

ABSTRACT

The return to democracy in Indonesia has benefited women by allowing greater access to the political institution of parliament. The Election Laws 2003, 2008, and 2012 legislated for a 30% quota of women candidates for legislative election. This study aims to evaluate the impact of the quota in the consolidated period of Indonesian democracy (2009-2014). To what extent has increasing women's representation in the Indonesian National Parliament (*DPR*) due to the quota promoted substantive impact in legislating laws addressing women's interests? The scope of the study is the structure of the *DPR* and the changing political environment in the parliament for women's substantive representation during the period 2009-2014.

To explore these issues, a qualitative field study was undertaken at the *DPR* during 2009-2014. The study involved interviews with 22 parliamentarians, 13 parliamentary staff and 3 women activists; participant observation of parliamentary committee work; and textual analysis of parliamentary documents. Drawing on feminist and grounded theory methodology, this data was analysed through thematic coding to produce the following key findings.

This study finds that the gender quota succeeded in increasing the number women elected to the *DPR* during period 2009-2014. These women were as equally qualified as their male counterparts in terms of education and experience as politicians.

However, women elected through direct election during the consolidation period of Indonesian parliamentary democracy, 2009-2014, were less effective in promoting

feminist legislative agendas compared with those in the transition period (1999-2009). The reasons for this, I argue, are several, including the changing characteristics of Indonesian parliamentary cohorts, the failure to follow the quota reform with broader gender equity measures in the working of the *DPR*, and the de-linking of civil society and formal party and parliamentary politics.

First, during the consolidated period, more men and women legislators came into the *DPR* from business backgrounds, replacing the cohort of reformists – largely from non-business backgrounds – who had shaped the parliaments of the democratic transition era. The male legislators from business backgrounds were less accommodating toward women's issues. More women legislators were from business backgrounds and similarly demonstrated a lack of interest in women's issues. In addition, these women legislators tended to be less engaged with other women in civil society, and had less of a commitment to a feminist agenda. Second, the introduction of the quota was not followed by addressing the gendered nature of the parliament itself. Specifically, the gendered organisational qualities of the parliament hindered women legislators from participating equally in political discussion. The organisation of standing committees placed less importance on women's issues, with women's empowerment being incorporated into the standing committee concerned with religious issues. In addition, the *DPR*, as a workplace, did not support women's double duties, with no maternity leave provisions and a lack of childcare facilities for young mothers.

In effect, access to the location of power required women legislators to display masculine behaviour and obey the orders of male political elites. The presence of women in leadership positions did not translate into support for a feminist legislative

agenda or more focus on women's issues. Control of the Indonesian Women's Parliamentary Caucus (*KPPRI*) by political parties meant the caucus was less effective in supporting both women parliamentarians and feminist legislative initiatives. This situation was a key trigger for tension between women legislators and women activists in civil society. Lack of communication between the two groups led to a less effective strategy in addressing women's issues at the parliamentary level.

The study complements literature on the implementation of gender quotas in new and developing democracies through its discussion of the Indonesian democratisation and the influence of Islamic values on the political system in parliament, along with emerging democracies in Islamic societies. The significance of this study and its findings are important for feminists in developing effective strategies for advancing gender equality in parliament. It will also be useful for both women's civil society organisations, and women legislators in Indonesia, to revisit strategies on gender mainstreaming at the parliamentary level, and adjust to the way the political climate has changed after almost two decades of Indonesian democratisation. The thesis argues that as well as sustaining the relationship between women's civil society organisations and women legislators, the women's movement also needs to focus their agenda on development of the organisation of the *DPR* to a more woman friendly work place.