A PARADOX OF WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES IN A MUSLIM PATRIARCHY
AND MATRILINEAL SOCIETY IN WEST SUMATRA, INDONESIA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI’I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
IN
SOCIOLOGY

AUGUST 2007

By
Selinaswati

Thesis Committee:
Yean Ju Lee, Chairperson
Meda Chesney Lind
Barbara Watson Andaya
We certify that we have read this thesis and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a thesis for degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.

THESIS COMMITTEE

[Signatures]

Chairperson

[Names of committee members]
AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several people I would like to thank for their support and encouragement throughout this thesis process. I would first like to thank my committee chair Dr. Yean Ju Lee, who is also my academic advisor, for her help, guidance and constant support in my academic life in the University of Hawaii. I am also indebted to Dr. Meda Chesney Lind, for invaluable feedback she provided on my thesis. I am also extremely grateful to Dr. Barbara Andaya, who is my external committee member for introducing me to the many references about women and Minangkabau, and for providing me with feedback in the thesis process. My deepest gratitude goes to them for their patience and great contributions to my academic life.

I would also like to thank to The Ford Foundation for giving me a chance to study in the University of Hawaii through the International Fellowship Education Program (IFP) grant. I would also like to thank to The Indonesian International Education Foundation (IIEF) Jakarta especially to Ibu Irid Agoes, Mbak Mira Sambada, Mbak Marni Andriani, and Mbak Nurwening for help and assistance. I am also grateful to Dr. Kim Small of East West Center for his guidance and constant support for my study in the University of Hawaii. I also appreciate the attention of Terry Bigalke and Mendl Junaidy of East West Center when I was an affiliate student in the East West Center. I would also like to thank to Hannah Miyamoto and Deby Williamson for their help in editing process. Your editing skills and patience made this crazy process easier to bear.

My gratitude also goes to Reading Group in spring 07 of Sociology Department; Thank you for Dr. Kalei Kanuha, Kozue Uehara, Meiko Arai and all of Reading Group members. Your thoughtful discussions help me in my writing process.
My deepest gratitude also goes to several people who gave me access during the field research in West Sumatra and Riau province, Indonesia. I would like to thank to all respondents and informants for their help and for kindly giving me their time during the interviews. My gratitude goes to my journalist friends Harri B Khor‘un and Harismanto who gave me the access and contacts to members of Parliament. You are the best friends I could ever ask for during the field research in West Sumatra and Riau province. I would also like to acknowledge the following individuals and thank them for their friendship in Hawaii, Mas Bambang, Mas Syaiful Umam, and all the Indonesian fellows of IFP Ford foundation in Hawaii.

I am also grateful for the support of my family, my late mother, my father and brothers for their love and constant belief that I could do it. And finally, above of all, none of this would have been possible without God is blessing.
REFLEXIVE STATEMENT

This research is a qualitative research that cannot be freed from the subjective judgment of the researcher. Here, I would like to declare that my conclusion may reflect subjectivity since I come from the same cultural background (Minangkabau). However, I will draw out an objective conclusion based on my research findings.

I come from Payakumbuh, one of municipal cities in West Sumatra which is around 78 miles (125-km) to the south of Padang, the capital city of West Sumatra province, and 113 miles (180-km) north away from Pekanbaru, the capital city of Riau province. I am already familiar with these two provinces since my childhood, and I visited the families in both provinces, and then often went back and forth to cover the news and events about local board council and local government issues in both provinces since I became a journalist in 1999. These factors may influence my research conclusions. However, I tried to make a conclusion based on “what I see, what I hear, and what I feel” in the field. In short, even it is impossible to eliminate subjectivity I tried to be objective.
ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the impact of a tradition of matrilinealism on the political participation of women in West Sumatra, Indonesia. West Sumatra has an ethnic group, the Minangkabau, which has a matrilineal tradition that provides more opportunities for women in terms of public activities. The data shows the number of female legislators is on average. This contradicts the assumption that women in a matrilineal society have higher status than their counterparts in patriarchal regions.

By using interviews and observations of fifteen female representatives in four provinces in Indonesia, the results indicate that most successful female politicians have male relatives, have highly motivation, and often face discrimination in their efforts to get elected. Their service in the Parliament is challenging due to the male domination as well as their inadequate relationship with women activists outside of the Parliament. But the matrilinealism means that compared to female politicians in other provinces, Minangkabau female politicians can publicly voice their opinions in media.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................. iii
REFLEXIVE STATEMENT .................................................................. v
ABSTRACT .................................................................................. vi
LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................... x
LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................................ xi

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................. 1
  1.1 Background ........................................................................... 1
  1.2 Research Question and Overall Organization ......................... 4

CHAPTER 2 SOCIAL CONTEXT .......................................................... 6
  2.1 The Structure of Indonesian Parliament .................................... 6
  2.2 Gender in Indonesian Politics .................................................. 7
  2.2 Gender, Education and Personal Autonomy ............................... 13

CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW .................................................. 18
  3.1 Bargaining Position ................................................................ 18
  3.2 The Historical Heritage in Women’s Role ................................. 19
  3.3 Culture and Religion in West Sumatra ..................................... 21
  3.3.1 Matrilineal System ............................................................. 22
  3.3.2 Islam and the Patriarchal System ........................................ 24
  3.4 Indonesian Women’s Political Participation and the 30% Quota .... 25
  3.5 State Control over Women’s Political Participation and Political
      Genealogy ................................................................................ 27
3.6 West Sumatran Women’s Participation in Politics .................... 31

CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY ............................................................... 33

4.1 Research Location .................................................................. 33
4.2 Selection of Respondents ...................................................... 34
4.3 Data Collection ..................................................................... 35
4.4 Data Analysis ........................................................................ 36

CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS ................................................................. 38

5.1 Electability ............................................................................ 41
5.1.1 Quota System .................................................................... 42
5.1.2 Male Connection ............................................................... 49
5.1.3 Candidate Qualification and Political Party Policy .............. 52
5.1.4 Motivation ......................................................................... 56
5.2 Current Service in Parliament ............................................. 60
5.2.1 Independent Agenda on Women’s Issues ......................... 60
5.2.2 Cultural Factors ............................................................... 63
5.2.3 Religion ............................................................................. 66

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION ............................ 69

6.1 Discussion ............................................................................. 69
6.1.1 Nomination and Election of Women Members of Parliament ... 69
6.1.2 Legislative Program of Women Member of Parliament ....... 73
6.2 Conclusion ............................................................................ 76
6.3 Further Research ................................................................... 78
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sex-ratio of Parliamentary Candidates in the 2004 Election</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sex-ratio of Members of Parliament in the 2004 Election</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Composition of Parliamentary Candidates in Patriarchal Indonesian Provinces 2004</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Composition of Parliamentary Delegations in Patriarchal Indonesian Provinces 2004</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ratio of Candidates Elected to Office from Selected Indonesian Provinces in 2004</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Composition of Parliamentary Delegates from Selected Indonesian Provinces, 2004</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Gender Related Development Index (GDI) by Province, 1999</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Informant Data Base</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Other Respondents</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Map of Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Map of Sumatra Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Legislator Candidates in West Sumatra and Riau Period 2004-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Legislators in West Sumatra and Riau Province Period 2004-2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This study is a cultural sociological inquiry into the political participation and social agency of Minangkabau women in West Sumatra province, Indonesia. Unlike most other Indonesian ethnic groups, the Minangkabau maintain a matrilineal social system, albeit with substantial accommodations for the prevailing patriarchal Indonesian Muslim social system. However, largely for historical reasons, some other provinces are involved in this study, including Riau, North Sulawesi and East Nusa Tenggara (Nusa Tenggara Timur, or ‘NTT’). These provinces are more patriarchal than West Sumatra. In Riau province there has been a long tradition of Minangkabau migration in which people from West Sumatra settle and adopt the more patriarchal Malay system. In North Sulawesi and NTT, the dominant religion is Christianity, and their society practice pure patriarchal system (Statistic Indonesia, BPS, 2003).

Although Minangkabau society prescribes female inheritance of land and property and other customs associated with matrilinuality, at the same time it also operates within a larger national system that generally endorses patriarchal values. This system is often justified by reference to Islamic teachings, since although Islam is not Indonesia’s state religion, the overwhelming majority of Indonesians, around 88%, are Muslim (Indonesian statistic, BPS, 2003). Consequently, the activities of Minangkabau women display both matrilininal and patriarchal influences.
Map No. 1 locates Sumatra in the Indonesian archipelago, while map No. 2 shows the area of West Sumatra, which includes the western part of Sumatra, and also the neighboring province of Riau in the south eastern part of Sumatra.
While this study focuses more specifically on female political participation in West Sumatra, additional information will be examined from Riau province. The population of both provinces belongs to the Malay ethnic group, with Islam the dominant religion. Riau, a province of 5.3 million people, is 88% Muslim, while West Sumatra is 98% Muslim and has a total population of 5.4 million (Indonesian Statistic, BPS, 2003). Over the last two hundred years, Minangkabau migration to Riau province has been ongoing; currently the ‘Minangkabau’ comprise about 65% of Riau’s population (Andaya 1995: 503). In such rantau (migration) areas, observers note that residents in the capital of Riau, Pekanbaru, use the Minangkabau language in their economic and daily activities, especially in the market area. Nonetheless, it is also evident that Minangkabau customs have undergone considerable change in the rantau and the social status of women has declined markedly. According to Els Postel-Coster (1992), the image of Minangkabau women is very different in the rantau from image in the original area. Women’s life in the rantau is generally viewed as a milieu marked by ‘a deterioration of social status’ (p. 231).

