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Indonesian democracy's resilience: A case study of women's representation in Jakarta provincial legislature

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the resilience of democracy in DKI Jakarta by looking at the representation of women in the legislative ranks of the DKI Indonesia Provincial DPRD. This research uses a qualitative approach with literature study methods and case studies that allow researchers to conduct in-depth research on the electoral system applied in Indonesia in order to create an ideal democracy in a holistic point of view. The collected data will be analyzed qualitatively using grounded theory analysis techniques. The results of the analysis show that there are still significant challenges in increasing women's representation in politics in Indonesia. Women's participation in politics can be an important voice in fighting for policies and programs that strengthen the protection of women and overcome gender violence. The lack of women perspectives in policymaking can also hamper efforts to improve access to protection and health services for victims of violence, as well as to strengthen law enforcement against perpetrators of violence.

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INTRODUCTION

Democracy is a political system with a government based on the sovereignty of the people. In Europe, the concept of democracy developed after the French revolution with the fall of the monarchy and the rise of enthusiasm to create a just government and social structure by carrying the slogans *Egalite, Fraternite, Liberte.* Democracy then underwent many changes by adapting to social developments that occurred in the world. Broadly speaking, democracy in the world today is based on the concept of democracy initiated by Montesqiue, namely a political system with a strict separation of powers between the executive, legislature, and judiciary. Although considered one of the best systems today, democracy cannot be separated from various shocks and challenges in implementation. For this reason, to form and run politics in order to create prosperity, democratic resilience becomes an important element in analyzing the dynamics and practices of democracy run by a country.

Indonesia after the 1998 reform began to try to improve its democratic life. The political right was opened widely, political parties were free, and the role of the press became more free and independent. But over time, challenges began to threaten the resilience of democracy. One of them is on indicators of political culture. The political culture that grew in Indonesian society is still not fully separated and adapted to modern democracy. One element of the assessment is the level of women's representation in every election held since the reform era. One of the efforts made is to issue regulations to encourage the level of women's representation of at least 30% in parliament. Even so, political parties are still difficult to win over their female cadres both nationally and regionally.

DKI Jakarta as the national capital and national political barometer has shown good figures on the level of women's political participation and also the gender inequality index. However, this figure is not directly proportional to achieving at least 30% female representation in parliament. In the 2014 and 2019 elections, there has been an increase in the electability of female candidates in the DKI Jakarta DPRD to 21.7% in 2019 from 19.8% in 2014. The existence of women in political parties and parliament will certainly give its own political color, but major obstacles hinder the opportunity for female cadres in every election event held. In general, the obstacles faced by women in politics are closely related to the social construction of Indonesian society itself which is then followed by psychological and economic barriers. This situation indirectly has a

negative impact on women's politics. From the perspective of democratic resilience, the low representation of women in parliament will have an impact on minimal consideration of women's interests when a policy will be made or decided, especially demographically the female population reaches half of the total population in Indonesia.

It is still difficult for elections to produce 30% female representation in parliament because women politically face many obstacles in their efforts to win seats in parliament. The most common obstacle is cultural barrier. Women have been identified as emotional subjects, unable to control feelings, not confident, and no better than men in appearing as a leader. Women are also identified with domestic roles in the household so they do not have the social skills to appear in public spaces. This cultural barrier then has implications for the knowledge and opportunities that women can get in politics. Due to the closure of women's political access, women are unable to obtain enough knowledge to be able to appear in public spaces. The result is that women tend to close themselves and are not confident to want to appear in public spaces. Another condition that hinders women's representation in parliament is social capital and economic capital. These two capitals are very important capital in winning seats in elections. In terms of social capital, women have been culturally identified as complementary to political parties. Although able to get tickets to contest in the election, the next obstacle is on economic capital. The high political costs in Indonesia make it difficult for women to build political networks, finance campaigns and win elections. Thus, it is not uncommon to find that even though there is representation of women in parliament, they come from among the political elite so that their interests are held hostage by the interests of certain parties and groups, not the interest of forming a more inclusive and equal social structure of society. Eventually politics became very masculine and women found it difficult to engage freely.

Based on the circumstances and dynamics, as well as existing assumptions on women's political participation in DKI Jakarta, this study is intended to analyze the resilience of democracy in DKI Jakarta. The role of women in politics, especially women's representation in parliament, is very crucial in the context of women's involvement in making policies in parliament that can be enjoyed by a group, including women themselves, so that democracy can become a political system that brings justice and welfare.

