the restraint of sexual desires and governance of behaviors to minimize crime. However, it was the women who became the target of this morality.

27 *Koncowingking* is Javanese term, literally means, "the partner of men, supporting from behind." "Behind" refers to areas of kitchen, bedroom, and bath areas, which had no relation with guest or the public sphere.

relations) with local government into the relation between the extended family with colonial government, and where local government was forced into powerlessness. The implication for women was a position of dual subordination, one under the patriarchal family system and the other under the colonial government.

### **3.3 Reinforcement of Patriarchy in the Creation of State Female Role Models**

The following section narrates how women have been perceived in state institutions in Southeast Asia. Sylvia Walby (1990, 176) identifies a second aspect of a patriarchal society as being the establishment of institutions in both spheres that become the platform to reinforce and reproduce patriarchy. It is manifested in the mobility of women from the individual to the collective, from private to public, from being excluded to being segregated.

Walby finds a patriarchal structure and strategies to maintain women in subordinate positions in six institutions, namely the household, temporary employment, culture, sexuality, violence, and the state. In the household, women are obliged to bear children, care for the children, serve their husbands, prepare food, and oversee the maintenance of the household. In work institutions, women are often driven into positions of temporary employment. In cultural institutions the subordination of women under patriarchal control continues. In terms of sexuality, control over women shifts from control by husbands and fathers to public control. In state institutions, women are acknowledged as citizens and they are allowed to enter economic-political-cultural institutions, however they are in subordinate positions.

To explain patriarchal reluctance to political representation by women, this study shall focus on cultural and state institutions as the means that produce and reproduce femininity symbols of state. State femininity symbols are used to keep women within the corridor of patriarchal norms as desired by state rules. Three cultural institutions that encourage this are the education curriculum and schools, religious institutions, and the mass. Two institutions, education and religion, are platforms directly controlled by the state in creating state femininity models. The media is not entirely under the control of the state, but it uses state femininity symbols as commodities.

### 3.3.1 The Paradox of Education and State Femininity Symbol

Experiences in the Philippines, Malaysia, Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Indonesia show a correlation between access to education for girls and the advancement of women in the public domain, despite curriculums even today, still imparting gender bias and distinctions, as promoted by dominant religions

Schools in Cambodia only began to accept girls after the country declared independence in 1953. From 1884 under French rule, schools which were managed by monks and only open for boys, were not allow developing. It was not until the early 20th century that the French established alternative schools exclusively for elite Cambodian male students who would be hired as administrative staff in the colonial bureaucracy and therefore focused on teaching French. When schools were opened to female students, *chbab srey* (the code of conduct for women) was a compulsory subject and taught from the elementary level. Here, female students were trained how to speak, walk, and articulate softly; they were not to scream or shout. Female students were also taught to be reserved, to restrain from showing any interests, their womanhood, or a desire for power (John M. Collins dan Jacob 2008).



Outside school, *Chbab Srey* was introduced by parents at home from when their daughters could walk. Even from infancy, mothers began to train their daughters to control sexual desires. Interview footage conducted by Smith-Hefner showed a mother, saying: "...if girl drink milk too long, they will be naughty. Boy, if they drink milk too long, they will be strong". Viewing women as unable to control their desires and emotions, the period of breastfeeding for girls is limited, as a long period of breastfeeding would make them passionate. Boys, on the other hand, need to be breastfed for longer so that they are strong, as in the future they will have to work for their families (Smith-Heffner 1999).

In Timor-Leste, opening access to education for girls became the underlying factor of change for women in the public domain. However, the great distances between home and schools serve as an obstacle for female students, especially those who live in rural areas. Parents do not normally allow their daughters to travel too far from their homes, as girls are thought to be vulnerable. This is also the reason behind the high drop-out rate among female students. Today, the Education Ministry of Timor-Leste in collaboration with the governments of Cuba and Brazil, provide informal schools for female students who have dropped out of school. The program's success in encouraging women's participation in education, however, has yet to be determined.

The population of Timor Leste is predominantly Catholic (over 90%), and as such the curriculum in Timor-Leste is highly influenced by Catholic teachings. Catholic prayers are recited at the beginning and at the end of classes. Sister Eliza, a nun and teacher at a Catholic school said that there are no gender differences in the Catholic education system and learning process. All teaching acknowledged equality of rights.<sup>28</sup>

However, there are unwritten rules that discriminate against female students. For instance, girls who become pregnant are expelled from school, but boys who are responsible for a pregnancy are not. The explanation given for this regulation is that signs of pregnancy are visible in girls and it may taint the school's image and affect the student's peer group. Sister Eliza expected female students to be well behaved in order not to attract the attraction of grown men who might seduce them. Sister Eliza went on to say that it is unfortunate if a

---

28 Interview conducted on May 25, 2013



female student should be expelled due to pregnancy or failure to guard her behavior. Therefore, Sister Eliza places a lot of emphasis on the behavior of girls and women in order for them to participate in education, or in the public domain.

The Church also differentiates between men and women. Men have the opportunity to become pastors, but women only have the opportunity to become nuns, who in principle assist the pastor. Education curriculums for pastors and nuns are also different as pastoral students prioritize the study of theology and philosophy, while those studying to become nuns only study the basic principles. It is argued that, since the responsibilities of the said roles weigh differently, the access to knowledge is also different.

The segregating nature of education and religious structures that separate male and female students in Timor-Leste is vital in shaping the mindset of Timor-Leste as a nation. For girls, the lesson of obedience to boys is stressed, in accordance with the religious teaching 'women are created from the ribs of men'. This view is indoctrinated from generation to generation, and from a young age children are taught to accept gender differences and that girls are subordinate to men. Consequently, girls become used to their subordinate position in the family, and their dependence on men continues into adulthood. A typical example is when a young woman engages in a romantic relationship, first she is fearful of her male siblings, then she behaves as her companion wishes and this continues until they are married. The outcome is that women are not used to making any decisions, and when they are encouraged to participate in the public domain they are reticent.

In Malaysia, women in general have equal access to education as men. In fact today female students in universities generally outnumber male students, however when women join the workforce their work choices are limited to positions they can take while taking care of their children. Frisk (2009, 27-62) traces evidence of girls first being allowed to attend school back to the early 20th century, when the Youth movement initiated a reform on traditional Islam. Prior to this, girls studied at home or at informal schools. They learned to read the Qur'an, studied the hadith, morals, and ethics. When calls for reform began, the Youth movement encouraged girls to step outside the private domain, and to attend schools for boys and girls called *madrasah* (religious boarding school).

The Youth movement also criticized religious way of life based on Islamic sharia and brought about a change of perception of Islam from being based on interpretations by Ulama to being based on the Qur'an and the Hadith. In *madrassahs*, female students who were regarded as irrational are studied to become rational. The model of the *madrassah* essentially replicated schools established by the British government – the *madrassah* was set up as alternative schools, as British schools were suspected of having Christian missions. Following Malaysia's independence in the 1950s, the country saw a great increase of female students at schools.

However, the surge of female students in public schools and the notion of female students studying to become rational beings were criticized by the Da'wah movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Ong in Frisk (2009, 27-62) argued that the presence of female students in educational institutions, including higher education, lowered the authority of men. The Da'wah movement therefore attempted to restore men's authority by returning the moral portrayal of women as *solihah* mothers, wives, and daughters. The education for women was then focused on religious rituals and the covering of women's bodies and wearing of the *jilbab* (*hijab*). A study by Klessner cited by Frisk (2009, 27-62) found female students being prohibited from participating in political parties or becoming members of political associations other than Da'wah groups.

Gender stereotyping was inserted into school syllabuses, through storytelling by teachers and in textbooks. The following sentence is an example taken from a language textbook: "Ali is always allowed to go out to play football with his friends while his sister, Aminah has to stay at home to help her mother cook lunch." The father is portrayed as reading the newspaper or watching the news on television; sometimes, he joins in his wife's or children's activities, as long as he finds the activities interesting. This is a typical example found in Malaysian textbooks. Gender stereotyping taught at schools continues and significantly influences the students' mindset. Often, it is the male student who is elected as head of the class or group, indicating that perception of men as leaders and women as followers has already been deeply culturally embedded. Female students who are elected as group leaders are 'not feminine' according to the

“heteronormativity” norm.<sup>29</sup> At schools, there are even more male teachers than female teachers, except in all-female schools.

Lesson texts that are imbued with gender stereotyping such as “Ali is playing football with his friends, while Aminah is at home helping mother cook,” can still be found in elementary school textbooks in Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and the Philippines today. In Indonesia, such texts are inserted into Indonesian language lessons. It is interesting that the same pattern appears throughout Southeast Asia, where private-public gender-based segregation is socialized formally through schools, yet on the other hand schools are where girls look to to gain equality. It is also interesting that segregation in education correlates with patriarchal structures in religious institutions and schools for religious leaders.

In her study on Indonesian women in the early 20th century, Cora Vredee van Stuers (2008) describes women’s advancement as literacy to knowledge, which started when schools were established in West Sumatera, North Sumatera, Java, Manado and Flores and were opened to female students. The Dutch government also set up public schools, where male and female students studied in classrooms together, as well as girls’ schools teaching general subjects and girls’ Islamic and Christian schools. There were also Islamic boarding schools and *madrasah*, but religious teachings were not included in public school curriculums until the mid 1970s. Instead of the Ministry of Education, it was the Ministry of Religious Affairs that developed and controlled the Islamic curriculum. At the start of 2000, Islamic schools outside the *madrasah* emerged; established up to senior high school level, these schools teach a general curriculum as well as Islamic teachings. Religious rituals are practiced from kindergarten where female students are introduced to full-clad uniforms of long skirts and blouses as well as jilbabs.

The strong link between education and religious institutions can also be found in the Philippines. The education system in the Philippines comprises public

---

29 According to the Oxford Dictionary: *heteronormative (adj) denotes or relates to a worldview that promotes heterosexuality as the normal preferred sexual orientation. The term ‘heteronormativity’ is a terminology popularized by Michael Warner (1991) that refers to the concept from Gayle Rubin according the society’s worldview that creates sex and gender hierarchy, which produces a set of norms for male and female characters. The female norms is associated with feminine characteristic – compassionate/attentiveness, wanting to protect, caring, and nurture others.*

and private schools. Private schools are managed by Catholic congregations that provide funding and boarding, to prepare students before entering public schools. In addition, there are also schools managed by the Chinese community and the Protestant Church - *Iglesia ni Cristo* is a popular school. The Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) today has 1,252 member schools. The membership includes universities and academies offering college scholarship for the students. The CEAP also has 700 missionary schools offering elementary education for poor and marginalized families.