As an index of female political participation in society, data about women legislators in these two provinces were compared, along with information about the education and labor force participation of women in these provinces. The number of women elected to parliament was used as an indicator of female participation in the political field, years of schooling as an indicator of educational attainment, and women’s labor force participation as an indicator of their economic condition. This data was used to assess the hypothesis that the difference in social status of women between Riau and
West Sumatra is reflected in differences in the participation of women in the political system as candidates for legislative office, and as sitting legislators.

The Indonesian government has a policy of encouraging the participation of women in the national and provincial parliaments by suggesting the quota of 30%. The regulation enacted in 2003 by general Election Law number 12 of 2003 indicates that political parties should ensure that at least 30% of their candidates for election are women. This policy was in response to the influence of activist Indonesian women, who believed that increasing the number of women in the parliaments would increase the concern of parliaments for the concerns of women. However, female membership in many provincial legislatures is even lower. The electoral event had been conducted for ten times since Indonesia gained independence in 1945; the highest number of women’s representation in the national Indonesian Parliament was only 13%, which happened in electoral period 1987-1992 (Parawansa 2006). A major reason why Indonesian political parties have failed to meet the guidelines of the government is that this policy is advisory only, with no procedures for enforcement

1.2 Research questions and overall organization.

The gap between the national goal of at least 30% female participation in the Indonesian parliament and the reality that female participation is far lower than that interests researchers who detail the activities of Indonesian women in public forums. This study is founded upon the premise that women have a higher status in relation to men (in the sense of having opportunities for carrying out outside activities) in West Sumatra Province than in the more patriarchal systems of other provinces in Indonesia, because it operates in a combination of matrilineal and patriarchal systems. The research
presented here examines this question further. The three research questions areas of interest are as follows:

1. What opportunities do Minangkabau women in West Sumatra and Riau have to be politically involved in their society? Do women in West Sumatra have a more advantageous bargaining position relative to men than women in Riau, and if so, do they have more opportunities for political participation than Minangkabau women in Riau? What are the wider implications for Indonesia in general?

2. What factors influence the decisions of women to participate in the electoral politics of West Sumatra and Riau provinces?

3. What contradictions exist between the expectations placed upon Minangkabau women legislators by the matrilineal and patriarchal systems of West Sumatra and Riau?

The next chapter describes the overall history and culture of West Sumatra, particularly the social context, in relation to the condition of women in the local economy and educational system. Chapter 3 lists work by other researchers on this and related subjects, and also reviews their theories and positions. Chapter 4 explains the methodology of this study, including how the data was collected, recorded, and analyzed. Chapter 5 presents findings, and interprets the data found in the field. The final chapters analyze and discuss the data collected.
CHAPTER 2
SOCIAL CONTEXT

2.1. The structure of the Indonesian Parliament

The Indonesian parliament operates as a bicameral system in which the highest institution is called the People’s Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Republik Indonesia or MPR-RI). The MPR-RI consists of two institutions: the Peoples’ Representative Council (DPR-RI) and the Regional Representative Council (DPD). The MPR-RI, DPR-RI, and DPD are only found at the national level. At the local level, the representative board council is divided into two parts: the regional or municipal board council (DPRD Provinsi) at the provincial level and the county board council (DPRD Kota/Kabupaten) at the district level.

The political system in Indonesia is dominated by males and tightly centralized in Jakarta. The political parties have branches in every region. These political parties mostly have male leaders and follow the rules of the national political parties in Jakarta. This situation affects the ability of women to be elected, because decision making is dominated by men.

Normally, the Indonesian government should hold elections every five years. The first election was held in 1955. The transitional political situation during the Soekarno era in the first two decades of the Indonesian government had the result that the next election was conducted in 1971, with subsequent elections held in the years 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, and 1997. In the reform era after Soeharto was deposed in 1998, elections were conducted in the years 1999 and 2004.
2.2 Gender in Indonesian politics

In the Indonesian national election of 2004, 24 parties competed for seats in the House of Representatives (Sherlock 2004). In almost every province, the seven largest parties Golkar Party (Partai Golongan Karya), Indonesian Party for Democratic-Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan, PDI-P), National Awakening Party (Partai Kesatuan Bangsa, PKB), United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP), Justice and Prosperous Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS), Crescent Star Party (Partai Bulan Bintang, PBB), and Democrat Party succeeded nationally and locally in obtaining the required votes to seat their candidates in the legislature. Though the Indonesian political system has been characterized by many parties since 1998, Sherlock (2004) mentions these seven parties, with the exception of the Democrat Party, remain the most popular and continue to dominate the political arena in Indonesia (p.24).

Democrat Party is a newcomer, appearing first in the 2004 election. In the 1999 election, Democrat Party was not in existence, and at that time the National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional, PAN) was one of the five biggest parties.

A consistent trend in Indonesian national elections is that although far more men than women are elected, more women vote than men. Statistics from the year 2000 show that the female population in Indonesia reached 101 million, or 51% of the total. This was also reflected in the large numbers of women who turned out to vote (Cetro 2004). Even though more women than men voted, the results showed that more men than women were elected. In other words women voters must vote more often for male candidates than for female ones. Consequently, national and local women legislators in most provinces constitute less than one third of the total general assembly members. An example of
women's political participation can be seen in tables 1 and 2, which show the sex-ratio for parliamentary candidates and elected representatives in the 2004 elections for Riau and West Sumatra provinces.

Table 1. Sex-ratio of Parliamentary Candidates in the 2004 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riau</td>
<td>460 (72%)</td>
<td>180 (28%)</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sumatra</td>
<td>454 (74%)</td>
<td>163 (26%)</td>
<td>617</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.kpu.go.id

Table 2. Sex-ratio of Members of Parliament in the 2004 Elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riau</td>
<td>55 (95%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sumatra</td>
<td>50 (90%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.kpu.go.id

Figure 3 Legislator candidates in two provinces (%) Period 2004-2009

Figure 4 The result of General election 2004 for West Sumatra and Riau
As Table 1 illustrates, in the 2004 elections, 26% of the parliamentary candidates from West Sumatra were women candidates, slightly similar to the 28% female parliamentary slate in Riau province. However, as Table 2 shows, the proportion of women elected in the Parliament of West Sumatra province in the election was nearly twice as high as female representation in the Riau delegation.

Despite national goals for female political representation in the legislature to be increased and the encouragement for at least 30% women to be candidate for election, the laws are apparently not followed, nor do the laws appear to greatly affect the composition of the national parliament (NDI, 2003). As Table 3 shows, only 12% of the entire national parliament membership elected in 2004 is female. Even though one might expect that increasing the number of female candidates would lead to more women becoming legislators; this expectation has not been fulfilled. This phenomenon also can be seen at the provincial level. For instance in the 2004 elections, although Riau province has a large number of women parliamentary candidates compare to West Sumatra, twice as many of the parliamentary delegations, the number of women's legislators from Riau province are less than the number of women's legislators in West Sumatra.
As Tables 4 and 5 indicate, the experience of female candidates in West Sumatra is consistent with the rest of Indonesia, despite the unusual matrilineal culture in this province. The proportion of female candidates in five patriarchal
provinces which include Bali, South Sulawesi, Papua, NTT, and Riau is similar to West Sumatra. Also the ratio of female legislators between those patriarchal provinces and West Sumatra does not show significant differences, with the percentage of female delegations among 5% to 9%. More specific detailing regarding the composition of female legislators among fifteen provinces in Indonesia in 2004 elections can be seen on table 7.

Table 4: Composition of parliamentary candidates in five patriarchal provinces and West Sumatra province

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bali (Hindu 95%, Patriarchal)</td>
<td>461 (77%)</td>
<td>139 (23%)</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sulawesi (Islam 89%, Patriarchal)</td>
<td>181 (73%)</td>
<td>68 (27%)</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTT (Christian 83%, Patriarchal)</td>
<td>498 (73%)</td>
<td>188 (27%)</td>
<td>686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua (Christian 78 %, Patriarchal)</td>
<td>550 (71%)</td>
<td>229 (29%)</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riau (Islam 88%, Patriarchal)</td>
<td>460 (72%)</td>
<td>180 (28%)</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sumatra (Islam 98%, Matrialineal+Pat)</td>
<td>454 (74%)</td>
<td>163 (26%)</td>
<td>617</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://kpu.go.id/, Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Tabulation by author

Table 5: Composition of legislators in five patriarchal provinces and West Sumatra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bali (Hindu 95%, Patriarchal)</td>
<td>50 (91%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sulawesi (Islam 89%, Patriarchal)</td>
<td>64 (96%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTT (Christian 83%, Patriarchal)</td>
<td>51 (94%)</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua (Christian 78 %, Patriarchal)</td>
<td>40 (91%)</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riau (Islam 88%, Patriarchal)</td>
<td>55 (95%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sumatra (Islam 98%, Matrialineal+Pat)</td>
<td>50 (90%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://kpu.go.id/ Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Tabulation by author

In addition, as Table 6 illustrates, the probability that a female candidate will be elected to office, once nominated by a party, is far smaller than for male candidates. In the provinces studied, the probability that a female candidate will be elected to office
varies between 2% and 5%. The probability that a male candidate will be elected is
ranges from two to eight times higher. One likely explanation is that most female
candidates are nominated by parties in districts in which they have few supporters. Thus,
many female candidates are ‘throw aways’ nominated by parties who concede a district
but still field a candidate.

Table 6: Ratio of candidates elected to office from selected Indonesian provinces in 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bali (Hindu 95%, P)</td>
<td>50/461 (10%)</td>
<td>5/139 (4%)</td>
<td>55/600 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sulawesi (Islam 89%, P)</td>
<td>64/181 (35%)</td>
<td>3/68 (4%)</td>
<td>67/249 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTT (Christian 83%, P)</td>
<td>51/498 (10%)</td>
<td>3/188 (2%)</td>
<td>54/686 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua (Christian 78%, P)</td>
<td>40/550 (7%)</td>
<td>4/229 (2%)</td>
<td>44/779 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riau (Islam 88%, P)</td>
<td>55/460 (12%)</td>
<td>3/180 (2%)</td>
<td>58/640 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sumatra (Islam 98%, M+P)</td>
<td>49/454 (10.8%)</td>
<td>6/163 (3.7%)</td>
<td>55/617 (8.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: [http://kpu.go.id](http://kpu.go.id). Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
Tabulation by author.