This study aims to analyze the resilience of democracy in DKI Jakarta by looking at the representation of women in the legislative ranks of the DKI Jakarta Provincial DPRD. The research is expected to give more insight into women representation in Indonesia and become a reference for future relevant research.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach with literature study methods and case studies that allow researchers to conduct in-depth research on the electoral system applied in Indonesia in order to create an ideal democracy in a holistic point of view. In this context, theories regarding democratic resilience, political culture, gender, and political parties, will be relevant theories within the theoretical framework of this study.

In addition, secondary data in the form of political news as well as expert opinions will be used. The collected data will be analyzed qualitatively using grounded theory analysis techniques. This analysis will identify the resilience of democracy in DKI Jakarta. In the analysis process, a comparative study will be carried out with democracies and countries that have similar socio-political conditions in order to obtain comprehensive research results. This research will propose conclusions based on the results of data analysis and propose the concept to stakeholders so that it can be utilized in an effort to create an ideal democracy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Women's representation in politics is a complex and crucial issue in gender analysis. In many countries, women still face obstacles in achieving significant political positions. Low representation of women is not only a reflection of social injustice, but can also have a major impact on inclusive and gender-responsive policy development. Women's active participation in the formation of gender-unbiased public policies will have a significant positive impact in building a good democracy. By ensuring balanced representation in political power structures, women can bring other perspectives and can be controllers at the decision table.

In their writing, Adeni & Harahap (2017) stated that Indonesia is still strong in a patriarchal system so that this is the reason for the limited involvement of women in political participation. Rampant patriarchal systems tend to give preference and reinforce male dominance in the political sphere. As a result, women often face structural and cultural barriers in achieving significant political positions. Gender problems have actually been going on since six thousand years ago (Nurcahyo, 2016). Opposition to gender equality intensifies when inequality arises and subordination relationships arise. Gender problems get worse when the partriaki system is considered reasonable because its justification is aligned with the division of labor based on sex or sex and not based on gender (Nurcahyo, 2016).

In fact, it needs to be understood that the presence of women in a political system can build democracy in forming public policies that are not gender-biased in DKI Jakarta. Women's involvement in the policy-making process brings diverse perspectives and first-hand experience of the challenges faced by women in society. Thus, the resulting policies tend to be more sensitive to gender issues and better able to create sustainable solutions to overcome inequality (Hevriansyah, 2021). In addition, women's participation in politics also helps create a more inclusive and representative political environment that reflects the diversity of DKI Jakarta society more accurately. Many have tinkered that power in the political system should be held by men. In his writing, Hardjaloka (2012) states that power is basically neutral, where it depends only on obedience, change, and renewal.

DKI Jakarta is one of the centers of the government system so that it has an important role in determining the direction of national development and handling various existing social, economic, and political issues. In this context, the presence of women in the DKI Jakarta government system is becoming increasingly crucial. Women's active participation in government decision-making processes not only reflects inclusivity in political representation, but also enriches policy views with a deep gender perspective. Through integrating gender analysis in every aspect of policy making, DKI Jakarta can produce public policies that are more sensitive to the needs and aspirations of women and society as a whole. The presence of women in the center of government such as DKI Jakarta is the key to ensuring that the development process and decision-making carried out reflect gender justice and provide equitable benefits for all Jakartans.

Reality shows that women's involvement in politics in the DKI Jakarta DPRD in 2009, 2014, and 2019 is still not in accordance with Article 65 paragraph (1) of Law Number 12 of 2003 concerning Elections where it is stated that election participants can propose candidates for members of the DPR, Provincial DPRD, and Regency / City DPRD for each electoral region by taking into account the representation of women at least 30 percent.

Table 1. Acquisition of Women Seats of the DKI Jakarta Provincial DPRD

Year	Number of Position			Persentage of Position	
	Total	Female	Male	Female	Male
2009	94	22	72	23,40%	76,60%
2014	106	19	87	17,92%	82,08%
2019	106	23	83	21,70%	78,30%

Source : KPU DKI Jakarta Province (Indira & Mariyah, 2021)

Table 1. shows that women's involvement is still below 30% in the DKI Jakarta Provincial DPRD. Despite a significant increase in 2019, where the percentage of female seats reached 21.70%, the figure is still far from achieving the expected gender equality in political representation. This shows that there are still significant challenges in increasing women's involvement in political life in DKI Jakarta.