In fact, there are more educational scholarships of greater sums provided by Catholic education institutions, than scholarships provided by state institutions. For instance, *Ateneo de Manila* and *de La Salle University* grant on average 53,000 pesos in scholarships, compared to 22,500 pesos from state universities - *University of the Philippines* and *Polytechnic University* for instance, only provide around 1,000 pesos. Based on the amount provided by Catholic institutions, we can see the significant value that the Catholic Church brings to education in the Philippines. The quality of Catholic education also prompts large numbers of parents to send their children to Catholic schools.

This leads us to examine the message promoted by the Catholic Church regarding women and power. The most notable message is the exclusion of women in the church's hierarchy – cardinals, bishops, parochial pastors, and deacons are the positions of power. As there are no women in the church's hierarchy, Bishops' conferences in the Philippines are never attended by women. Women are also prohibited from performing sacraments<sup>30</sup>. Meanwhile, cardinals, bishops, and parochial pastors are the leaders eligible to lead mass and have the authority to preach or convey their opinions.

Another strong message is the image and symbolism of the Virgin Mary, which is enthusiastically worshipped and sets an example for women to follow. It is the center of devotion for the Church's leaders and is the archetype for women. Referring to the Bishops' conference in the Philippines in 1975, in a 'Pastoral Letter', 100 parochial pastors honored the Immaculate Conception, more than 60 were dedicated to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, while others varied from *the*

---

30 According to Oxford Dictionary: sacrament (noun): sacred ritual ceremony; in Catholic there are 7 rites of sacrament consists of baptism, matrimony, penance, anointing of the sick, the eucharist, ordination and reconciliation for repentance.

*Assumption, Our Lady of Carmel, Mother of Perpetual Help, Our Lady of Lourdes, etc.*

An excerpt of the Bible in the 'Pastoral Letter' reads as follows: "The data we have from the Gospels concerning Mary is that she was betrothed to Joseph (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:26.27) in Nazareth; that she was a virgin when she conceived. (Luke 1:27.34-35; Matthew 1:25; see also Luke 2:5) and that she gave birth to Jesus in Bethlehem (Matthew 1:25-2:1; Luke 2:4-7). Otherwise she is simply located at various places, always connected with her Son: in the hill country of Judea for Elizabeth's recognition of her unique maternity (Luke 1: 39ff.); at Jerusalem for her own purification in the Temple and the offering of the Child to God (Luke 2:22ff.); at Nazareth for the Child's rearing (Luke 2:51; Matthew 2:23); at Jerusalem for the discovery of Jesus speaking with the teachers in the Temple (Luke 2:42.46); at Cana for a wedding (John 2:1); and finally at Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified (John 19:25) and when the Holy Spirit comes upon the Apostles (Acts 1:8).

This example illustrates how the Virgin Mary, throughout the Bible, is socialized to Catholics in the Philippines, which account for 80% of the population. Mary is portrayed as a mother revered for her purity, fortitude, courage, sincerity and immolation to fulfill God's command. She is also the symbol of a woman who cares and loves her family wholeheartedly, yet with no position of power.

The two examples above indicate the strong influence of Catholic values that are imparted through curriculums in private schools managed by Catholic leaders, public schools where the majority of teachers are Catholics, and masses led by pastors. These values are interjected in to textbooks and embellished by the teachers' explanation. Moreover, most of the officials in the Department of Education, authors, teachers, and other education stakeholders are Catholic.

In Catholic schools, there is also the practice of separating male and female students, such as the policy of Don Bosco, an all male school, and St. Paul's College and College of the Holy Spirit for female students. Catholic values are robustly institutionalized and greatly influence the social structure of the society, including women.

All the above demonstrate how Catholic-based education is not limited to

teaching women what they should or should not do. These narratives serve to highlight how religious leaders and teachers transform values and knowledge that hamper women from entering the political arena, despite the fact that the women's literacy rate (93.3%) is very close to men's (93.7%) and the school participation rate for female students, both at schools managed by Catholic institutions and at public schools, is 2% higher than male students.

In addition, teachings at church emphasize the deepening and strengthening of faith according to the guidelines in the Ten Commandments<sup>31</sup> through policies formulated by men through the church's hierarchy, both domestically and in the Vatican. Women in general devote themselves to serving at mass (assisting the pastor), the Church's hierarchy, and the Ten Commandments, while men carry out core duties in relation to power. Similarly, at schools, female students receive in-class education while male students are exposed to outdoor challenges.

### 3.3.2 The Mass Media Paradox: Benefitting and Damaging

The media is one of democracy's vital pillars but is contradictive towards women. On the one hand, the media legitimizes women's contributions in politics, yet on the other hand reproduces gender stereotypes and sexism, and becomes a means to control women. While the media does provide examples of women who are successful in their professional and personal lives, very often the media shows or depicts women's bodies as sexual objects through pornography. Women who are actively engaged in politics, the economy, or culture are surrounded by this humiliating and belittling female symbolism and are judged by the media based on this. If there is a mistake, a woman's political career will be condemned on the basis of poor morality.

The majority of the population in the Philippines has access to the media, which influences the daily social behavior and values of women, men, children, and political decision-makers. According to the Gender Media Monitoring Project

---

31 The Ten Commandments: (1) You shall have no other God of graven images or likenesses, (2) You shall not take the Lord's name in vain, (3) Remember the Sabbath Day, (4) Honor your father and mother, (5) You shall not kill, (6) You shall not commit adultery, (7) You shall not steal, (8) You shall not bear false witness, (9) You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, (10) You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor (Exodus 20:1-17)

(GMMP)<sup>32</sup>, the media allows room for patriarchal power to subdue women and exert unfair treatment. With electricity reaching all of the Philippines, almost all households can now listen to and watch radio and television broadcasts, while the middle class is familiar with social media such as Facebook and Twitter. GMMP data concludes the following: (1) Gender stereotyping is instilled in news from around the world, (2) many news items are reported using language and imagery that is gender-biased, (3) news frequently presents misguided analysis, at all levels, concerning the difference between male and female genders, (4) a great number of scripts (drama, movies) confirm gender stereotypes and position women as resigned, powerless characters when facing problems.

Cases of violence against women, such as domestic abuse by husbands beating their wives, are highly prominent in the news. Furthermore, the police treat the victims (the wives) as the offenders, while the men (the husbands) are acquitted. Worse, national television watched by an audience of millions, repeatedly broadcasts such cases. Consequently, the socialization of cases and the legal stance taken by the police further corroborate society's image of women as lacking in morals.

At the same time, the media demonstrates women as sexual objects in advertisements for products such as alcoholic beverages, men's clothing, and so forth, where women are placed in contrast to men's superiority. For example a tag line for a beer product says, "Men should act like Men" by consuming the product, this implies "Men should not act like Women". The advertisement also shows a woman's body that is irrelevant to the product. Therefore, beer consumption is conceptualized as "*a male way of life*" and in this context is equivalent to a husband's beatings.

In Malaysia, gender-based assumptions are formed and controlled by the Government through popular media. Most mainstream print media such as *Utusan Malaysia*, *The Star*, *Berita Harian*, *The Sun* and *Sin Chew*, and television channels such as TV3, NTV7, TV9, RTM1 and RTM2 are owned and controlled by the Government of Malaysia, or by a political component of the *Barisan Nasional* coalition.

---

32 *Gender Media Monitoring Project*, <http://www.allvoices.com/contributed-news/12289733-gender-education-to-gender-sensitive-communication>

These media entities serve the interests of the ruling party and sabotage reports of the opposition. Thus, Malaysians are deprived of alternative political aspirations other than those of the Government. Realizing the sabotage, opposition parties use alternative media to communicate their views and political actions.

Gender stereotyping is common in the Malaysian media. Time and time again, women are perceived as the weaker gender and hard workers. A 'good' wife is one who dutifully complies with all her husband's rules without question despite any actions he may take against her. A wife who, in spite of her laborious work at home caring for the family, even perhaps at the workplace as well, needs to stay compliant to her husband's rules. Such is the portrayal of a 'good' Muslim woman disseminated by the media that applies to all, including female politicians.

Through drama series and movies broadcast by television channels, the image of a 'good' Muslim woman is disseminated. Other examples of being a 'good' Muslim wife are enduring a husband's beatings or allowing the husband to have more wives (polygyny). As a 'good' mother, a woman would always be at home to prepare her family's meal and perform other chores to maintain the house's condition.

The media also portrays women as having a high appeal or entertainment value – this approach is also taken by the alternative media. The opposition will use stories and imagery of women politicians in the ruling party to victimize them and put them down. Rosmah Mansur, wife to the sixth Prime Minister, Mohamad Najib, is an excellent example. Rosmah was not a politician, yet was highly involved in a Malaysian political drama, creating an image of her as being more distinguished compared to the wives of previous prime ministers. Rosmah was highly criticized as she was perceived as extravagant and meddling too much with her husband's political affairs. She was also slammed for paying too much attention to her appearance. Shahrizat Jalil, the former Minister for Women and a member of the Senate at the Dewan Negara (National Hall) is another example. Shahrizat was forced to step down after a very public cattle business scandal involving her husband and children. Women politicians such as Rosmah and Shahrizat are easy targets for the media, and through their scandals their ruling party was destabilized. These kinds of incidents create a negative precedence for all women who are actively engaged in the politics.



Prior to the 2012 election in Timor-Leste, *Caucus Feto Iha Politica* or the Timor-Leste Women's Caucus, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with several print media and radio stations. The MoU agreed on the media's role to report gender-sensitive news, including promoting women's participation in politics and the electoral process. However, the MoU was dishonored and was not executed as expected. According to the Timor-Leste Women's Caucus, the MoU breach was due to a lack of understanding among media workers regarding the importance of women's participation in politics. As a consequence, the media was reluctant to report on women's political activities. Typically, the media only interviewed male officials, the President or political parties as sources. A woman politician, who was also the leader of *Uninade Nacional*, Fernanda Borges, was never covered even though her party failed to meet the parliamentary threshold during election.

The impact of minimum media attention on women was the people's lack of knowledge concerning the struggle, participation and contributions made by women in politics. This affected the public's perception of the capability and potential of women as political actors. To overcome this obstacle, one of the efforts led by women's organizations in Timor-Leste was to hold gender-sensitive training for media workers, aimed at raising gender awareness and more news coverage about women.

In Indonesia, the female symbol of a 'good' and active woman in the public domain has been socialized by women's magazines since the 1970s. Several popular magazines such as *Femina*, *Kartini*, *Sarinah*, and *Dewi* illustrate women's dual roles. Despite having a career in the politics, finance, or social institutions, a woman does not reject her role as a housewife in the private domain. The idea of a dual role has become a female model among well-educated women, who occupy professional positions with substantial salaries. These women successfully compete with men, but they may not be entirely present in the public domain. Their responsibilities in the private sphere as wives and mothers also need to be carried out.