To illustrate this point, Table 7 lists the composition of parliamentary delegations
in fifteen of the thirty two provinces in Indonesia. In this group, women comprise less
than 10% of the delegations of ten provinces, while the parliamentary delegations of five
provinces are between 10% and 20% female.
Table 7: Composition of parliamentary delegates from selected Indonesian provinces, 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bali</td>
<td>50 (91%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sulawesi</td>
<td>64 (96%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTT</td>
<td>51 (94%)</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua</td>
<td>40 (91%)</td>
<td>4 (9%)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riau</td>
<td>55 (95%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sumatra</td>
<td>50 (91%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Sulawesi</td>
<td>38 (86%)</td>
<td>6 (14%)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Sulawesi</td>
<td>38 (85%)</td>
<td>7 (16%)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aceh</td>
<td>62 (95%)</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Java</td>
<td>85 (85%)</td>
<td>15 (15%)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Java</td>
<td>89 (89%)</td>
<td>11 (11%)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogyakarta</td>
<td>50 (92%)</td>
<td>5 (9%)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banten</td>
<td>70 (93%)</td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Kalimantan</td>
<td>51 (95%)</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Kalimantan</td>
<td>35 (83%)</td>
<td>7 (17%)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://kpu.go.id](http://kpu.go.id) Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Tabulation by author

2.2 Gender, education, and personal autonomy.

Mean years of schooling of females and the number of pupils by provinces, sex, and status of school in 2003-04 were used as an index of the education of women and girls in West Sumatra and in Riau province (Tables 8 and 9). Likewise, labor force participation was used as a gauge of the access of women to wealth and the greater number of choices that wealth brings.
Table 8. Gender-related Development Index (GDI) by Province, 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Life expectancy (years)</th>
<th>Adult literacy rate (%)</th>
<th>Mean years of schooling (years)</th>
<th>Proportion of labor force (%)</th>
<th>GDI Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Aceh</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. North Sumatra</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. West Sumatra</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Riau</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Jambi</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. South Sumatra</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bengkulu</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lampung</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Jakarta</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. West Java</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Central Java</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Yogyakarta</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. East Java</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Bali</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 West Nusa Tenggara</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 East Nusa Tenggara</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>83.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 West Kalimantan</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Central Kalimantan</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 South Kalimantan</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 East Kalimantan</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 North Sulawesi</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Central Sulawesi</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 South Sulawesi</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 South East Sulawesi</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Maluku</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Irian Jaya (papua)</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Human Development Index (HDI) Indonesia 2001
As table 8 shows, while West Sumatra girls receive, on average, more schooling than girls in Riau province; for boys, the opposite is true. Nationally, West Sumatra is
sixth among the 26 provinces in Indonesia in the amount of schooling received by children, while Riau is ranked seventh. A similar difference exists in senior secondary school (similar to ninth to twelfth grade in the U.S.), as table 9 illustrates; although the two provinces have virtually the same population, a greater proportion of West Sumatran girls enter high school than is the case in Riau.

West Sumatra women are also more likely to work for wages or a salary; as table 8 indicates, female labor participation in West Sumatra province is the fourth highest in Indonesia. Moreover, West Sumatra is relatively rural compared to the leading three provinces, which are all dominated by a major city like Jakarta. By comparison, while Riau is fifth in female workforce participation, the percentage is 10% lower than for West Sumatra.

In conclusion, West Sumatra’s matrilineal society apparently opens up economic, educational, and even political opportunities for women. However, in other areas, such as East Kalimantan and East Java, women are even more involved in the political process, although these areas are organized patriarchally. This is most likely explained by the unusual characteristics of these provinces. East Java is dominated by a traditionalist Islamic organization, Nadhatul Ulama (NU). NU has many sub organizations, such as sub organizations for women (Muslimat NU), young girl’s organization (Fatayat NU), and young boy’s organization (GP Ansyor NU). These women’s sub organizations provide the members of NU to involve in public activities with several organization experiences. Additionally, from about decade ago NU has been divided between conservative and progressive kyai. Kyai are informal leaders in the NU community and in East Java, where the party is strong, people are more loyal to their kyai.
than to government officials, even in regard to programs developed by the government. Some kyai of the progressive NU faction have already developed programs in their communities related to women’s issues, including the provision of opportunities as female legislators. Thus many women’s legislators in East Java have contributed to the NU community. Of fifteen female legislators in East Java province, six come from the NU organization that is affiliated in parliament with Partai Kesatuan Bangsa (PKB, one of the five biggest parties in Indonesia and led by former president Abdurhaman Wahid). In East Kalimantan, Islamic traditions are less entrenched, largely because the area has been subject to recent migration.
3.1 Bargaining Position

According to Agarwal (1994), the bargaining position is defined as the gender relations between men and women, in which women have the independent ability to live with several alternatives (p.67). She argues that women can attain a bargaining position through their ownership of assets, such as land and property. In the Indian context, Agarwal claims land has critical importance in determining women’s economic wellbeing, social status and political power. By owning assets, women have access to income derived from use of these assets and can utilize that capital autonomously, independent of patriarchal control.

Agarwal has compared matrilineal and patriarchal cultures across South Asia, and has found a direct relationship between the power of women and land ownership. She looked at some small tribes of northern and western areas in South Asia which still practice matrilineal and bilateral systems that contribute to women’s autonomy through passing land inheritance through the female line (p.153). The matrilineal system in West Sumatra is similar to the ‘tribal’ areas studied by Agarwal, in that women here own a greater share of the land and property than most women in the other provinces, and they also have a better bargaining position compared to women elsewhere in Indonesia. Although Agarwal primarily discusses women who exercise personal control over their land and property, the hypothesis that land ownership and relatively higher female status are correlated seems to hold even when property cannot be alienated (i.e. women cannot themselves sell it) except with the agreement of the extended family and for particular
reasons¹. In West Sumatra, land and property is communal; it is maintained by women and it can be utilized for their other activities, but they cannot sell it because it is controlled by the extended clan or lineage group (kaum). The concept of ‘ownership’ in Minangkabau’s matrilineal society thus places limits on the extent to which women can actually exploit the land that passes through the female line. Nevertheless, even if understandings of ‘ownership’ are different, it seem evident that possessing substantial amounts of property does give West Sumatran women greater self confidence, helping them build productive lives outside their household, including involvement in political activities.

3.2 The Historical Heritage in Women’s Roles

The relative prominence of women in West Sumatra’s politics and culture is evident in the region’s recent history. Since the late nineteenth century Minangkabau women have held prominent positions as writers and teachers, particularly in comparison to most of Indonesia during the Dutch colonial period. The first Indonesian female journalist, Roehanna Koeddoes (1884-1972), began her career in 1892, teaching women in West Sumatra (Fitriyanti 2001). In 1911, she founded a women’s school in West Sumatra, In 1912, Koeddoes founded a newspaper named ‘Santian Melayoe’ (Malay Ornament), which she managed with Zubaidah Ratna Juita; published for nine years, the paper was active in voicing women’s issues.

In 1923, Ummi Rachmah El Junusiah founded a school for girls in Padang Panjang, Diniyah Putri. Even though many people hesitated to support her activities, she

¹ According to adat, the member of kaum can sell the communal property legally for several reasons, including the cases when urgent conditions related to kaum such as, the custom house (Rumah gadang) needs to repair, when there is a body in the custom house need to bury, and when the ‘adult’ women need to have a husband.
persisted in establishing the school in order to empower women. In that year, she traveled to North Sumatra and Malaya with an uncle who was a merchant to make her school more widely known. She also undertook great efforts to collect donations after the earthquake of 1926 in Padang Panjang destroyed her school (de-Stuers 1992). The school, Diniyah Putri, has now been in existence for eighty-three years.

In 1927, Asyiah, the women's wing of the Muhammadyah, one of the biggest and oldest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, opened in West Sumatra. Asyiah was led by Ramlah, one of the women activists of the Muhammadyah. Within two years, the organization spread throughout West Sumatra, being led by women who established medical clinics, schools and orphanages (Nafis 2006). Another memorable woman is Siti Saodah, a woman who also faced challenges from society while attempting to continue her study. Sa'adah Halim was a female journalist who led and worked for Soeara Perempuan (Women's Journal 2003) in 1938. Minangkabau women were also active in the nationalist movement. Some women even led guerilla forces in the field in 1908, for example, Siti Manggopoh (1880-1916) who became a leader in a guerilla war against the Dutch in the Padang Pariaman district. She helped strengthen groups opposing the Dutch in this area. In one of the battles, her forces killed fifty-three Dutch soldiers (Yurnaldi 2003). Rasuna Said, an orator and one of the leaders of the Indonesian Muslim Party (Partai Muslimin Indonesia or Permi), was imprisoned by the Dutch for fifteen months in 1932 (Kahin 1999: 56) because she called openly for the independence of Indonesia in her oration at the Permi meeting.

In short, many West Sumatra women were active in public affairs decades before national independence, at a time when most Indonesian women were illiterate and
housebound. The contribution of Indonesian women legislators thus builds on a long record of bold and determined work by outspoken West Sumatra women. The major reason for West Sumatra’s exceptional contribution to female empowerment in Indonesia is the unique history and culture of the region.