Women members of the DKI Jakarta DPRD can come from a variety of diverse backgrounds, including from the middle class, working class, and elite class. However, there is a tendency that the dominance of the elite class is superior among members of the DPRD, especially at the DKI Jakarta Provincial level. As written by Mawardi (2019) that the position of the elite class in politics has become commonplace due to the support of resources and access to be involved and enter the political world. Nevertheless, there were also representatives of the middle class and working class within the DPRD, mainly as a result of increasing political participation from various walks of life. However, their proportion may be smaller compared to members who come from the elite class.

There is a theory that supports the discussion of political elites, namely *Elite Theory*. In *Elite Theory* developed by Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) and Gaetano Mosca (1858-1911), it is explained that elites arise because of the skills and personal intelligence possessed by a person compared to others. Mosca is more likely to see an elite as someone who has better organizational management. However, in its development, C. Wright Mills stated that elite power arises because of the domination of the masses by the elite. Mills argues that what is happening is actually the exploitation of the masses by the elite. There is a difference in definition between domination and exploitation where elite control over the lower society cannot be called domination, but exploitation. This explanation led to the emergence of *the power elite* theory. It is undeniable that *power elite* theory is indeed carried out in today's life. In his writing, Mawardi (2019) stated that *the power elite* not only holds formal power, such as in government, but also a small group of people who have great influence to participate in directing the wheels of government. In the context of today's era, the concept of elites is still relevant and can be seen in various aspects of life, especially in the political, economic, and social realms. Elites are small groups of individuals who have significant control or influence over important decisions that affect society as a whole. They often have broad access to resources and power, be it in the form of material wealth, political connections, or social influence.

The elites who occupy the legislative seats of the DKI Jakarta DPRD in recent years are those who are artists. Artists who are elected to the DKI Jakarta DPRD often use their popularity in the entertainment industry to gain mass support. Nonetheless, their presence in the legislature also raises questions about their ability to formulate public policy and represent the interests of society well. In 2019, several *public figures* or artists participated in the ranks of legislative seats such as Tina Toon from PDIP and Zita Anjani from PAN. In his writing, Lubis (2015) stated that involving *public figures* or artists is one of the things that is considered effective in socializing political parties so that the existence of the party will also be lifted. This makes the elite who are among artists more dominant than the middle class or working class. According to Lubis (2015), the phenomenon of *public figures* who enter the political realm can become *celebrity endorsements* for the benefit of party campaigns. In other words, the popularity capital owned by artists will be easier to get electability, because progress has become the initial capital compared to other candidates.

Maliki (2018) argues that the elite still holds dominance in politics in this country. Maliki insists that elites, including artists, remain dominant in politics. This indicates that power structures in politics tend to remain concentrated in the hands of groups that have access to political resources and power. For this, there is a concern that there can be vulnerabilities in the quality of political institutions and political culture in Indonesia. Their presence raises questions about the ability of political institutions, especially in the DKI Jakarta DPRD in selecting and evaluating legislative candidates based on appropriate qualifications and competencies. This highlights potential weaknesses in the candidate recruitment and assessment process, where popularity or fame is often the dominant determining factor rather than leadership quality and understanding of public issues. This phenomenon also highlights the condition of political culture that is vulnerable to the influence of *celebrity endorsement* and political pragmatism. A political culture that is too focused on the image and popularity of individuals can obscure the substance of the role of the legislature itself, which is to formulate policies that favor the public interest and represent the aspirations of the people. When the public is more interested in a person's image and popularity than his or her track record and political commitment, this can undermine the accountability and quality of political representation that should be upheld. This opinion is in line with the views of Putri, et al (2018) in their writings which also stated that when voters are more likely to vote based on one's fame and charm rather than considering one's track record and political commitment, the democratic process can be eroded. This can lead to the election of leaders who are less competent or do not meet public expectations, as priorities in elections change from leadership qualities and clear political agendas to mere popularity.

Low involvement of women can also result in underrepresentative policies towards gender equality. Without sufficient representation of women in decision-making institutions, their voices and needs are likely to be inadequately represented. This can lead to public policies that are insensitive to issues faced by women, such as wage gaps, access to education and reproductive health, and gender violence. Thus, the low involvement of women in politics not only harms women directly, but also creates gaps in representation and development of policies that are fair and inclusive for all societies.