In addition, these women are also depicted as lifestyle consumers due to their trendy, fashionable appearance. This idea was highly prominent in the 1990s. At the same time, women's tabloids emerged, publishing gossip on women in the public domain related to politicians, celebrities, and other career women,

highlighting the emotional aspect instead of rational aspect. Women who cry are overwhelmingly exploited, including women politicians who have been caught up in corruption scandals.

The media only covers women's participation in politics when women lead demonstrations on the streets. Political activity by women within the Parliamentary Women's Caucus or in political parties is not covered. This is due to the way the Indonesian media tends to prioritize events, scandals and cases, while the activity of women in politics is not deemed newsworthy.

In Cambodia, the media is controlled by the ruling party<sup>33</sup>, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), which crushes views that are contrary to the Government's. Even the alternative media refrain from openly criticizing the Government. Women's political activities, therefore, receive no attention from the media. However, there is news and advertising that perpetuate violence against women and undermine respect towards women.

Based on analysis carried out by the Women's Media Centre<sup>34</sup>, a quarter of all articles or news in the media depicts women in a pornographic context, and more than 80% describe obscene aspects of women's bodies. Women are also victimized; there are numerous articles that contain threats towards and condemnation of women who are deemed to have violated the norms of society, including in cases of domestic abuse. Meanwhile, television companies air television dramas that further promote women's roles in the household as the obedient mother and wife, and at the same time as a sexual objects or attractive mistresses. Cambodian media persecutes women and is the arm of a patriarchal culture that preserves the stereotype of women as house ornaments and a source of entertainment.

---

33 Tive Sarayeth, *Media Reform Experiences in Cambodia*, a paper presented at the *Beyond Media* Education symposium in Manila, 20-25 September 2010, [waccglobal.org/.../658-Media-reform-experiences](http://waccglobal.org/.../658-Media-reform-experiences), downloaded on 2 October 2013

34 Tive Sarayeth, *Media Reform, results of the Women's Media Centre monitoring in Cambodia between 1996-1998*, *ibid*

### 3.4 The Implementation of State Patriarchy in Electoral Systems and Political Parties

The manifestation of patriarchal influences in state institutions can be found in the electoral system and political parties. When looking at women's political participation and political representation as in this study it would be amiss not to examine electoral systems and political parties to see they are affected by patriarchy.

Indonesia implements a proportional electoral system. The main characteristic of this system is its emphasis on representation to accommodate a diverse population and the interests of a myriad of ethnic groups. However, this system has strengthened the domination of political parties in various decision-making processes especially in party candidacy and policies in general. It also endorses the formation of an oligarchy in its central management, centralized structure and policy-making. As a consequence, the potential of political cadres and people at the grassroots level is hindered.

In line with efforts to reform the party system and the electoral system, various efforts are conducted to support meaningful participation and to reduce centralization as well as domination of the central management in Political parties. To that purpose, since 1999, various changes have been made to the electoral system to put politicians closer with the people. In addition, selections of other political positions have also been done directly based on candidacy, e.g. presidential, heads of region, and members of the Regional Representative Council (DPD).

In order to strengthen political parties as institutions and to improve the quality of the relationship between representatives and their constituents, the 2004 elections saw the introduction of an open-list system in elections. Therefore, as well as casting votes for a party, voters could directly elect the candidates from their chosen party. This system encourages candidates to have a better relationship with the people in order to be elected. If they are successful, the candidates must also maintain the relationship with the constituents and take heed of their interests in order to maintain popularity.

Ahead of the 2009 elections, the Constitutional Court issued a decree that stipulated that elected candidates are candidates who garner the most votes. The Decision of the Constitutional Court was an attempt to encourage a relationship between politicians and their constituents, and to reduce the domination of the central management of the parties. However this creates more challenges for women politicians as they usually come into politics late and with less resources than male politicians, thus making it harder for them to compete for votes.

In Timor-Leste, seats in Parliament are held by members of political parties who have won votes during elections. From 2001, political parties have been re-established, including existing parties such as *Frente Revolucionaria de Timor-Leste Independente* (Fretilin), the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), the Association of Timorese Heroes (KOTA), the Popular Democratic Association of Timor (APODETI), and PET who reemerged. The parties were re-formed in preparation of the first election in 2001.

New parties were also established including the Social Democratic Party (PSD) founded by Mario Carrascalao, who also founded UDT in 1974. The Democratic Party (PD) established in 2001 by ex-university activists, who formed a resistance movement during their studies in Indonesia. The party's agenda is to bring the voice of young intellectuals to the nation's development process. The Timor Socialist Party (PST) was founded around the same time as PD, promoting equality in its ideology. Another party is the Timorese Nationalist Party (PNT).

Political parties are an effective vehicle for promoting political participation among women. Parties play a strategic role in nominating candidates at national and sub-national levels, who will occupy public positions. Article 8 of Timor-Leste's Political Party Law (Law No. 2/2004) states:

*“Political parties should promote the participation of women especially in the organs of the party leadership, and at their discretion, a system of quotas or other measures to promote the participation of women in party political activities.”*

Further, Paragraph 2 of Article 8 states the following:

*“Political parties should also promote the participation of younger citizens in the age group between 17- 35 years into the top management of the party by setting quota system, if appropriate.”*

The response of political parties to the quota system, especially in terms of leadership recruitment and disclosure of candidate names in their party-list, vary. Despite parties being ambiguous towards the quota set forth in the Political Party Law, overall, political parties do adhere to the stipulation as reflected in their formal policies and the number of women elected into Parliament from respective parties.

The low representation of women in politics in Malaysia may be due to the politicization of religion. The Islamization, or perhaps more appropriately the Arabization, of society, state and laws in Malaysia began in the early 1980s under the leadership of Mahathir Mohamad. Both UMNO and the Pan-Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS) emphasized the Islamization of the country as the key to building a successful state, and competed with each other to garner votes from the Malay-Muslim community. Apart from gaining votes, UMNO's Islamization agenda was also aimed at defining a multi-ethnic Malaysia as a country founded upon Islamic rules, including in its political system. This idea produced even greater social discrepancy in a diverse society, creating separate social lives in a polarized culture.

In Malaysia, faith is not a private matter, but instead, it is a matter of the state. Islam is the source of public and state policies, regulating how Islam should be practiced and obeyed by its citizens. Unfortunately, the perspective of Islam adopted by the state determines that women may not be leaders, and this affects how women are regarded and treated. Equality is ensured, but only within the definition of Islam by the state, which is largely based on a protectionist approach.

Out of 30 positions in the ministerial cabinet, only one position is occupied by a woman, the Minister for Tourism. Meanwhile, Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, Minister for Women's Affairs, Family, and Community Development was requested to resign due to a corruption scandal involving her husband. Shahrizat Abdul

Jalil's vacant post is now occupied by the Prime Minister, Tun Najib Razak. It should be noted that other than occupying the Women's Affairs, Family, and Community Development post, Tun Najib Razak also serves as the Minister of Finance.

Responding to the Prime Minister's triple roles, Chong Eng, a politician from the opposition party, wrote on a website that the undertaking of multiple roles was essentially a betrayal against the *Tanjong* Declaration, which supports the establishment of a ministry for women in order to achieve fair development for women. Malaysia is now stagnant in terms of gender equality. This situation also reflects the Prime Minister's insensitivity and *Barisan Nasional's* lack of seriousness in delegating leadership positions to more suitable candidates. Chong Eng went on to say that in future elections, he would ensure no women voters would vote for *Barisan Nasional* led by Najib Tun Razak.

With the Prime Ministry undertaking the post of Minister for Women's Affairs, Family, and Community Development, and the low representation of women in the Malaysian Parliament, it may be said that the position of women and their advancement lag far behind other countries in the region. The status of women in the Malaysian political arena, as conveyed by Wan Azizah (wife of politician Anwar Ibrahim), is not represented by Malaysian political institutions. Chong Eng described that in general, Malaysian politics was still closed to women. To increase the number of women in Parliament, a compulsory quota proportionate system is implemented.

This is a seat reserve method similar to Timor-Leste. Curiously, in 1999, when a political tsunami took place, votes for the opposition rose from 41 to 81 seats. This may be one of the causes that slightly changed the composition of women in Parliament, as opposition parties selected more women candidates to represent the parties. Regrettably, women in Parliament have never spoken about women's agendas other than the celebration of International Women's Day. The Parliamentary Women's Caucus is also void of supporters – a situation that is the opposite to the situation in the state of Penang, which now has a Women's Development Cooperation.

The increase of women's representation in parliament does not necessarily ensure a favorable situation for women's agendas. It is crucial that women's representation in parliament is accompanied by capacity enhancement for

women representatives. In politics itself, women's representation seems to be a fading issue. Without strong political will, especially from male politicians, women will not be able to enter an arena overwhelmed by a male influence.

In the Philippines, female voters do vote for women candidates. However, if this situation is further scrutinized, we see that during elections many candidates are in fact women who are replacing their husbands, fathers, or sons, whose office term have expired. It may be said that women who hold positions in Parliament only do so until their husbands, fathers, or sons, are eligible to return to Parliament after three years. For women candidates, entering politics is not a personal decision as they are dutifully following the directions of their husbands, fathers, or sons. As a result, these women politicians are not targeting strategic positions as a career in politics is not their ultimate goal.

The other significant characteristic of politics in the Philippines is the dominance of political dynasties, which are rooted in elite families with political power and economic wealth accumulated from the colonial era. These families constitute the center of political power that determines the Government's agenda. According to the University of the Philippines, out of 15 million families in the Philippines, there are 250 dominating political dynasties at national and local levels. This means that 94% of all the provinces in the Philippines have a political dynasty.

The participation of political dynasties in politics is not based upon platforms and agendas but on strategic alliances to secure their win in elections in order to maintain the political and economic power of their families. Political alliances themselves are often adjusted which is not an unusual tactic employed by the candidates and their families. As such, politics in the Philippines tends to rely on popularity and influence rather than competition on political platforms and programs, and a solid track record. Currently, an election in the Philippines is a contest of popularity and wealth, two aspects that the political dynasties have in abundance. Here lies the critical challenge for mainstreaming of women's agendas.