3.3 Culture and Religion in West Sumatra

Culture refers to the universal human capacity to classify, codify and communicate their experiences symbolically. As defined by Tylor (1924) in Williams (2007), culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired members of a society (p.251). Further, the manifestation of culture consists of four elements, notably values, norms, institution and artifacts. A major reason why West Sumatra women are able to transcend their rural Indonesian environment is that the culture of their people combines the Islam pervasive in the archipelago with a more ancient matrilineal social organization. The Minangkabau term for this aspect of their culture is *Adat*. ²

The manner in which Minangkabau women advance in Indonesia by negotiating the features of *adat* is explained well by Anthony Gidden’s Structuration Theory. For over thirty years, Gidden has attempted to explain how people are heavily influenced by their society, while simultaneously helping to change social norms through conceptually joining action and system (Kilminister 1991). As agents, individuals have knowledge which they can use in innovative and creative ways. With knowledge and will, enabled agents have sufficient power to transform the structure, while at the same time, their actions, ideas, and goals are heavily influenced by the existing social structure. All

---

² *Adat* is a cultural tradition recognized as distinct by a particular ethnic group. It subsumes social custom, tradition, belief and laws in that society (Blackwood, 2000:198 and Sanday, 2002: 255).
individuals, even slaves, children, and women, have some power to influence society, but inequalities of power definitely occur along lines of class, gender and race. The specific way in which power and resources are distributed throughout a society is manifested by the rules that govern individuals.

In the case of West Sumatra, female legislators are agents attempting to shape Indonesian society, by influencing national laws, administrative policies, and government budgets. However, unlike other women in the national parliament, or those who might wish to be in parliament but are not, West Sumatra women can negotiate by using the Minangkabau *adat* tradition as a resource that gives them more power in relation to men than is typical for Indonesian women. Also, through the matrilineal distribution of property maintained by *adat*, West Sumatra female legislators also have more financial and social resources at their disposal to help them gain and keep political power. At the same time, they are also influenced by *adat*, as is the structure of the local parliament. It is the combination of matrilineal and patriarchal society in Minangkabau that situates female legislators as agents.

3.3.1 Matrilineal System

How does the matrilineal system operate in Minangkabau? In the first place, it works to strengthen the links between women in the extended family. As Peggy Reeves Sanday (2000) explains; “The matrilineal system is the transgenerational link in the maternal chain, through which pass ancestral land and matrilineal title from the grandmother to the mother, and then to the granddaughter, and her descendant in the female line” (p. 27). Sanday emphasizes that women are positioned at the core of the generational family. Largely through this matrilineal social organization, the leading
figure in a Minangkabau extended family, usually the oldest sister, is a symbolic ‘queen mother,’ or ‘Bundo Kanduang’ (Sanday 2002). As Bundo Kanduang, her responsibility includes teaching customs, adat, to members of her extended family (Sanday 2002). Her role also includes serving as an important advisor to her relatives and kinfolk.

Another scholar, Evelyn Blackwood, also says that the ‘Bundo Kanduang’ is the senior woman in her kinship group. Women are like mothers (Bundo Kanduang) of the lineage, because they own the family’s property, and are thereby able to control their own social identity. One apparent consequence is that the Minangkabau language has no term for domination or subordination, because women also have privileges in their clan and kinship network that also gives them social power in their community (Blackwood 2000).

As indicated above, part of the power of a Bundo Kanduang comes from her relative age, as well as her sex. In Minangkabau society, all senior women and men are leaders in their communities. They are incorporated in a complex ‘web of power’ that has many different orientations (Blackwood 2000, p.189). This social system separates the roles of men and women such that are ‘mothers’ of the lineage, while men are tasked with ‘protecting’ the lineage. Under adat, all women and men have definite rights and privileges, assigned by their sex, age, and birth order. The same view is evident in the work of Wieringa, who noted that women in Minangkabau society have social status in terms of their customs, property ownership, and egalitarianism in the society (Wieringa 1995). Overall, according to the observers above, the matrilineal system opens up a space for women to be decision makers in their communities in terms of adat, and custom. However, the question of whether the matrilineal system has a beneficial impact
on women’s political participation in generally remains to be examined, and is the topic of this research project.

3.3.2 Islam and the Patriarchal system

Matrilineality characterized the Minangkabau long before Islam reached West Sumatra in the sixteenth century (Dobbins 1992). Despite the initial tension between traditional Minangkabau beliefs and Islam, the world religion was ultimately very successful; today, more than 97% of the Minangkabau population is Muslim (Indonesia Statistic, 2003).

At first, the two traditions conflicted violently; disputes over religion and culture even broke out into open warfare in the nineteenth century, the so-called Padri War. However, since the mid-nineteenth century, the two traditions have settled into a comfortable plurality, as the Minangkabau intertwine Islamic law with their older traditions (Sanday 2002). One common Minangkabau motto is: ‘Adat stands on Islam and Islam stands on the Qur’an’ (De Stuers 1960: 26).

The mixture of ideas between Islamic rule and matrilineal custom ultimately influenced the Minangkabau understanding of gender roles, leading to contemporary matrilineality in West Sumatra. Despite this matrilineal tradition, Minangkabau society is also deeply embedded within the Islamic religion, which has a heritage of favoring the patriarchal system. Additionally, other areas around West Sumatra, such as North Sumatra, South Sumatra and all the provinces in Indonesia employ the patriarchal system.

In feminist theory terms, patriarchy is a system of male dominance over women in society (Lerner 1986: 7). The domination of men affects women’s lives by relegating them to subordinate positions due to gender discrimination. In West Sumatra, however,
Islam frequently adapts to the local, Minangkabau culture. In other words, being a devout Muslim in Western Sumatra does not mean that a woman has little authority or little influence.

3.4 Indonesian Women's Political Participation and the 30% Quota

Under the 1966-1998 ‘New Order’ regime of Soeharto, female political participation was only a tool to accomplish government policies. Organizations like the Civil Servant’s Wives Association (Dharma Wanita) and Family Welfare Guidance (Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga, PKK) confined more than facilitated political activity by women. Although these organizations did give women opportunities for activity outside their homes, they focused on supporting husbands, rather than empowering women to speak for their personal interests. Their programs controlled the participation of women involved in political parties and other social organizations. Under Soeharto, women were encouraged to only think of their husband’s life and their household; their primary concerns were expected to be domestic, e.g., bearing and caring for children, and attending to their husbands. In regard to the state, women were expected to support their husbands’ careers through PKK and Dharma Wanita.

Women in both urban and rural areas were encouraged to be involved in the PKK and Dharma Wanita programs. Throughout Indonesia, the Soeharto government internalized its prescription of ‘womanhood’ into a hegemonic ideology. Suryakusuma (2004) calls it ‘State Ibuism,’ using an Indonesian word for ‘mother’ (p.162). By intent and effect, this ‘mother-ism’ or ‘State Ibuism,’ created women who were dependent on their husbands and other men. Politically, socially and psychologically, ‘state ibuism’
withdrew social recognition of the autonomy of women, depriving Indonesian women of their agency (Suryakusuma 2004).

The deposing of Soeharto in May 1998 dramatically altered the Indonesian political system, and was originally expected to transform the role of women in the nation. However, even though Indonesian political parties and mass media have flourished under the 2001 decentralization policy, democratization and women's participation in political life was still problematic. For example, routine practices of bribing and otherwise distributing money to voters before elections, along with certain regulations and new laws passed by the more-autonomous provinces, have increased the marginalization of women in politics (Budianta 2006). Indeed, between 1999 and 2004, no more than 9% of the members of the People's Representative Assembly (Majelis Permuyawaratan Rakyat,-MPR) were female, and female participation in provincial, municipal, and regency assemblies hovered between 3% and zero (Budianta 2006:917).

As Indonesia's democratic institutions evolved, the reform era has continued, but increasing female political participation has remained the official goal rather than a national goal. For example, in 2003, a new law encouraged—but did not require—political parties to reserve 30% of their seats in the national and local legislatures for women. The Indonesian government already adopted CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women) with the enactment of Law No.7/1984 and Presidential Decree No.9/2000 at the national level. In 2001 feminists in Indonesia had urged the government to put in place a reservation of 30% women in parliament. Activists argued that the more women in parliament who contribute to the
creation of public policy, the more public policy debates will develop concerning women's issues (Hapsari 2001).

Since debating the reservation discourse almost three years, women's reservation in parliament meant providing a 30% quota system have already been mentioned in Indonesian Electoral Law with the enactment of Law No. 12/2003. Article 65 (1) of this Law states that: 'Every political party has an opportunity to present their candidates with a consideration of female candidates, at least 30% …' This law provides opportunities for women to be involved in the election process and to be elected as legislators. However, the regulation is just a suggestion without strong law enforcement from the Indonesian government that will establish real involvement of women in politics. The autonomy of political parties in selecting their candidate is stronger than this law and has far yielded little result in the way of increased political participation for women in Indonesia.

3.5 State Control over Women's Political Participation and Political Genealogy

Despite the new quota policy and the official goal of Indonesian society for women to participate more in the political system, the number of female legislators is low—far below the official 30% goal—throughout Indonesia. A major reason is that many other factors besides discriminatory laws influence the decisions of women to participate in politics. As McGlen, O'Connor, Van Assendelft and Gunther-Canada explain in Women's Political Participation, in addition to gender bias, female political participation is not only influenced by the political system, but also the race, class, ethnic, and educational backgrounds of individual women (2001). Consequently, some of the obstacles to female political participation can be traced to the government and other influences that infuse major institutions within Indonesian society.
In Indonesia, the government system is still tightly centralized in Jakarta. In many ways, Soeharto’s former New Order regime still affects the nation. In particular, because most influential figures in contemporary Indonesian politics are men who grew up under Soeharto, Indonesia’s national and regional leaders were largely socialized to presume that positions of authority should be exclusively held by men. Therefore, Indonesia illustrates what McGlen, O’Connor, Van Assendelft and Gunther-Canada (2001) meant when they argued that male domination of government merely reflects negative cultural attitudes and cultural expectations in the society governed. These cultural obstacles discourage, and even bar, women from being involved in the public sphere, and instead, public-minded women are channeled into charitable activities (p. 88).