A problem that is widely associated with the issue of gender equality is violence. Gender violence can take the form of violence against women, including sexual harassment, rape, and domestic violence. In data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in 2024, it is recorded that perpetrators of violence show that men get a score of 3,030 and women get a score of 406. This figure represents a stark disproportion between the number of male and female perpetrators of violence. With a much higher value for men, this indicates that gender violence is still mainly perpetrated by men against women. This phenomenon reflects the inequality of power and control in gender relations, where women are often victims of violence committed by male partners or individuals. The DKI Jakarta Provincial Government through the Office of Empowerment, Child Protection and Population Control recorded that throughout 2023 there have been 1,682 cases of violence against women and children (Kompas, 2024). In 2022, there were 1,455 cases of violence against women and children, so it can be concluded that cases of violence against women show an increasing trend every year.

The increase in cases of violence every year reflects that the process of pursuing policies on gender is still not optimal. The lack of women's involvement in the DKI Jakarta DPRD can be one of the factors that causes efforts for women to be less than optimal. Low representation of women in the legislature can result in a lack of understanding of issues faced by women directly, including the issue of gender violence. In this context, the presence of women in the DPRD can be an important voice in fighting for policies and programs that strengthen the protection of women and overcome gender violence. If women's representation in the DPRD is low, then issues related to women tend not to get adequate priority in the legislative agenda. The lack of women's perspectives in policymaking can also hamper efforts to improve access to protection and health services for victims of violence, as well as to strengthen law enforcement against perpetrators of violence. The lack of women's voices in the policy-making process can result in an imbalance in attention to gender issues and inadequate policies in support of gender equality.

Analysis of the socio-cultural and political conditions of Indonesian society indicates that although there is high political participation from women in elections, it is not always directly proportional to the number of female councillors elected in the DKI Jakarta DPRD. This reflects the structural and procedural barriers in democratic practice that result in vulnerable social groups, including women, often being excluded or isolated from the political decision-making process (Laku, 2021). Structural barriers such as gender stereotypes, inequality of access to political and economic resources, and lack of support from political parties can be major factors that hinder women's representation in legislative institutions such as the DKI Jakarta DPRD. In addition, a political culture that is still dominated by patriarchal norms and traditional views on gender roles can also be an obstacle to women's political participation that is more active and involved in the political decision-making process.

Women's representation in politics in Indonesia also has a significant impact on the resilience of democracy in Indonesia. When women's involvement in the political decision-making process is too low, there will be indications of imbalances in political representation and reducing the plurality of voices in the policy-making process. Thus, the low involvement of women in the DKI Jakarta DPRD, which is one of the important centers of government in Indonesia, can reduce the plurality of views and experiences in political representation.

In this context, gender inequality in the legislature will raise new problems which concern the resilience of democracy in Indonesia. Such inequality will potentially threaten the basic principles of democracy that Indonesia has built. One of the fundamental principles in democracy is inclusive and participatory representation, where all citizens have equal opportunities to participate in political processes and decision-making (Sulastri, et al, 2020). However, when there are significant gender inequalities within political institutions, this results in inequalities in political representation and participation between men and women. Gender inequality in legislative ranks creates imbalances in voice representation and perspectives in policy formation. Women often have different experiences and needs in society, and when they are not adequately represented in political institutions, issues specific to them are often ignored or taken seriously in policy formation (Fatmariza, 2003). As a result, the resulting policies tend to be insensitive to issues faced by women, such as gender violence, economic inequality, and access to health services.

In addition, gender inequality also creates imbalances in the overall political agenda. Gender-related issues often do not receive adequate priority, reducing diversity and plurality in political representation. In a healthy democracy, all citizens should have equal opportunities for adequate political representation, regardless of their gender. This explanation is evidence that gender inequality in the legislative ranks not only violates fundamental democratic principles, but also threatens the quality and legitimacy of the political system as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The low representation of women in politics in DKI Jakarta reflects challenges in the practice of inclusive democracy. Cultural, psychological, and economic barriers prevent women from winning seats in parliament, which negatively impacts gender-inclusive policies. The dominance of the political elite, including artists, exacerbated this situation. Gender inequality in politics threatens the basic principles of democracy, reducing the quality and legitimacy of the political system as a whole.

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