Political dynasties similar to the Philippines are also present in Indonesia. The first female president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, is the daughter of Sukarno,

Indonesia's first presidency following the proclamation of independence in 1945. Megawati started to gain popularity when, she was made a symbol of opposition to the New Order regime by her party, *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (PDI). Violent attacks on PDI's office on 27 July 1996, which claimed a number of victims, shaped a new party, *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan* (PDI-P), as well as new form of political fight using Sukarno's pro-people image through Megawati as the party's symbol. When Megawati participated in the 1999 election, several Islamic leaders declared that "women may not lead" which they supported with quotes from the Qur'an. However, Megawati was elected President in 2001 and was given the nickname, the 'housewife'.

Following Megawati's election and the stipulation of a 30% quota system in the Election Law, the participation of women politicians contesting in legislative and executive elections increased. The Deputy Secretary General of the Golkar party's Central Leadership Board (DPP) Nurul Arifin, acknowledges that the dynasty influence in politics is indeed rising. Nurul Arifin states that this illustrates how democracy can create political dynasties and explains that the party was unable to forbid or restrain dynasty politics. According to her, to meet the 30% quota of women as legislative candidates, a number of wives and daughters of politicians stepped in as candidates.<sup>35</sup> For example Ratu Atut Chosiyah, Governor of Banten Province, and Ratu Atut's sister-in-law, Airin Rahmi Diani, Mayor of South Tangerang (Banten province). Ratna Ani Lestari, Banyuwangi Head of District, when elected was the wife of Gde Winasa the Head of District in Jembrana, during the electoral process, Ratna Ani was a MP for Jembrana district. However, Ratna's win was criticized by religious leaders and society groups, who said that Ratna had converted from Islam to Hinduism.<sup>36</sup> During the election period for the head of region in Kediri in 2010, Dr. Haryanti and Hajah Nurlaila, respectively the first and second wife of the incumbent Head of District, Sutrisno, stepped in as candidates.<sup>37</sup>

---

35 Roy Wijaya, *Jadi Tumpuan, Dinasti Politik Semakin Menguat* article published on 19 August 2013 on Portal Media Komhukum, downloaded on 30 July 2013

36 Kang Irwan, *Bersuamikan Bupati Jembrana, Ratna Jagoan dari Banyuwangi*, article by blogger written on 27 August 2008, kangirwan.wordpress.com, downloaded 30 July 2013

37 Herda Prabadipta, *Mengintip Fenomena Politik Dinasti dalam Pemilihan Kediri*, student paper for Fakultas Ilmu Administrasi, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, 2012



In addition, there is another obstacle in the election system that is disadvantageous to women and even threatens the success of women in Parliament. Lena Maryana Mukti from *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (PPP), Rosmailis and Binny Buchorie from Golkar are all concerned with money politics. Firstly, the open election system enables anyone, including those with no ethics and or political knowledge, to enter Parliament as long as the candidate has enough money. An election system that allows candidates to be selected freely is fertile ground for money politics. The relation between political parties or candidates with their constituents is merely transactional, similar to a seller and a buyer. Political parties or candidates distribute money, goods, T-shirts and so on, even going as far as repairing roads in their constituencies just before elections in order to win votes. In this way, celebrities such as comedians, singers, or movie stars are elected to Parliament, instead of women activists from women's organizations who are genuinely concerned for women's rights. Secondly, women candidates from women's organizations lose confidence when competing with celebrities or family members of political dynasties. Moreover, for political parties today, the purpose of recruiting women candidates is simply to meet the 30% quota requirement. Thirdly, the party system also hinders participation and electability of women candidates. Golkar's women's wing, for instance, has not been able to produce gender sensitivity or a feeling of sisterhood among the women.

During the electoral process in Cambodia, leaders of political parties typically draft a closed-list of candidates. Party leaders have the exclusive authority to determine a small number of candidates based upon political and economic interests. Among those who are overlooked are women. Aside from being regarded as powerless, women themselves are overshadowed by a feeling of inferiority. Political parties rarely offer financial support to women candidates, and this affects women's electability. Meanwhile, it is very difficult for female politicians to establish a network with fellow women politicians between parties, at different levels. The civil war and political violence that took place over a significant period of time in Cambodia's history is the underlying factor of political trauma and women are yet to be able to overcome their fear (due to the trauma) and enter politics.

In Timor-Leste, political parties are the key platforms for women's participation in the politics, such as Parliament or other political positions in government.

Results of research conducted by the Women's Caucus of Timor-Leste shows that women's participation in political parties has increased substantially. The research focused on women participants who were still active in their parties and identified a number of errors when women enter Parliament or became part of the Government. Some women were able to pass the electoral selection due to money, personal connections, or because they have been important contributors to the parties. As a consequence, women politicians in Parliament or the executive body are not gender sensitive and void of a sense of responsibility to promote the quota system in order to have better quality of women's representation.

Resistance from male politicians also emerges as women are seen as political opponents. Negative comments are often expressed regarding hefty demands from women, and how fulfilling one demand would only lead to another. Nevertheless, the male leader of the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT) faction supports women's involvement in politics. In his view, women's emancipation in Timor-Leste is called for, as women also took part in the fight for national independence.

Therefore, it is only fair that Timor-Leste's Constitution ensures gender fairness and an increase of women's representation in Parliament. Today, Timor-Leste's Attorney General and the Chief Justice are women, and 30% of members of the cabinet are also women, where they hold such posts as Minister for Social Affairs, Minister for Private Sector Affairs, Minister for Culture, Minister for Women's Emancipation, and Deputy Minister for Education and Health.

### **3.5 Perceptions of Women towards Politics and Perceptions of the State towards Women in Politics**

Women in the Philippines have proven that they are able to carry out their responsibilities and duties in the political domain alongside their male counterparts. However, gender stereotypes based on religious beliefs that have been ingrained from childhood might explain why their political representation has not been satisfying. Women who are able to participate in politics are seen to have burst through the masculine glass ceiling. J. Silvestre<sup>38</sup> points

---

38 Silvestre, <http://www-mcnair.berkeley.edu//2001journal//jsilvestre.html>

out that the popular symbol used to identify with women in the Philippines is the Madonna<sup>39</sup>, ‘semi-divine, morally excelled, and spiritually stronger’, and therefore women are perceived as being more resilient to corruption than men. This characteristic is one of the cultural factors that is logically accepted by the public regarding female political leaders.

Annabelle C. Tangson, president of the Lady Municipal Mayors Association of the Philippines, states that women leaders, elected as government officials, show better performance because they incorporate the caring and nurturing characteristics of women, while demonstrating more robust and fair leadership compared to men.

According to Prosperina D. Tapales<sup>40</sup>, modern society in the Philippines has made progress in its electoral system by initiating women-oriented programs. Although in general Filipino women earn their seats due to their fathers’ or husbands’ political connections in the ‘dynasty system’, women perform just as well as leaders. However precisely because of the ‘dynasty system’ the opportunity for other women who have genuine interests in women’s agendas, is limited.

Another factor that hinders women’s outright involvement in politics is their great responsibility in the household. According to a study by L.V. Castro<sup>41</sup>, the percentage of women trained in making decisions in the household is 59.1% higher than men. Women’s deep entrenchment in the household correlates with low participation levels in politics, thus their percentage of women elected in the 2013 elections was only 18.4 percent compared to 81.6 percent for men.

Furthermore, women in general, are also regarded as weaker than men. One example is former president Corazon Aquino who had to endure sexism in an intensely masculine political environment. She had to suffer from derogatory insults such as ‘female fishmonger’, despite her firm views. She was also accused of being the ‘coward who hides under her bed’ after a failed coup attempt to overthrow her. Meanwhile, her participatory and consultative style

---

39 Other name for Saint Mary the Virgin

40 Shah, Angilee. *Women’s Political Role on Rise in Philippines*, 14 October 2005, <http://www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=31539> downloaded on 26 May 2013

41 Lina V. Castro, *Philippines Statistical Development: Program, 2011-2017: Local Statistics Development*, downloaded from [www.pep-net.org/.../Day3\\_NSCB\\_Castro.pdf](http://www.pep-net.org/.../Day3_NSCB_Castro.pdf) on 28 May 2013

was construed as signs of weakness and incompetence that were associated with her femininity. However, when a male leader adopts her leadership approach, he is praised and is considered a leader who follows democratic principles.

Women's political participation in Cambodia is culturally constrained by gender stereotyping socialized through education and religion constitutions. Aside from the discrepancy of education levels between men and women, women in Cambodia bear a double burden. On the one hand, women need to oversee domestic duties and manage the family's finances, and on the other hand are expected to generate complementary earnings. These duties leave them with little time to develop a career in politics. General poverty in Cambodia also hampers women's participation in the politics, which requires a strong financial basis.

The culture of patriarchy can be seen from the opinion of a Cambodian man (who represents the general view of men) that a woman's place is at home, and it is not suitable for women to participate in politics. However, according to a female politician in Cambodia, in essence men are jealous of women who are bold enough to enter politics. Such feeling is demonstrated by the attitudes of men in political parties, who show animosity towards the women. Patriarchal groups within parties are also dominating and they effectively build a strong sense of brotherhood, maintaining their bonds by visiting entertainment centers together, enjoying drinks or karaoke. A female candidate shared her experience during her candidacy as mayor, when she was asked by a man whether he would lose the house he had been living in since the day he was born if the city were led by a woman.

Female politicians in Cambodia are also the target of vulgar gossip. They are heavily scrutinized by a society that seems to be endlessly following their every move. Husbands are often provoked by such public scrutiny to question their wives' activities with other male politicians especially in the evenings. Questions are frequently raised by the public such as, "what is the wife doing with the (male) politician that they stay together until late?". Due to such provocation, husbands are overwhelmed by jealousy and end up divorcing their wives (the politician). Another reason commonly cited for women not participating in politics is great responsibilities at home. In some cases,

husbands confine their wives to the house to prevent them from having any activities outside the home.

In Indonesia, women politicians are often jealous and develop prejudice against fellow female politicians in the same party. According to Binny Buchorie, this tendency does not reflect a 'female culture', as women cadres in political parties currently are highly promising and very ambitious to secure certain posts within the party structure. This vigor is set off by the nature of political parties, which may not readily allow these potential women cadres to participate. Political parties tend to secure the interests of male politicians, and prioritize men when seeking to occupy strategic positions before considering their wives, daughters, or female relatives, as there is a lack of trust in new cadres.

Dian Kartika Sari from the Indonesian Women's Coalition observes that the patriarchal tradition is particularly strong at the grassroots level. Women tend to depend on their husbands and do not possess the courage to make their own decisions. Voters are also doubtful about electing women rather than men, unless the constituents have physically met the women candidates.

Patriarchal tendencies can also be found in political parties, for example the case of a leader of a political party who defended five of his party cadres who raped a woman on the grounds that the intercourse was consensual. Meanwhile, women politicians from religious-affiliated parties may not conduct any campaigns when the sun has set, while male candidates may campaign at any time.