Lacking direct access to political institutions and limited ability to speak independently to political leaders, women do not have resources to campaign for real programs that will address women’s concerns. Consequently, not only do few women know how to run a winning campaign; they also have great difficulty framing an independent agenda for women’s issues. Ultimately, national and local governments pass few favorable laws and devote few resources to addressing matters than affect Indonesian women, beyond a narrow band of concerns that relate to them to their families.

One example where culture has heavily influenced politics to reinforce male supremacy in Indonesia is the controversial elevation of Megawati Soekarnoputri as president of Indonesia in 2001. Megawati, a woman, succeeded former president Abdurrahman Wahid after he was impeached in 2000 (Brenner 2005). One of the major groups opposing her presidency was the National Awakening Party (PKB), which represented Wahid’s power base. However, more influential than the petty personal
rivalry of Wahid and his supporters were the loud protests from conservative Muslims who claimed that having a female of state contradicted Islam (Brenner 2005). As I will show later, despite her failings as a political leader, Megawati's ability to serve as president was fundamentally hampered by prejudice against her sex and the entrenched sexism institutionalized in Indonesian politics.

Another obstacle to persuading Indonesian legislatures to address the issues of Indonesian women is that, beyond an unusual standout like Megawati, most female legislators owe their office to their relationship to senior bureaucrats or military members (McCormick 2003). As such, they have little independent political support, and many were not chosen for either their abilities or concern about public issues but because they are a member of Golkar party or active in ‘Dharma Wanita.’ They are unable to address major issues confronting women, or even to voice the concerns of their constituents very well because they lack the experience and ability of capable decision-makers and do not evince much interest in gaining the skills to use their offices effectively. In addition, they were placed in a different political atmosphere following reforms in the Indonesian government and changes in the political system after Soeharto was deposed in 1998. Those women legislators are not typically re-elected after the first term and most of the women in the Golkar Party had to work hard to regain a seat in 2004 national election.

In contrast to the national and local legislatures, some women are more active in grassroots organizations, participating as NGO (Non-Government Organization) activists, writers and artists, where they are less under the control of party leaders and politicians in general. Women such as Gadis Arivia, Ratna Sarumpaet, and Ninik Leksono participated in politics as members of organizations like Suara Ibu Peduli (Voice of Mothers group).
Through this NGO, these women helped reform the Indonesian political system by bringing about the fall of Soeharto (McCormick 2003).

As previously mentioned, Megawati Soekarnoputri is one of the women who became prominent politically during the last years of Soeharto regime and the early years of the Reform era. A member of the Indonesian Party for Democratic Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan, or PDI-P), Megawati is a daughter of the first Indonesian president, Soekarno. However, she did not enter politics until 1986, long after her father was deposed, and subsequently died. In fact, Megawati was recruited into the PDI (Indonesian Democratic Party) largely for her expected appeal to voters (McCormick 2003: 16). Although she was indeed swiftly elected to a five-year term in the national parliament, she did not play a strong role in either the parliament or the PDI party, and she never commented to the press on important issues. Even her position as the titular PDI leader from 1993 is due more to the fact that she is the daughter of the nearly mythical Soekarno, rather than to her personal abilities. She is only one of many women who have carried on a political legacy for a male relative after his death.

One of Megawati’s influential female rivals is Siti Hardiyati Rukmana, nicknamed ‘Tuitut’, a member of the Golkar Party, and a daughter of former president Soeharto. A third major female politician in Indonesia is Khofifah Indar Parawansa of the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, or PPP, but then she moved to the PKB party); unlike the other two, none of her close relatives is a politician.

The contrasting histories of these women illustrate the most common routes of Indonesian women into positions of at least nominal power and prestige (McCormick 2003). In particular, not only Megawati but major female figures in the dominant Golkar
party, like Siti, differ from Khofifah in that they hold office more for their loyalty to the party, and their family connections, than for their appeal to voters.

3.6 West Sumatran Women’s Participation in Politics

Males also dominate in the provincial level politics, where they are reluctant to permit women to hold real power. For example, in West Sumatra, only five out of 55 legislators are female (KPU data, 2004), despite the official policy goal of at least 30% female candidates, and the expectation that this will bring more female legislators into national and regional parliament.

In addition to the effects of Soekarno’s regime, and the pervasive male domination of Indonesian culture, the consequences of a 1958 unsuccessful rebellion of West Sumatra against the central government added to the obstacles facing local female empowerment by making the Minangkabau more reluctant to defy the Jakarta government (Kahin 1999). Moreover, local political party members follow national party leaders in the central city in regard to policies about women politicians. Though the matrilineal system is a potential boost to female agency and active participation in politics by women, the influence of the national culture is proving stronger than local traditions.

The liberative force of matrilineality is further undermined by reinterpretations of certain adat writings to accommodate the old Soeharto regime. As an example of men who reinterpreted adat writings, Blackwood (2004) discusses one Idrus Dt.Hakimy Dt. Radjo Penghulu. It was in 1966 when the Soeharto government formed the Association of Adat Council on the Minangkabau World (Lembaga Kerapatan Adat Alam Minangkabau-LKAAM). Under central government direction, the LKAAM institution,
together with Idrus Dt.Hakimy Radjo Penghulu, reinterpreted *adat* writings. The reinterpretation conformed to the policies of the Jakarta government, as expressed by such institutions as Dharma Wanita and PKK, which declared that the most important role of women in society was to serve as good wives and mothers, or Bundo Kanduang (Blackwood 2001, p.141). Furthermore, the very reduction of *adat*, originally an oral tradition, to writing illustrates the influence of the new Indonesian state. Although the restructuring of *adat* reflects Jakarta's concern with the restive nature of the Minangkabau people, especially after the 1959 rebellion, the changes also illustrate the local power of men, particularly when they are cooperating with a central government dominated by men.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Interviews were the primary method of data collection in this study. The interviews with nine female legislators were conducted in West Sumatra province and with three female legislators in Riau province between July 25 and August 22, 2006. Additional interviews with three female legislators from the eastern part of Indonesia (South Sulawesi and NTT) were conducted by phone between November 17 and November 29, 2006. In total, fifteen female legislators were interviewed with focuses in two provinces.

The type of interview in this research is open-ended and in-depth. As stated by Shulamit Reinharz (1992), open ended and in-depth interviews are also called ‘semi-structured’ and ‘unstructured interviewing’ respectively. This type of interview research gives the interviewer access to the informant’s ideas, thoughts, and memories. Since the current research project utilizes women’s legislators as informants, this method of interviewing is important for the study of women’s issues. It brings to mind a comment by Reinharz: researchers’ access to women’s problems is a way of learning from women and is an antidote to centuries of ignoring women’s ideas altogether or having men speak for women (p.19)

4.1 Research Location

The specific research locations are West Sumatra and Riau. Those provinces were chosen for several reasons:

a. People in West Sumatra practice a combination of the matrilineal system and the patriarchal system.
b. People in the Riau Province live in a patriarchal system, and, even though many Minangkabau people migrate to Riau from West Sumatra, the migrants adopt the patriarchal system in Riau.

On a personal note, I believe that my background of being of the same ethnic Malay group and my cultural heritage as a member of a matrilineal society is also useful in analyzing the social phenomena in these areas specifically and Indonesia generally.

4.2 Selection of Respondents

Women's strategies and activities in the political field in Indonesia can be best understood through direct observation of women who are legislators. The unit of analysis in this research is individual women legislators in the House of Representatives. To gather descriptive and narrative facts about the matrilineal and patriarchal societies, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with fifteen female legislators. This number is a percentage of the overall number of female legislators and could be considered the maximum data needed to capture the phenomenon without 'saturation.' 3

Even though the interviews focus on female legislators, it is still necessary to broaden the investigation to include their family members and colleagues because all the aspects of an individual’s social life are interconnected and often one aspect cannot be adequately understood without the consideration of the others (Berg 2004, p.252). Therefore, interviews were conducted with other informants who are knowledgeable about the research questions, including scholars, informal leaders, male politicians and other parties. In this research, I interviewed three informal leaders, three politicians who

---

3 The researcher found the same data and information from different informants many times. Continuing to collect similar data (saturation) is not necessary, and in this case the researcher should end the interview process.
were colleagues of female legislators, one scholar and the husband of a female legislator, and two women who are active in a women’s NGO.

4.3. Data Collection

This study used qualitative methods. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) stated that “qualitative method refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data through written and spoken words and observable behavior” (p.5). The opinions of female legislators, the strategies they used to become legislators, such as their experiences during election process and their activities as legislators were examined and documented through in-depth open-ended interviews. These interviews were conducted to get full and accurate information from informants (Whyte 2003, p.110). Interviews were conducted using an interview guide and were tape-recorded. The interviews were conducted using either the Minangkabau language or Bahasa Indonesia and later translated into English.

Observation is an important method for gathering information about the female legislator’s activities in the political field. Since this research focuses on women’s daily activities as legislators, the researcher recorded and observed female legislators’ activities during six weeks of intense interaction with them. The researcher witnessed the House of Representatives meetings, followed two female legislators to their homes, and participated in their political and family activities in several other places, including homes and the political party office. The goal of this approach was to gain a first hand account the pressures on female legislators and how they resolve these issues in their personal as well as professional lives.
4.4. Data Analysis

According to Yin (2002:21), there are five components in designing case study research, including the proposition, the research question, the unit of analysis, the logic linking the data to the proposition, and the criteria for interpreting the findings. In this study, the analysis focuses on (1) the opportunities and the bargaining position for women in West Sumatra and (2) the factors that influence them and their strategies in their political and personal lives. Addressing the proposition, this research assumes that women in West Sumatra have more opportunities than women in other provinces that practice more patriarchal systems. The unit of analysis, as mentioned before, is individual female legislators. The logic linking the data to the proposition was carried out in the data analysis and the interpretation of the findings.

Qualitative data collected from in-depth interviews and observations were placed into two categories related to the research question, including the women's electability and their current service in parliament. For electability, the themes selected concerned the quota system, male connections, political party and qualification, and motivation for participation. For their current service in the parliament, questions focused on whether women legislators have an independent agenda, and the influence of cultural and religious factors on their service. The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed so the data could be coded. Data coding was based on the informant's statements on the issue in every parameter and variable. First, the coding system used a simple 'yes' or 'no.' Then, detailed analysis was continued with the respondent's explanations. To analyze the respondent's statement, this research follows the five steps that Yin (2001) proposed including (1), collection of verbal data; (2), reading of these data; (3), breaking data into
themes; (4), organization and expression of the data from a disciplinary perspective and linking between the proposition and field notes; (5) synthesis and summary of the data for purposes of communication to the scholarly community.
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

In investigating women's political activities in West Sumatra province, interviews were completed with four female legislators who are sitting in the provincial legislative council, and five female legislators in the municipal legislative council. In Riau Province, interviews were conducted with one female legislator sitting in the provincial legislative council, and two female legislators at the municipal council level in Pekanbaru municipality (Pekanbaru is the capital city of Riau Province). In sampling North Sulawesi and NTT, each of the interviewees was a legislator at the provincial level and one female legislator was from regional board council level in NTT.

In total, fifteen female legislators were asked about the 30% quota system, male connections, qualification and political party, and their motivation to seek political life. Also some complementary information was done by interviewing other informants who were connected to the female legislators. The background information about the informants can be seen in summary interviews on table 10 and table 11. Those tables titled; 'informant data base' and 'other informants data base':
### Table 10: Informant Data Base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name, Party, Province</th>
<th>Previous work</th>
<th>Educational background</th>
<th>Political experience</th>
<th>Relations to Influential Males</th>
<th>Family status (H=husband)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Salma, PBB, WS</td>
<td>Administrative staff in Educational Institution</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Party activist since 1999.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Unmarried.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yeny, PKS, WS</td>
<td>merchant</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Islamic, student, women's activist; party activist since 1998.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>H= entrepreneur. Four children, ages 2-11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Name*, Party, Province</td>
<td>Previous work</td>
<td>Educational background</td>
<td>Political experience</td>
<td>Relations to Influential Males</td>
<td>Family status (H=husband)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Yossy, FBB, WS</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Golkar activist, formerly; PBB party since 1998</td>
<td>Brother in law, politician</td>
<td>Unmarried.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ida, Golkar, WS</td>
<td>Entrepreneur, construction.</td>
<td>B.S.</td>
<td>Trade association member, party activist since 1998.</td>
<td>Father and husband, entrepreneur</td>
<td>H=entrepreneur. One child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Marni, Demokrat, Riau</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Women’s trade association member.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>H=entrepreneur. Three children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dinda, Golkar, NTT</td>
<td>Lecturer.</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>Party activist since 1990s</td>
<td>Uncle, Mayor in Local government (Sor regency)</td>
<td>H= civil servant. One child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Fitri., Democrat, NTT</td>
<td>Administrative staff in construction company</td>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>Party Activist in Democrat party since 2004</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>H=entrepreneur construction. Childless.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11: Other Informant Data Base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name*</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Province</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Drs. Indra</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Golkar legislator since 1992.</td>
<td>West Sumatra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(WS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rizal</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Golkar legislator since 2004</td>
<td>WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Heldi</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>PKS provincial legislator since 1999 (colleague), husband of female municipal council member.</td>
<td>WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Golkar legislator.</td>
<td>Riau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dt. Tendy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Informal Malay cultural leader.</td>
<td>Riau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dt. Kamal</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Informal Minangkabau cultural leader.</td>
<td>WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hj. Anny</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Traditional Minangkabau cultural leader.</td>
<td>WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>DR. Rer. Soc Irdam</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Amsir M.S</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lina</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>NGO activist; KPPI</td>
<td>WS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Zainab, S.H</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>NGO activist; LBH APIK</td>
<td>WS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Names fictionalized

Electability

This research focuses on women legislators at the local board council levels such as provincial and municipal council levels. Assuming the competition at the local council
level is not as intense as at the national level, the number of women that can be elected at
the local level is greater than at the national level. In other words, the opportunities for
female legislators to be elected are greater at the local level than at the national level,
even though the opportunity is still linked to their rank on the list of candidates or *(Daftar
Calon Tetap-DCT)*. Hence, the phenomena of female legislators can be better observed
at the local council levels.

In a representative democracy, anyone seeking a full legislative term, regardless
of sex, ethnicity, or class, must win an election. Many factors influenced the prospects
for Indonesian women seeking public office, ranging from the national 30% goal for
female representation in parliaments, to the political influence of the woman’s relatives,
as well as her qualifications for office, and the local popularity of her political party. All
of these factors were discussed by the people I interviewed.

5.1.1. Quota System

As described earlier, since 2003, Indonesian parties have been encouraged to
guarantee that at least 30% of the candidate representatives that they send to the
provincial and national parliaments are women. The election 2004 system applies ‘open
list’ proportional representation or the *system proportional daftar terbuka* (Sherlock
2004). Under this system, the parties and candidates’ name will be named on the ballot
paper and voters will have the opportunity to cast a vote for a single individual as well as
a party. Thus, women’s candidates have opportunities to be chosen by voters through the
ballot paper. However, political parties have played an important role, in which these
political parties arrange a slate of candidates (*daftar calon tetap*, or *DCT*) for parliament,
ranked in order of preference. The more votes that a party receives, the more of its
candidates win parliamentary seats. Top-ranked candidates are the most likely to win election among the candidates of their party. In the 2004 election, most top-ranked candidates in all the major parties were male. Another indication of their importance is that top-ranked candidates are most likely among the members of their party to hold key party positions, including party chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary.

Men are predominant at the top of the DCT lists of all major political parties, including the Golkar Party (Partai Golongan Karya), Indonesian Party for Democratic Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan, PDI-P), and United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP). These major political parties have branches in every province in Indonesia, these offices are mostly chaired by men, and power within these parties is concentrated among the male members of particular powerful families. In these parties, election to a parliament is both a consequence and a method of having power within one’s party.

By comparison, in newer parties, women generally have more opportunities to hold important leadership positions, because there is less competition for leadership within the party. In addition, as most newcomer politicians have similar experiences, a greater proportion of female party members appear to be among the most qualified for leadership than in major political parties. Some of these new political parties include the National Mandate Party (Partai amanat Nasional, PAN), National Awakening Party (Partai Kesatuan Bangsa, PKB), Prosperity and Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS), and Crescent Star Party (Partai Bulan Bintang, PBB). These parties were established during the first year of the reform era in Indonesia, after the deposing of Soeharto regime in 1998.
Referring to table No.10, in interviewing nine female legislators in West Sumatra, two of them (one from Golkar Party and one from PAN, or informant No.9 and No.1) stated that the quota system does not help them directly. But the other seven female legislators thought that at least this system provides some opportunities for women to participate in the election process. Three out of seven female legislators (informant No. 2, 3, and 7) answered ‘yes’ spontaneously when questioned as to whether the quota system benefited them or not. These three come from different parties, notably PDI-P, PBB and PKS. Four out of seven female legislators (informants No.4, 5, 6, and 8), two from PKS and the rest from PBB party answered ‘yes and no’ in the question as to whether the 30% quota influenced them to be legislators. The reason these four female legislators gave the combination answer ‘yes and no’ is because the 30% quota has a role but not the sole role in determining if they were elected to parliament.

Representing Riau province, three female legislators were interviewed (informants from No.10-12 in table 10). One of them (informant No.11) said that the 30% quota system did not affect her election. However two of them mentioned that the 30% quota system was influential in their election, based on the opportunity that they have from their parties as candidates. Among the rest of the female legislators, one from South Sulawesi (informant No.13) did not agree that 30% quota helped her to be elected in any substantial way. This was a similar answer to that of the female legislator from the Golkar Party in NTT (informant No.14), but the other female legislator from Democrat Party (Informant No.15) said that the 30% quota helped her to be elected.

In general, female legislators who believe a 30% quota system did not help them to be chosen as legislators said that the quota system only provided the opportunity to run
for election and not to actually be elected. From these perspectives, it can be explained that for members of new political parties the quota helps them to be elected, while for larger parties, which have existed for a long time and have many politicians, it does not help female politicians to be elected. Rather it allows them entry to the election process without guarantee of being elected. The quota system is only then an ‘affirmative action’ plan without any legal obligation for political parties to elect 30% females to its power positions. One female mentioned that the 30% quota does not help her, as she stated below;

It is just a ‘rubber law’ (undang-undang karet). The major political parties have their own system in determining which of their cadres get into the House of Representatives. Unlike the new or small parties that intend to implement the ‘30 % quota system’ that comes from the central government, large parties tend to apply the regulation from their central political party’s policy themselves. (Interview with informant No.1 on Wednesday, August 16, 2006).

For major political parties such as Golkar, PDI-P (Indonesian Party for Democratic-Struggle), and PPP (United Development Party) the existing recruitment systems among the cadres to become legislative candidates are more dominant than the newer quota policy system. Women as cadres have to compete with male politicians. This competition is linked to the phenomena that the major parties tend to have male politicians in the highest positions. The opportunities to run for legislators are dictated by male politicians who have the leading position in their parties. They put women at the base of the list of candidates, because those women do not have prominent positions. Consequently, most women’s cadres are placed below their male counterparts. They are at a disadvantage because their opportunities to be elected as legislators are fewer than male politicians since women do not hold positions of authority in their parties. This
phenomenon happens in almost all provinces in Indonesia. As stated by one female legislator from a dominant party, Golkar party, in NTT;

Most women were disappointed after their names were put on the lower levels of the DCT list as candidates. As the election system determines candidates to be seated based on the vote that they get, most parties have opportunities to put forward one or two candidates. It is impossible for women to be elected, because their names do not head the list of DCT list of candidates. (interview informant no.14, Sunday, November 26, 2006).