It is argued that it is inappropriate for women to be outside (campaigning) in the evening, as they need to be at home, preparing dinner for their families. Permission from the husband serves as another obstacle for woman, citing a rule in Islam that says woman many not lead. The patriarchal culture has made women in West Sumatera reluctant to enter the political arena, as in their opinion politics is 'dirty'. Despite having a matrilineal kinship system in West Sumatera (Minangkabau), the women do not object to being led by men as long as they can live harmoniously. Furthermore, political activity consumes much time and energy which may distract women from their responsibilities in the household.



The background features a series of overlapping, organic, light blue shapes that resemble stylized waves or petals. These shapes are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall color palette is a range of light blues, from pale to a slightly more saturated hue.

**THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT  
FOR POLITICAL AFFIRMATION**





## [ CHAPTER IV ]

# THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT FOR POLITICAL AFFIRMATION

The early 20th century was a momentous period for the women's movement in fighting and overcoming state patriarchal barriers which were manifested in political and cultural institutions. For the first time, women were introduced to modern organizations, modern political movements, and modern countries. Women then established organizations and demanded women's representation in the political system of a modern country. The idea flowed from Europe to their colonies in Southeast Asia. The very idea was eventually used to repel the colonial system and to open a new phase in women's history that has been progressing and regressing until today's 21st century.

### 4.1 Political Reform and Opportunities for Women

In the 1990s political systems in countries in Southeast Asia were changing towards transition and democracy consolidation. Preceding other countries, in 1986 the pro-democracy movement in the Philippines saw Corazon Aquino become the first female president in Southeast Asia. The women's movement played a central role in supporting people's power to overthrow martial law during the Marcos era.

Cambodia, in 1979, held 'free and open' elections following the end of the Khmer Rouge regime. Contributions by women were important to the reconciliation and democracy reconstruction process. Indonesia experienced political reform during the 1999 election and five amendments made to the law which gave access for women's participation in politics. The onset of democracy in Timor-Leste was the country's independence in 1999, which opened opportunities for women's participation. The political reform in Malaysia started after the economic crises swept over Southeast Asia and was led by Anwar Ibrahim in 1998. The impact of the crisis was not serious, but the critical role of Anwar

Ibrahim against the UMNO government opened up new opportunities for women to participate in politics. This opportunity was used by women activists in Malaysia to establish the Women's Candidacy Initiative in 1999 as a channel to advocate for women's agenda. In Southeast Asia, this decade seemed to mirror the mid 20th century, when the women's movement revived and grew to demand their political rights.

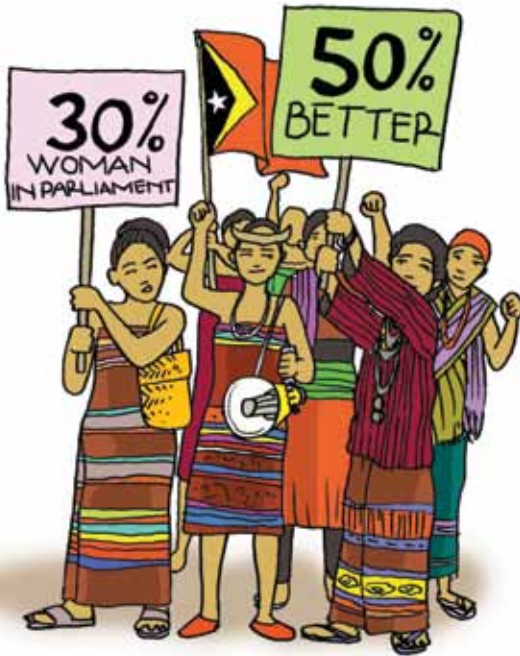
The demands for political reform that grew in the five countries sparked a political want to democratize the previously authoritarian system and laws. Nonetheless, in terms of gender fairness in the politics, the national constitutions of the five countries are still closed to the 30 percent quota system for women. The following table shows the similarities and differences between the levels of acceptance of the women's quota in the different countries of this research.

**Table 1. Quota System in Five South East Asian Countries**

Country	Constitutional Quota for National Parliament	Election Law Quota for National Parliament	Constitutional Quota at Sub National Level
Malaysia	No	No	-
Indonesia	No	Yes	-
Cambodia	No	No	
Philippines	No	No	Yes
Timor-Leste	No	Yes	-

As seen in the table above, even election laws in Malaysia, Cambodia and the Philippines do not include a quota system for women. Only Indonesia and Timor-Leste have included a quota system in their election laws. However, even with this law in place, while Timor-Leste has managed to attain a 23.3 percent representation by women in its Parliament, Indonesia has only managed to reach 18.2 percent women's representation. Meanwhile, the Philippines only applies a women's quota system at the sub-national Parliament level, reaching a 22.9 percent representation, higher than Indonesia. Unfortunately, political reforms in Cambodia and Malaysia have not been sufficient enough to see the inclusion of a women's quota such as their neighboring countries.

## 4.2 Women's Political Affirmation Movement in the Course of History



The women's quota system is part of the women's suffrage struggle – the earliest form of women's fight against state patriarchy in the history of democratic countries, especially in the United States. The term 'women's suffrage' refers to a movement that encompasses social-political-economic reforms demanded by women through voting rights in election. In the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia, this movement began in early 20th century, at the same time of the independence movement. In Timor-Leste and Cambodia, women's suffrage rose when the women's quota system was mandated by democratic countries around the world.

The demand of women's suffrage in the Philippines began during the United States (US) settlement of the country after the Spanish left in 1901. When the US government founded the Parliament in 1906, the Philippine women's movement used the opportunity to demand election rights. Women activists

such as Conception Felix founded *Asociacion Feminista Filipino* and Pura Villanueva Kalaw formed *Asociacion Feminista Ilonga* – both aimed at fighting for women’s suffrage in the House of Representatives in 1907 (Eviota, *Political Economy of Gender*, 61-62).

At present, democracy in the Philippines has led to political access for women. Women are now able to advance and compete with male politicians to win seats in the legislative body and at sub-national government level. This access and the process to acquire it in particular, were seized by interest groups such as women’s organizations and civil society organizations represented in Parliament. Although the Government has not realized the 30 percent quota for women’s membership in Parliament, women politicians have been able to secure seats and maintain their positions through elections.

For many women, the election process is very bewildering. Voter registration is open to women and the local government endeavors to register both men and women as permanent voters. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and mass organizations also engage women through political education for voters to explain what political participation through elections actually signifies. Citizens are also trained to generate criteria for candidates based on the interests of the people as well as developing their ability to evaluate candidates. These organizations help to establish some sort of information center and also invite residents to be register as permanent voters

To create a democratic institution that represents the people’s interests, the government of the Philippines issued a regulation that requires a national party-list system, regional organizations, and sector and mass-based organizations in the legislative. The regulation was passed in 1995 and implemented in the 1998 election. The party-list system is based on principles of proportional representation and determines 20 percent of the seats in the Lower House, for national political parties, regional organizations, and sector and mass-based organizations. Elected parties or organizations, who gain significant votes in the national election, are eligible to occupy a seat in the Congress based on the voting proportion that it wins in election. The party-list system encourages more participation from other civil society organizations at large in the election. This system is also the channel for society and organizations that previously had no access to politicians to be able stand in

the Congress and articulate their agenda of interests. This system enables a democracy that better represents people's interests.

Women's suffrage in Indonesia originated from *Dutch Women's Suffrage Association* (DWSA) in the Netherlands, which established a branch in Indonesia in 1908. It demanded the right to elect and the right to be elected as members of *Dewan Praja* in Jakarta, Semarang, and Surabaya - but only for Caucasian women. In the 1920s Indonesian women started to collaborate with DWSA to also acquire the right to elect and be elected. Later, the women's suffrage issue, which was centered on native Indonesians becoming members of city councils, was discussed in the third Indonesian Women Congress in Bandung, July 1938. The Congress resulted in a mandate to advocate for women's suffrage for native Indonesian women. It was part of a political movement by women activists to breakthrough patriarchal politics in political institutions in the colonial state. However, the women's suffrage policy for native women was granted by colonial government on the night the Pacific War broke, in 1942, which made the policy impossible to implement (Blackburn 2004). Following the declaration of independence on 17 August 1945, the demand for women's suffrage was accommodated in the 1945 Constitution. However, between 1955 to 1999, this constitutional foundation did very little to increase women's representation in Parliament.

The inclusion of the 30 percent quota system for women in Law No. 12 in 2003 concerning elections has successfully re-ignited women's suffrage issues in Indonesia, both at national and sub-national levels, although the target has not yet been met. To highlight the case of low women's representation, even in the province of West Sumatera which follows a matrilineal system, the women's quota was far from being met. In the legislative elections of 2004, women's representation only reached 11,09 percent, which increased in 2009 to 18 percent.

In Timor-Leste, the women's movement emanated from the *Frente Revolucionaria de Timor-Leste Independente* (Fretilin). When Rosa Bonaparte unfolded the independent flag of Timor-Leste on 28 November 1975, Indonesia launched its military invasion. During the 1990s women's organizations in Timor-Leste, with affiliations with women's organization in Indonesia grew. After Timor-Leste's independence from Indonesia, one of the outcomes of the women's

struggle was assurance for the protection of women in the State Constitution. The Constitution stipulates equality and non-discrimination for all, in particular equality between men and women, including political participation.

The success of the quota system in Timor-Leste cannot be separated from the role of *Rede Feto*, supported by NGOs, farmers, university students, judges, lawyers, and members of Parliament. *Rede Feto* is an umbrella organization for 24 women's organizations representing thousands of women. *Rede Feto* was initiated by women who were involved in underground movements during the fight for independence, who lived in the forest or abroad. Together with NGO activists, it held its first congress in 2000. The congress discussed demands for a law for the protection of women, a quota system and health issues. These were then formulated as national women's agenda. The initiatives, ideas and agenda were integrated into a strategic plan and analyzed for submission to Parliament and to UN bodies – as a means to put pressure on Parliament.

The successful outcome of this strategy was a 30 percent quota for women, stipulated in the Constitution. Previously, the ratio of men to women MPs was 4:1, this was revised to 3:1. The *Rede Feto* congress also discussed women's role in government. The second *Rede Feto* congress discussed the power of the police and the military, while the third congress discussed the formation of Secretary of State for the Promotion of Gender Equality (SEPI). *Rede Feto* also discussed government programs and reviewed programs on health, education, infrastructure development, agriculture, justice, security, and the economy, as well as gender mainstreaming within the programs, and generated recommendations for improvements. Regarding these programs, there is a good cooperation between NGO and government entities.

The success of the quota system implementation in Timor-Leste also correlates with the presence of international agencies, including the formation of a transitional government that was assisted by the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) and founded upon international conventions, such as CEDAW. Being a newly independent democratic country, the citizens of Timor-Leste also allow all of its citizens to participate in the politics.

To accommodate women's aspirations and to initiate women's empowerment, *Gender Affairs* was founded. The women's group had major role in preparing

the women of Timor-Leste to be more actively involved in politics. Cooperating with several international organizations, *Gender Affairs* advocated for the 30 percent quota to be included in the election laws, to ensure a women's presence in the General Assembly elections. Although at the beginning the 30 percent quota was widely criticized, even by women, the proposal was approved and ratified in the country's Electoral Law.

Following the ratification of the quota, women's representation in the General Assembly in 2004 reached 20 percent (22 seats out of 88). In the 2007 elections women's representation increased to 29,2 percent (19 seats out of 65) and in the 2012 elections the quota was exceeded with 38.5 percent representation (25 seats out of 65). The accomplishment of surpassing the women's quota target of 30 percent may be credited to CEDAW ratification and equality of rights stipulation in the Constitution.

The participation of women in politics in Malaysia was driven by the women's wing of political parties and not by the civil society movement. Following World War II, the first women's wing from the Malay National Party (MNP), called *Angkatan Wanita Sedar* (AWS), was founded in 1946. The British government then dissolved MNP and its AWS, whose activists then spread to various organizations, including *Pergerakan Kaum Ibu*. In 1947, *Pergerakan Kaum Ibu* supported male domination in UMNO, and women's issues were diminished. However in 1954, Khadijah Sidek, a female member of UMNO, demanded women's representation in political parties and parliament, however she was subsequently dismissed from her party. Eventually, Malay women entered politics through *inter-ethnic consociational* model and in 1963 the multi-ethnic National Council Women's Organization was established. However, women's participation became even more limited. In the mid-1980s, women's organizations originating from civil society groups emerged, focusing on the issue of violence against women (Mohamed, Ng and Hui 2006).<sup>42</sup>

Women constitute 50 percent of Malaysia's population, but only one of the 30 positions in the ministerial cabinet is occupied by a woman, the Minister for Tourism. Meanwhile, Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, Minister for Women, Family, and Community Development had been requested to resign, as her husband was

---

42 Maznah Mohamed, Cecilia Ng, Tan Beng Hui, *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Malaysia: An Unsung (R) evolution*, (Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2006)

involved in a corruption scandal. The post Shahrizat Abdul Jalil previously occupied has now been taken by the Prime Minister, Tun Najib Razak.

Malaysia's 10th election on 5 May 2013 was an important moment. For the first time, a woman from a civil society organization succeeded in coming forward as a candidate. Her name was Zaitun Mohammed Kasim<sup>43</sup>, popularly known as Toni Kasim. She took part in founding the *Women's Candidacy Initiative* (WCI) in the 1998 election and was the first independent female candidate to participate in 1999 elections for Selayang area. Eventhough she did not win a seat, she was successful in garnering 30,000 votes. WCI then actively advocated for women candidates, especially those who fought for gender fairness.

Prior to the election in 2013, *Mama Bersih* founded by *Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor* declared a manifesto<sup>44</sup>. It contained eight demands regarding gender equality, the electoral system, economic development, and privilege provided for candidates during campaign period. Three demands in regards to the legal assurance for a 30 percent women's quota were submitted to the federal government and the central government. However, their demands only received little attention from both the government and political parties.

Cambodia has a 13.8 million population, 52 percent of which are women. The structure of the 1993 Cambodian Constitution consists of a National Assembly (lower house), the Senate (upper house), and Commune Councils. When the issue of gender equality in Cambodia, Parliament's response was quite advanced. There is, however, inconsistency between policy and its implementation, where women account only for 20 percent in the National Assembly, 15 percent in Senate, and less than 18 percent in Commune Councils (Lilja, 2008).

Despite a lower than 30 percent representation of women in Cambodia, women's participation in politics has increased since 1993 and women are very active in advocating issues in their communities. However, three of the fundamental barriers to women's participation are economic and socio-cultural obstacles, and Cambodia's political situation that is not conducive for women

---

43 Toni Kasim was a woman activist involved in *Sister in Islam* (SIS), *Suara Rakyat Malaysia* (Suaram), *the Joint Action Comitee and the Women's Candidacy Initiative* who passed away in 2008 due to illness.

44 Empower Malaysia, <http://empowermalaysia.org/blog/2013/04/16/mamabersihs-manifesto/> downloaded on 2 October 2013



(Sethi 2013)<sup>45</sup>. There are many NGOs that promote women's participation in order to generate a political mechanism based on gender equality, yet political support remains low.

However, it is an unwritten rule. FUNCINPEC is the only political party that implemented a 30 percent women's quota in its list of candidates before the party took part in the National Assembly elections in July 2013. Other political parties such as CPP, Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), and Lead for Democracy Party (LfDP) are also in support of having women in politics, but they reject the women's quota system, as in their view the system would discriminate against men.

At the National Assembly (directly elected) level, between 1993 to 2008 women's representation increased from 6 percent to 22 percent, while at the Senate (indirectly elected) level women's representation reached only 14.75 percent (CCHR data, 2012). At the Commune Councils level (directly elected), between 2002 to 2012, women's representation in the position of First Deputy rose from 7.55 percent to 9.27 percent. The number of women occupying the position of Chairman of Commune decreased from 4.93 percent in 2002 to 4.66 percent in 2012, however the total number of women involved increased with more women elected as members of Commune Councils.<sup>46</sup>

Analyzing the needs to increase women representation in order to achieve the 30 percent quota requires the influence of an egalitarian culture. The support of their political institutions is one critical element for women's success in the politics. Women need to be actively engaged in political parties and involved in political decision-making, without abandoning women's organizations or civil society networks that promote the women's quota system.

The procedure for candidate selection results in women's representation making up 50 percent. In short, institutions play a key role in supporting women's struggle to acquire higher representation. Political participation of women in the five countries of this study would embolden other women around the world who are currently fighting for greater access to political power.

---

45 Gabriella Sethi, *Increasing Women's Political Representation and Participation in Cambodia through the Implementation of Gender Quota*, executive summary (CCHR, 2013)

46 *Politics in the Kingdom*, report issued by CCHR in collaboration with Partnership, 2013

### 4.3 The Distinctiveness of the Strategy of Women's Movement for Political Affirmation

Reflecting on her experience as a member of Parliament in Timor-Leste, Maria da Costa Exposto describes how women in parliament are discriminated against and were regarded as being incapable, having 'too many needs'<sup>47</sup>, being unable to work independently, and so on. However, these harsh attitudes have gradually subsided after women showed their active participation in all parliamentary activities. The transformation has brought positive impacts too, as women politicians have started to earn credibility, and have even been selected as secretaries, commission leaders, and other strategic positions in Parliament. Prior to her parliamentary activities, Exposto was involved in numerous projects regarding equal rights and gender strengthening. As an activist, she has an extensive understanding of women's rights and regulations that protect the rights of women in Timor-Leste. Her role and popularity make her well known among the public, including among important political figures. Exposto turns this to her advantage and uses her unique position to enhance her bargaining position with national political elites.

To fight for the recognition of women in Parliament, Exposto's strategy was to lobby for a Parliamentary Women's Caucus in Timor-Leste. Exposto says, "We women need to be actively involved and use the power vested in us to influence policies, which are generally dominated by men. We must show that, as women, we are capable." Exposto admits, earning recognition from her male colleagues was challenging when women are not generally equipped with sufficient knowledge. She continues, "We as women need to realize that women's rights are stipulated by the law, therefore we need to equip ourselves with as much information as we can to develop sound capacity." Exposto acknowledges that one of the underlying challenges for women politicians in Timor-Leste is the low capacity to perform political analyses, thus women are unable to debate with male politicians who generally have a better knowledge and ability to analyse.

A friend of Maria Exposto, also an MP and former secretary to the President, explains that one of the strategies to have women's opinions recognized in the

---

47 Having 'too many needs' refers to the consumption of goods

political arena is to have sufficient information (knowledge) regarding politics. This means that prior to voicing a topic for discussion in Parliament; a woman politician must first study the topic comprehensively by reading references and discussing it extensively with CSO partners. As reiterated by Exposto, *“The failure of a woman, who proposes a topic but is unable to maintain the basis of her argument, will be used as a precedent to disregard recommendations by other women, despite the urgency of the topic. It will also be used as a reason to maintain the view of women as unfit for politics.”*

Exposto further elaborates, to be involved in politics women need to exercise their ‘power’. By this she refers to courage, integrity, adherence to principles, and ability to influence. Exposto is never hesitant to lobby, through her connection of influential politicians, to advocate for a national level decision. When the President of Timor-Leste was going to implement a ‘shoot on sight’ policy against the opposition in one of the districts, Exposto used her influence and power as an MP to defy the policy. She said to the President, “The people in the district elected me as their MP. I come from that district. If you enforce a ‘shoot on sight’ policy on the opposition, you might as well erase the district from the map of Timor-Leste. We need to find alternative forms of measure, other than eliminating them.” Exposto conveyed her opinion in front of all the male politicians who were proponents of the ‘shoot on sight’ law. Apparently her view affected the President and the decision to enforce a military emergency status in the district was repealed. In addition to showcasing such courage, women politicians have to be clever in using the media, as well as maintaining good relationships with coworkers, especially male coworkers, and influencing political observers, NGOs and society.

As for the key elements required in building power and influence, Exposto emphasizes four things. First is to set a political precedent, especially in upholding the principle of ‘prioritizing the interests of the country over personal interests,’ to political elites and the political condition in Parliament. Second, she set an example of being an independent woman politician, even though her husband and son are on the opposition. Third, Exposto’s involvement in politics began at the grassroots level from the days of the struggle for independence, and she keeps in touch with these networks until today. Fourth, she never keeps count of the sacrifices she has made, from the struggle for independence to running the government of the independent Timor-Leste, and

so she is not driven by the desire to demand in return from the state. Exposto truly instills her name 'Maria' and tries to emulate the power of the Virgin Mary and Maria Goretti - a martyr in women's struggle in Timor-Leste.

In order to create democratic institutions that better represent the interests of the people, the Philippines passed a law mandating the inclusion of national political parties, regional organizations, and sectoral mass-based organizations in the legislature. This law was passed in 1995 and has been effective since the 1998 elections. The party-list system, which is based on proportional principles, reserves 20% of the seats in the Lower House for national political parties, regional organizations and sectoral mass-based organizations. To gain congressional seats in proportion to the votes they received during the election, parties and mass organizations are elected at the national level.