Overall, the female legislators criticized the 30% quota system precisely because it was a voluntary guideline; mere ‘lip service’ from the government. As one woman, the chief of the Solok municipal council in West Sumatra (respondent 9 in table 10), complained

Women have to struggle to get the opportunities. They have to make lots of effort, twice as much as men do. It is really because men will not give up to women voluntarily something that interests them. Thus, the quota has no meaning; it is nothing to do with women politicians. (Interview informant No.9, on Friday August 4, 2006).

Although the two female legislators quoted above are skeptical, other female legislators were more positive about the 30% quota system which they feel offers them opportunities as candidates and then seats them as legislators. As stated by the Demokrat party legislator (number 12) from Riau province:

The reason why my answer is yes, to the benefit of quota system, it is because the women’s quota policy causes the political party to look at women and to put them forward as candidates in their party. If they do not put women on their list of candidates (DCT-red), the political party cannot run in the election process. Thus, the women’s quota policy provides opportunities for women to become candidates. It means that women are automatically involved in the election process and some of them are interested in joining because there is an opportunity. In the case of my party, we have few female candidates, thus it seems I did not have to compete with many other females to run as a candidate at that time. (Interview informant No. 12 on Monday, August 7, 2006).
As a member of the Democrat party, this woman’s party was a newcomer in the 2004 election, but soon garnered strong popular support. Indeed, the Democrat candidate for national president, Susilo B. Yudhoyono, won the last election. Among the women with similar feelings, one member from West Sumatra is a member of the Indonesian Party for Democratic-Struggle (PDI-P), which is led by former Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri.

It seems other female legislators have different perspectives; their answers are based on their personal experiences. At the first, the women’s quota involved women in the election by incorporating them into a political party, but their placement as legislators depended on their party leaders. Thus, some of them think that the women’s quota policy is not effective in helping women to become legislators. Female legislators were divided in their answer between ‘half yes and half no’ in responding to the question about whether the quota system helped them be elected. As stated by one female legislator:

Women’s quota is just the first step for women to be involved in the political arena. It gives opportunities for women to stand in the political arena but it does not guarantee women will become legislators, because there is a political party mechanism that is the major contributing factor in putting their representative in parliament. If a female candidate is put on the last number in DCT’s list, it is useless to hope the woman will become a legislator, because there are not enough votes to put her in parliament. (Interview with informant No. 6 on Monday, July 31, 2006)

Among the fifteen women legislators interviewed, thirteen believed that the quota policy is a gateway to women’s participation in politics only. This policy provides new opportunities for women to be more involved in the election process. Some could not be elected without the quota system even though they had good personal qualifications. Therefore, the quota system is the first step and has motivated them to participate in politics. Meanwhile to two female legislators, were disappointed with the 30% quota
since the political party's policies ignored their participation in politics. It can be proven that in candidate lists for legislators, names of women are so far down the list that their chance of being seated is negligible, or to use the Indonesian term, they are known as 'nomor sepatu' (shoes number).

In general, most respondent had similar ideas about the women's quota policy. Their answers describe the 30% quota policy as ambiguous. On the one hand, the women's quota policy provides women opportunities to be candidates and motivates them to participate in the election process. On the other hand, the policy only puts women forward as candidates, but is not effective in positioning them to be legislators, because it policy does not require the political parties to actually obtain representation by women of 30% of the legislature, although they are encouraged to do so. Consequently, the decision to place women at the head of the DCT list, which is key to their election, still depends on the political parties.

In the 2004 election, the national legislature had only 12% women members. Meanwhile, at the provincial and municipal council level, the average membership of these legislatures that are women, as can be seen on Table 7, is 9.53%. Another phenomenon is that, there is no difference in preferences among female legislators about the 30% quota based on the areas or province. In West Sumatra, Riau, South Sulawesi and NTT, female legislators faced the same problems in being elected. This problematic in 30% quota is not about different provinces and different cultures where the female legislators are living and whether this is a matrilineal system or a patriarchal system, but this is about the domination of each political party with its policies in the Indonesian political system.
5.1.2. Male connection

The electability of women legislators is related to their connection to their relatives, especially men. Most female legislators are inspired by their male relatives to engage in politics. For instance, among nine female legislators in West Sumatra, five of them have connection with their male relatives. Specifically, two female legislators in West Sumatra have a husband and a brother as legislators at the provincial level (informant No.5 & 8). Two others have a connection with their father and uncle who became informal leaders in West Sumatra (informant No.2 & 3), and one of them is connected to her husband, who is a professional and businessman (Informant No.9). The rest of informants (number 1, 6, and 7) have husbands who are civil servant and merchants.

The proxy power of male connection can be seen through the support, networks and power of male relatives. Most respondents confessed that their efforts to be legislators are motivated and supported by their male relatives. For instance, one woman’s husband helped her in preparing the requirements for registration as a candidate. As stated by one informant:

At that time I was pregnant. As my husband and I were committed to our party’s platform, he supported my registration to be a candidate for the legislator and he was involved in fulfilling the requirements. My husband prepared my certificate and other documents related to the qualification as a candidate for the legislator. When I became a candidate for legislator, I had just given birth and I had to campaign, even though my baby was still young. During the campaign with its rigid schedule, my parents and my husband were involved in taking care of my children and I had to create personal time because I was breast-feeding my baby. (Interview with informant No.6, Monday, July, 31, 2006).

This statement showed that her husband played an important role during the campaign period. When a question was raised as to why her husband continued to
support her after she became candidate, this respondent affirmed that her husband was committed to their party because its platform reflects their own ideas. Because the husband was committed to the party, he supports her as a candidate. Another question was raised as to whether he would support her if she was a representative for a different party from that of her husband. She answered that in that case she could not guarantee that her husband would support her. This spouse was affiliated with the Prosperous and Justice Party (PKS-Partai Keadilan Sejahtera) that preaches (da'wa) or the teaching of Islamic ideas.

Another kind of male support is evident where the husband provides financial support and some facilities during the campaign process, including taking responsibility for campaign attributes such as T-shirts, hats, and stickers related to their party. As stated by a female from Crescent Star Party (PBB) in Municipal Council level, Padang;

Because we realized that our party is new, and that it does not have financial resources to carry out a campaign, then, I and my brother in law, who also is active as a politician, agreed to use his savings during the campaign. I also utilized his car for campaigning. We bought some stuff such as stickers, T-shirts and hats with our party’s logo. (Interview with Informant No.8 on Wednesday, July 27, 2006)

The statement illustrates that strong support from male relatives occurred because of their involvement in politics. However, another female legislator stated that support not only came from males active in the political arena. Even though her husband and her male relatives are not involved in the parties as politicians, her husband also supports her political activities:

My husband is in engineering. As an entrepreneur, he supports me as a legislator. During his free time, he accompanies me to events related to my job, such as picking me up after attending a political party meeting, especially at night. (Interview with informant No.9, on Friday, August 4, 2006).
Beside support from their male relatives, another form of male connection with women's politician is the male network. This is evident in the story told by the female legislator from Padang Pariaman. Her uncle is an informal leader who became an eminent person in their area. As a leader in one of Minangkabau's clans, this uncle is called Datuak. The popularity of her uncle helped her during campaign time. As she stated:

During the campaign, my uncle helped me to persuade people in our village to vote for me. He told them about me and asked his colleagues and most people in our village to vote for me. He promoted the idea that I, his niece, would be the best choice for the people in the village for the next election. (Interview with informant No.2, Tuesday, August 1, 2006)

This statement shows that the social position of male relatives can be of benefit for a female legislator in regard to getting more votes. As the uncle or (mamak)\(^4\) has a dominant role in West Sumatran culture, he helped this female legislator in campaigning with voters and even in meeting with her constituents.

The male connection with female legislators can also be found in Riau province, and NTT. In Riau province, one out of three female legislators had a male connection – her husband, a politician in PBB party (informant No.10) – but two did not have male relatives who influenced them to be active in politics. In the other provinces, South Sulawesi and NTT, from three female legislators that I interviewed, two have connections with males that motivated them to participate in politics. One (informant no.14) from NTT in the Golkar party confessed that she was inspired by her uncle who became a mayor in Soe regency when she was a child. In interviewing fifteen female legislators in this research, the percentage of male relatives in West Sumatra is 55.6%, Riau province is

---

\(^4\) Uncle in West Sumatra is called Mamak. He is the mother's brother, an uncle from mother's line. He has a significant role in an extended family.
33.3%, and NTT is 50%. According to the data, in comparing to Riau province and NTT, the percentage of male connections to female politicians in West Sumatra is higher than Riau province.

5.1.3. Candidate Qualification and Political Party Policy

When questions were asked about whether or not political parties play an important role in deciding whether they would run for election, all of the female legislators that I interviewed affirmed that their parties played a dominant role in giving them a seat in the Parliament. Each party has different policies in putting their cadres in parliament. The newer parties tend to have policies consider women, meanwhile for largest parties, they still keep their former policies, and without much more change. The Prosperity and Justice Party (PKS-Partai Keadilan Sejahtera), for instance, has a specific system to provide opportunities for women to be elected as legislator. In PKS, the system is called ‘internal election.’ This election gave the option for constituents of the PKS to vote for their candidates to run in the 2004 election. In this internal election, women can be elevated based on votes from their supporters in their region of election or the so-called DPW (daerah asal wilayah pemilihan)\(^5\) rather than from the PKS committee. As stated by a women legislator from PKS:

...Thus women have to show their capabilities to their constituents whether or not they deserve to be chosen. For our party, the problem is not that women don’t have opportunities, but rather how many female candidates have the capability to be legislators. We are still mindful of the question because not many women are capable, qualified and interested in

---

\(^5\) Region of election or Daerah Pemilihan Wilayah (DPW) is one aspect of the 2004 election systems. The 2004 election system operates ‘open list proportional representation,’ in which the voters punch the symbol of the parties or candidates. Those candidates representing their area will be named on the ballot paper and voters will have the opportunity to cast a vote for a single individual as well as party in different regions and levels. This also means that to be elected, the legislators have to represent their areas such as DPW I, DPW II, DPW III and so on. Every region is divided into areas for the election process; for provincial legislators, candidates have to represent the municipal and regency where the candidates live. For municipal legislators, they have to represent the county or district where they live.
running in the election at the same time. (Interview with informant No.5, on Tuesday July 25, 2006).