The system is proven to increase people's participation, and people can use it as a means to evaluate candidates during elections and after they have been elected to Congress. The idea of a party-list system is also useful in breaking the political popularity tradition and in urging political dynasties to adopt a pro-women platform

The party-list system creates access for women to enter the political arena in Parliament and fight for issues of women's interests. A number of political parties in the party-list system have consistently won seats in Parliament since 1999, and consistently represent women and their interests in Congress. One of these parties is *Akbayan*, which openly declared socialist feminism as one of the basic pillars of their organization. Similarly, *Gabriella*, which has been a left wing since 1998, is a women's political party that has retained its seats in Congress since the 2004 elections. In the 2001 election, the women's party *Abanse Pinay* also won seats in Congress. These achievements however are not simply as a result of the gender equality law or of the 30 percent women's representation quota system.

The success of female legislators in exercising their capacity as leaders cannot be separated from the role of the Capacity Building and Gender Equality Information Center (TCBGEIC) in Parliament. Olivia Sarmiento of TCBGEIC explained how the parliamentary gender center builds a network with the Women's Caucus, UN Women, UNDP, of course, with all women parliamentarians.

The parliamentary gender center provides technical facilitates for women MPs, including on the discussion of the state budget to produce gender-responsive budgeting and regulations. TCBGEIC also assists women MPs to prepare for overseas working visits, including the preparation of presentation materials. In addition, the group also helps women politicians prepare materials for public hearings, etc. This group raises funds for capacity building for women parliamentarians and women parliamentary expert staff.

When setting the Congressional agenda, the major role is assumed by representatives who are mostly men. The agendas are usually of a 'masculine' interest aimed at maintaining power over political opponents. This is especially true when it comes to winning strategic political decisions. The leaders of Parliament, who are given priority, do not take any radical actions to represent the interests of women.

An example of this was seen during the passage of the Reproductive Health Bill into national law. Over a period of 14 years, leaders of the Lower House, which is dominated by men, were lobbied by those who oppose a law on Reproductive Health Rights, supported by the Catholic Church, and rejected the draft bill. One of the attempts to derail the bill was by putting the sessions into deadlock. In fact, in the Lower House, members of the assembly who openly opposed the bill used their position to keep the bill from entering the plenary session.

During the 15th hearing of the bill, Parliamentary leaders postponed the vote as legislators failed to make compromises. President Aquino Jr. made a public statement in support of the reproductive health bill, which prompted leaders of the Lower House to say that the statement could lose the President votes. They said that the situation would be used by the opposition to claim that the leadership of Aquino Jr. was weak. Lobbying by women supporters from both inside and outside congress was not influential in breaking the stalemate created by the leaders. The final vote was eventually made following the President's appeal to the legislative body, to analyse the pros against cons of the bill.

Proponents of the bill spent their entire time lobbying leaders and consolidating votes to pass the bill. However, as the issue of reproductive health is a women's issue which conflicts with the dominant conservative mindset supported by people in power and the church, the bill faced many obstacles. However the

struggle to pass the bill managed to consolidate cross-gender women's issues among politicians, political parties and mass organizations. The agenda was supported by a national coalition led by the Akbayan Party.

The Reproductive Health Bill issue is in contrast to the prosecution of former chief justice and ombudsman, a legacy of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's administration. The impeachment movement represents a new regime which expedites responses from parliamentary leaders. The agenda of good governance and anti-corruption became successful and was supported by the Liberal Party, however it still excluded the reproductive health agenda.

In order to understand how gender equality enters the state political arena in Malaysia, it is interesting to observe the case of the state of Penang. Penang is the only federal state with an institution that supports and implements good governance and gender equality. This institution is fairly independent and is much needed by NGOs to put forward their demands.

It initially started with a People's Agreement to support the ruling party to implement programs for capacity and leadership for women. The challenge is that CEDAW was only ratified in Malaysia in 1995 and until now has not been made into a law for gender equality. This issue is not without supporters. Between 2006-2007, a women's organization proposed a bill to ensure gender equality, but was rejected by one of the influential decision makers in Parliament. He argued that men and women are one special unit, so men and women cannot be separated. So far, there has been no effort to re-submit the bill. Meanwhile, the rate of violence against women has escalated but is unrecorded even when the victim makes a report to the police; it is regarded as a personal matter. This attitude is common in small islands.

When women NGOs held a leadership training program for women, the women from grassroots communities suggested that the training be conducted in collaboration with the mosque authorities. However, as the training began, the mosque authorities requested that the women return home and wash the dishes instead of attending the training. However the low participation of women in politics cannot fully be attributed to women with limited options in the grassroots movements. Many women NGO activists and educated women prefer to live independently and autonomously, while women at the grassroots level are too busy taking care of their children and husbands.

The concept of gender equality is still difficult to comprehend in everyday life in Malaysia. For example, the cost of daycare is very expensive, so women prefer to take care of their children at home themselves which prevents women from having a career. Women between 30-40 years old, sometimes are trapped in the dilemma of having to choose between raising children or having a career outside the home. This situation has not been seen as a women's gender issue that may be resolved through formal political mechanisms, making it difficult to find women who are interested in participating in politics. Unfortunately, even though the number of women supporting women parliamentarians is growing in terms of both number and capacity, the number of women MPs is not yet sufficient.

Indonesian women activists use a gender mainstreaming strategy in the parliamentary system and mechanism to break through patriarchal state barriers. Prior to this, the efforts made by women activists to increase gender equality saw success in the inclusion of the 30 percent women's quota in amendments to the General Election, Political Parties, and Structure and Status Laws (regarding the performance of Parliament). However, while the 30 percent women's quota was successfully stipulated in the Election Law, in the law on political parties it only refers to "the need to consider gender fairness." Meanwhile, none of the two provisions is mentioned in the revised Structure and Status Law No 22/2003.

The Structure and Status Law (Sutjipto, Wardani dan Panjaitan 2010) regulates system, mechanism, rules, and parliamentary institutional support. When the women's quota was not warranted by Law, there was no guarantee for women politicians to implement gender mainstreaming in Parliament. During the 2004-2009 period, there were only two female politicians who held positions as chairperson of a commission and floor leader. Other than that, women MPs are posted in commissions related to social affairs, health, religion and education. Another institutional apparatus, the DPD, only saw a 10 percent representation of women in the 2004 election, and 18 percent in the 2009 election. The Parliamentary Women's Caucus was established in 2000 by women MPs between 1999-2004. They were hoping the Women's Caucus would become a forum for cross-party politicians to realize the mission of equal access and control between men and women in Parliament.

The strategy outside Parliament has been to identify 'potential women' from women's and social movements. A list of women was compiled between 2004-2009, and resulted in a book entitled "Potential Female Profiles", being distributed to political parties. This attempt was taken in light of the fact that Indonesian political parties lack women cadres. On the other hand, the women's movement in Indonesia promotes female candidates who could participate in the electoral process who are sensitive to gender issues and have genuine interests in fighting for women's agenda in Parliament. The level of success may not be measured yet, but at least there are hints that there are many women who have the potential and, in fact, have been involved in substantial political activities outside political parties.

Through a number of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) on the women's movement and studies by research institutions during the 2004 election experience an idea was formed that the agenda of increasing women's representation through the fulfillment of the quota system could only be realized by means of active participation in political parties. The concept of a women's quota system used to be a notion known only among NGOs working on women's issues and women activists, but not recognized by political parties. It was women's venture into political parties that provided a new experience in dealing with the patriarchy within.

Experiences of women politicians have shown they are required to work just as much as men in the public domain while continuing to carry out their duties at home. Men are unaware of this double burden since they are generally not responsible for carrying out household tasks for their families, while women politicians also bear the burden of the private sphere (Sutjipto, et.al. *Pengarusutamaan Gender*). Other burdens that women cadres in the parties are have to face are gender-based violence in the party, as well as becoming easy targets when a woman cadre becomes involved in an intimate relationship with the party leader.

In Cambodia, the ratification of international law components provided women with access to political participation by adopting them into state laws. The guarantee of equal political rights for women and men is administered in the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGS), and it is an important policy for increasing political opportunities for women. The Cambodian government has



also specifically set targets for increasing women's representation by 2015 in the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals (the CMDGs). Although the CMDG for increased representation of women is still far from meeting its target, the country has at least provided a normative guarantee.

As a member of Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Cambodia is also committed to implementing the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (2012). In the preamble of the Declaration of the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN Region it says "... to promote and implement the equitable and effective participation of women whenever possible in all fields and various levels of political, economic, social and cultural life of society at the national, regional and international levels."<sup>48</sup> By using this as the basis of their movement, it shows that women activists in Cambodia use a human rights approach to increase women's participation and representation in state politics.

According to Ros Sopheap, from Gender and Development in Cambodia (GADC), NGOs promote gender equality as a fundamental human right, and even though the human rights approach is rather slow, the situation has improved in the last 20 years. Cambodia has ratified CEDAW in 1992, and called for the drafting of the Anti-Trafficking Law in 2008. The government and NGOs have worked together to formulate gender mainstreaming programs at the grassroots level. Since 2005 the number of women who have occupied high positions in government has increased and the problem of discrimination and violence against women has decreased. NGOs and the government have also conducted technical meetings in the framework of women's empowerment and on the eradication of HIV/AIDS.

When writing the CEDAW report, Prok Vanny, regularly met with eight ministers who concluded that there are still many challenges to women's participation in politics, especially in relation to financial issues. Money politics in Cambodia has become a new culture of concern, something that women cannot afford to take part in. Besides, culturally, women are reluctant to get involved with money politics. Men also look down at women who run as candidates in elections.

---

48 *Politics in the Kingdom: Increasing Female Representaton*, Cambodian Centre for Human Rights, March 2013, collaboration between Partnership and USAID, 10

GADC's experience shows, there were a lot of men who complained that women had overruled them from winning elections. Elected women candidates are constantly provoked to return to being housewives, taking care of the children, husband and the house. Such provocation often undermines women and strengthens solidarity among men.

In theory therefore, an open electoral system, has created room for women in politics. However, there are many barriers that hinder the achievement of gender equality in the elections, particularly in terms of affirmative action for a women's quota system. Although the quota system has the support of national law, it is not necessarily able to eliminate patriarchal barriers which mean it is still difficult to increase women's representation. However, there have been some alternative actions that have successfully broken down institutional patriarchal barriers and increased female representation.

While women candidates participate in elections on a regular basis, it is important to understand their motivations and examine their agendas for women's empowerment. This is important to gauge their commitment to electoral politics, as well as their contribution to the empowerment of women. Substantive contribution from women candidates from a political family background is particularly needed to break the general practice of women candidates who replace their husbands, fathers and sons, but are temporarily unable to occupy their position as the law prevents it. There are, however, some women officials, and even political dynasties that have made a commitment to continue the empowerment of women. But as history and political lessons have shown, women members of political dynasties may sometimes compromise their commitment in order to sustain their political power.

The women's movement or civil society movements in general, should continue to make efforts to encourage women's participation. It requires a new political measure of combining the collective power of lobbyists and drawing men into the female perspective (feminism). The other challenge that remains is that there is little support and understanding from the men in politics in terms of the dual role of politician and caretaker of the household, that women play. This is naturally an unequal burden for women as men do not have any duties at home.

In order to promote women's rights, civil society movements, especially the women's movements, should educate constituencies to voice demands related to women's welfare. In terms of rising controversial issues in particular, the only powerful movement lies in the consolidation of 'popular sentiment' (cases that appeal to the public) and use this to put pressure on legislators.



The background features a series of overlapping, organic, light blue shapes that resemble soft-edged petals or waves, creating a layered, ethereal effect. The colors range from a pale sky blue to a slightly deeper, vibrant blue. The overall composition is clean and modern.

## **CHALLENGES TO WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION**



# [ CHAPTER V ]

## CHALLENGES TO WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

We have come to understand that while women's representation is indeed vital, various endeavors to increase this representation are equally important. Having said this, we can see the challenges this involves. This chapter shall present a discussion on future challenges – not only in meeting the 30 percent quota as an affirmative actions indicator, but also question the possibility of women's parliamentary representation decreasing in countries that have reached the 30 percent quota. Efforts to increase and preserve the achievement of the women's representation quota are a quantitative challenge. Although this challenge particularly applies to Malaysia, Cambodia, and Indonesia, the success of Timor-Leste and the Philippines may also face challenges in terms of decline.

Considering the political will from state institutions and the strong stream of affirmative movements, the quantitative challenge can be observed by utilizing the political systems (representative, electoral, political parties, and women's representation quota systems) optimally. Nevertheless, the five Southeast Asian countries face qualitative challenges regarding the substance of representative democracy, especially women's representation, which needs to be measured using different indicators.

In this closing chapter, we will draw on the perspective of Hanna Pitkin regarding women's representation to observe the quality of achievement of the representation. Previous chapters have described key perspectives of women's representation, namely descriptive and substantive representation. These perspectives are important to measure (1) whether the achievement of women's representation in the five countries studied in this research is descriptive or substantive; and (2) whether the descriptive indicators are adequate to reflect substantive achievement?

Descriptive representation describes representation based on the similarity or resemblance between representatives and voters. From this perspective,

the representatives (women MPs) are not taking action *for* the women they represent, but *in the name of* the represented women (women constituents). Substantive representation refers to representation of absent subjects (women constituents) by highlighting the similarity or resemblance, which in this case is that they are of the same (female) gender. When understanding the above explanation, it becomes clear that all the programs aimed at increasing women's representation in the five countries studied are still within the limitations of descriptive representation.

The 30 percent quota system indicates a descriptive representation to attain quantitative accomplishment of whether democracy in the five countries has created opportunities for women's participation and representation. Results of research in the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste answers this descriptive question and it is clear that the accomplishment still faces significant challenges within the state political institutions that inhibit the increase of women's representation (see Chapter II).

Although Pitkin observes descriptive and substantive women's representation as categorical concepts, in this conclusion we place descriptive and substantive representation as phases. This is the second challenge when answering whether descriptive achievement of women's representation in the five countries may evolve into substantive achievement. The definition of representation as substantive is when the representation shows that the representative of the people becomes the agent and proxy of that people, to voice or advocate women's issues.

To measure substantive representation, we can observe to what extent the representative has contributed in producing policies that addresses women's interests. The results of this research have not described in detail the substantive achievement, and present only the general facts. In the Philippines, for example, the increase of women's representation correlates with their success in passing the Reproductive Rights Law, which was a process that took 14 years to achieve. In Timor-Leste, the increase of women's representation has resulted in the passing of the law to protect women from violence. However, in Indonesia, it is still difficult to discern any correlation between the implementation of the 30 percent quota system and the drafting of a gender equality bill and women's representation. To determine substantive



achievement, we need to employ more specific indicators which is outside the scope of this research.

We need to acknowledge that this research on women's representation in five Southeast Asian countries is designed for the purpose of measuring the achievement of descriptive representation. It is possible to do so, as the empirical process of the fight for affirmative representation has only entered the descriptive phase. However, if women's representation is founded on women interests, the challenge to accomplish substantive representation is an issue that needs to be systematically put on the agenda as a research recommendation.

It is imperative to realize the substantive representation phase as the underlying purpose of a quota system to address women's issues as mandated by the Fourth Women Conference in Beijing in 1995. The mandate was set at the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and consists of twelve critical areas affecting women: (1) women and poverty; (2) education for women; (3) women and health; (4) violence against women; (5) military conflict and women; (6) women and the economy; (7) women and political decision-making; (8) institutional mechanism for women improvement; (9) women's human rights; (10) women and the media; (11) women and the environment; (12) issues of female children. These twelve critical areas in BPfA are international strategic issues that can be used as the indicators for substantive representation.

If BPfA is referred to as indicators for the quality of representative democracy for women around the world, the descriptive achievements of the five countries in Southeast Asia in this study have only fulfilled point 7 (seven) of the critical areas, namely women and political decision-making. However, the achievements go only so far as recruiting women as MPs to represent and make political decisions concerning women's interests. The descriptive achievement is the result of the long and difficult struggle undertaken by the women's movement in Southeast Asia.

The recommendations of this research are: first, to improve the achievement of the 30 percent quota for women's representation by refining the political systems in the five countries in this study. Second, to advance the descriptive

representation phase to substantive representation by enhancing the awareness and quality of women upon entering the political arena through parties. This advancement would not only focus on the quality and awareness of women politicians, but also on men politicians and political parties as institutions that provide political education for their cadres, who will represent their constituents.

The challenges for women when participating in politics in general are similar in Cambodia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste. Both challenges above need to be addressed by a synergy of the government's political decisions, political parties, and civil society movements – especially the women movement. Disharmony between these three elements will serve as fundamental obstacles for substantive women's representation. An awareness that women's identity is not homogenous because women's interests are not homogenous is also necessary to attain substantive representation. Meanwhile in this research, we find women's political representation that is dominated by discourse on women's homogeneous presence and identity. In the practice, the essence of substantive representation is the relationship between women representatives in parliament with the people they represent.

## [ REFERENCES ]

- Bhasin, Kamla. *What is Patriarchy*. (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1993.
- Blackburn, Susan. *Women and the State in Modern Indonesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Eviota, Elizabeth Uy. *The Political Economy of Gender: Women and the Sexual Division of Labour in the Philippines*. (London & New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1992.
- Frisk, Sylvia. *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asia Studies, 2009.
- John M. Collins, *Reconstructing Access in the Cambodian Education System*, in Domald Holsinger, B, and James W Jacob. *Inequality in Education: Comparative and International Perspectives*. Hongkong: Comparative Education Research Centre-University of Hongkong, 2008.
- Kadam, Chandrashekhar dan Ravindranath N. *A Study on the Grama Panchayat Women's Member Participation in Development Institute*. International Journal of Advance in Management and Social Science: Research GARPH Publication, 2012.
- Lilja, Mona. *Power, Resistance, and Women Politicians in Cambodia*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2008.
- . *Power, Resistance, and Women Politicians in Cambodia: Discourses of Emancipation*. Denmark: NIAS Press, 2008.
- Mohamed, Maznah, Cecilia Ng, and Tan Ben Hui. *Feminism and the Women's Movement in Malaysia: An Unsung (R)evolution*. Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Munir, Lily Zakiyah. *Domestic Violence in Indonesia*. Muslim World Journal of Human Rights 2, no. 1, 2005.

- Ng, Cecilia, dan Maznah Mohamed. *Primary but Subordinated: Changing Class and Gender Relations in Rural Malaysia, in Structures of Patriarchy, the State, The Community and the Household in Modernising Asia*. London: Zed Books, 1988.
- Norris, Pippa. *Political recruitment: Gender, race and class in the British Parliament*. Cambridge: University Press, 1995.
- Perez, Linda P. *The Filipino Woman's Role in the Humanization of Social Life*. Washington: The Filipino Woman's Role in The Humanization of Social Life, 2004.
- Philips, Anne. *The Politics of Presence*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Pitkin, Hanna. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California, 1967.
- Powley, Elizabeth. *Rwanda: The Impact of Women Legislators on Policy Outcomes Affecting Children and Family*. Rwanda: UNICEF, 2006.
- Qurtuby, Sumanto Al. *Arus Islam Cina-Jawa*. Yogyakarta: Inspeal Ahimsakarya Press, 2003.
- Ruth Indah Rahayu. *Militerisme dan Ideologi Koncowingking: Penguatan Ideologi Perempuan Indonesia Secara Pemaknaan Ksatria Jawa*. Jakarta: ELSAM and PUSDEP, 2007.
- Sethi, Gabriella. *Increasing Women's Political Representation and Participation in Cambodia through the Implementation of Gender Quota*. Executive summary, Cambodia: CCHR, 2013.
- Shugart, Matthew Soberg and Martin P. Wattenberg. *Mixed Member Electoral System: The Best of Both Worlds?* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Smith-Heffner, Nancy J. *Khmer American: Identity and Moral Education in a Diasporic Community*. California: University of California Press, 1999.
- Sobritchea, Carol. Carol Sobritchea, *The Impact of American Colonial Education on Filipino Women*. From Asian Studies, volume 1-2 (1990)." *Asian Studies, volume 1-2 (1990)*, 1990.

- Stoller, Ann Laura. *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt 1870-1979*. Michigan: University Michigan Press, 1995.
- Stuers, Cora Vrede de. *Gerakan Perempuan Indonesia: Kemajuan dan Pencapaian*. Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2008.
- Sutjipto, Ani, Sri Budi Eko Wardani, and Yolanda Panjaitan. *Pengaruh-utamaan Gender di Parlemen: Studi terhadap DPR dan DPD Periode 2004-2009*. Jakarta: UNDP Indonesia, 2010.
- Taylor, John G. *Perang Tersembunyi: Sejarah Timor Timur yang Dilupakan*. Jakarta: FORTILOS, 1998.
- Thornley, Adisti Ikayanti & Andrew. *Building Sustainable Partnerships to Promote Women's Political Representation in Southeast Asian Region*. Jakarta: Kemitraan, 2013.
- Walby, Sylvia. *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990.
- Zimmerman, Wilma Rule & Joseph. *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women and Minorities*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.