Similar to PKS, the Crescent Star Party (PBB; Partai Bulan Bintang) has its own policy of fielding female and male candidates together. The PBB provides opportunities for female candidates to be placed at the head of the DCT’s list, based on their district area or DPW. PBB party has instituted a ratio at least 4:1, which means that for every four male candidates the party has to nominate one female candidate or more. This ratio means that in a DPW consisting of four regions in each of which there is a PBB chapter; one out of four chapters has to put a woman candidate at the head of the DCT. This system provides fine opportunities for women candidates to be elected since every PBB chapter is compelled to follow this policy, which is different from the 30% quota for women suggested for political parties without any serious obligation. As stated by one female legislator:

Our party responds to the women’s quota policy by giving opportunities for women to be candidates at the first number on DCT’s list. In West Sumatra, we have five regions for election and within five regions our party included two female candidates. I think I became a legislator right now not because of the women’s quota policy itself, but because of our political party’s policy. It positioned me as a candidate to be elected. I was placed on the first DCT list in my area because of my cumulative score for criteria that measured the candidate’s capability. (Interview with informant No.3, on Tuesday July 25, 2006).

She further states that criteria to be elected include educational background, experience in organization, activities in political parties, and publishing articles in media that explain their opinions for local and national media. Of course, financial aspects are counted in measuring the candidates.

Even though political parties provide opportunities for female candidates based on their own policies, this does not mean that women can easily be elected; there are some
barriers that cannot be handled by political parties. For instance, in Riau, a female legislator had a bad experience during the election process. As stated by an informant from PBB Pekanbaru chapter:

My name was entered as a candidate at the head of DCT of PBB Pekanbaru chapter since PBB in Pekanbaru has four DPW. However, some people in PBB did not like the fact that I was a female candidate placed on the first list (calon jadi). They made some efforts to stop me from being a legislator, such as insulting me about the invalid certificate of my bachelor’s degree; they came to my house and asked me to resign from candidacy for legislator. Then they also told me that they were dubious about whether I had the capability to campaign. Of course I convinced them that I can campaign bravely to get support from the voters. During the campaign I spoke about PBB’s platforms and told them as a female candidate, I believe in the voters who will give their vote related to women’s interests. So I won a seat in parliament... (Interview with informant No. 10, Monday, August 7, 2006).

The statement above showed that even though a party gives women opportunities, women candidates are still looked down on by their colleagues. This woman was able to convince her detractors that she had the capacity to get out the votes and to gain a seat in parliament.

Another party, Mandate National Party (PAN, Partai Amanat Nasional), also considers women for legislative positions. Whether the candidate is male or female, the rank system for qualifying the candidate is based on certain aspects such as education, experience, and activities in the political party. Every aspect has a score in which the score accumulation bring the candidate, whether man or women, to the top of the DCT list. This system is evident from the interview with a member of the Mandate National Party, Riau chapter:

I think women become candidates to be elected mostly because of the party, not the women’s quota policy. In my case, I believe I was elected because people in my region knew me already, I was involved and am active in many organizations and of course was working hard
during campaign season. (Interview with informant No.11, on Monday, August 7, 2006).

From the interview above, we can see that the educational background, job, and organizational experiences (whether in political or social organizations), and popularity within the community are crucial aspects in positioning women as candidates for legislative positions in all parties, whether these are major parties or small parties.

In terms of educational background, fifteen female legislators have an appropriate educational background; in West Sumatra, among nine female legislators, one has a formal university education of more than fifteen years and has received a PhD and has become a lecturer. One received an MA degree, four received bachelor’s degrees and three received diplomas or bachelor’s degrees from college (with three years education after high School). In Riau province, one is still studying in a PhD program. One female legislator received a bachelor’s degree and another finished three years college. The situation is similar in NTT, where one woman received an MA degree and another graduated from university with a bachelor degree; in South Sulawesi, a female legislator whom I interviewed has already finished three years college. The wide range of educational backgrounds of these female legislators can be found in both major and newcomer parties, but in terms of experience in political organizations female legislators from major parties had the advantage.

Women’s experiences in organizations and activities in political party help them to be elected. Prior to becoming legislators, most informants had managerial positions, such as being a businesswoman in construction and in motorcycle rental (usaha ojek, in Indonesian). As can be seen in Table 10, ‘Informant Database’, West Sumatran informants included two businesswomen who had activities close to the ‘man’s world’
(informant No.1 & 9). Three female legislators were active in education as lecturers and teachers, two were traders, and two were employed as administrators in educational institutions. Meanwhile, of the female legislators in Riau province, one is a trader and the other is a lecturer. Most female legislators are lectures and others are activists in a wide range of organizations.

It can be seen that females in West Sumatra have a greater public presence, not only as traders and lecturers or teachers like other female legislators in Riau and other provinces, but also as female entrepreneurs that are involved in a ‘man’s world’, even in the case of motorcycle rentals, which involves virtually all male clients.

5.1.4. Motivation

Female legislators confess that they became interested in being legislators because they wanted to make changes in government policies. In West Sumatra, female legislators wanted to be members of the House of Representatives because they think that through involvement in parliament, it will be easier for them to respond to social problems in their circumstances. As stated by one;

Being a legislator means that we can engage peoples aspirations. I can have access to know exactly what happen at the grass root level, what are the problems and then bring those problems to the parliament. I can continue to discuss those problems in parliament, carry them on to the government and hopefully there will be changes in government policies to solve the problems. (Interview with informant No. 2, Wednesday, August 16, 2006)

Similarly, female legislators in Riau were motivated to be involved in parliament because they wanted to know exactly which problems are in their society. As they became involved in the political parties, they can more easily appreciate the internal workings of the government system. As stated by one legislator:
Firstly, I saw many policies that did not make me satisfied with what has been done by government. It made me curious to know in more detail how they make policies. Fortunately, the reform era was followed by the flourishing of political parties. Then I joined the Democrat party, and tried to know about policy decisions through involvement in parliament. (interview with informant no. 12 Monday, July 3, 2006).

Most female legislators from new parties and from different provinces offered a similar opinion to the above statement. However, female legislators from major parties in the different provinces have different answers; when the same question was asked of female legislators, one from the Golkar party and another from the PDI-P party, their motivation to be involved in politics was because they had already operated in parties for a long time. As cadres, they wanted to explore their capability as women politicians through becoming legislators. They think that as politicians, the political party can become a pathway to involvement in the election process and then bring them into parliament. As cadres, they are especially loyal to their political party. As stated by one informant;

I initially became a treasurer after getting involved in the PDI-P, Padang Pariaman regency chapter in 1991-1996. Then I became a secretary for the period 1996-2001; in the next period I became secretary of the PDI-P West Sumatra chapter. I think that my devotion to this party provides me with an opportunity to be a legislator for the period 2004 to the next election in 2008. (Interview with informant No.2, Tuesday, August, 1, 2006).

Among fifteen female legislators, four (two from West Sumatra, and each of them from Riau and NTT) have bad experiences in the election process. They needed to be strongly motivated to have a seat in parliament. Their persistence during the election process and their high motivation is an asset for women who want to be legislators, since gender bias affected their ability to obtain opportunities as potential candidates and to be elected. The harsh competition to be legislators is evident in statements made by two
female legislators from Golkar Party in West Sumatra and in NTT (informant No.9 & 14).

Women had bad experiences, for example, in selection of their names on the DCT during the election process. They knew that their names were placed on the DCT as one of the candidates of a Golkar Party chapter in their area, but their colleagues in the same parties removed their names, so that their name did not appear on the DCT in the Commission Election Office (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, KPU). Before the due date for sending candidates’ names in KPU was finished, they persisted in tracking down what went wrong. They tracked their name to KPU and to the head office of Golkar Party. As described by one female politician;

I knew that my name was on the third rank on DCT’s list at the provincial level. I was representing my area, Solok regency. But when I saw the DCT’s list again, it had been changed to number 8. It surprised me, especially when a colleague in the party falsely said that I was not a member of the Golkar Party. Then I reported it and wanted clarification from the leader of the Golkar party at the provincial level. After long debates in the meeting, they put my name back as number three. (Interview with informant no.9, Friday, August 4, 2006).

Similar to the case above, a female legislator from Golkar Party in NTT complained that her name had been removed from the DCT’s list. She represented her area, Soe regency, one of fourteen regencies in NTT. She was the only candidate representative from Soe regency, she was confident that she would get many votes, which would allow her to have a seat in the parliament. But her name did not appear on the list. As she explained:

I was surprised my name did not appear on the DCT’s list. But I was sure that I would get more than ten thousand votes from Soe regency. Because Soe is my political base of activities, I believed that many people would vote for me. Then I asked the chief of Golkar Party in NTT province to get in more detail explanations why my name was removed. I dealt with
him several times through contacts and meeting, and finally my name appeared in the DCT's list. And here I am now. (Interview with informant no.14, Sunday November 26, 2006)

Another phenomenon about women's struggles to be elected can be seen in West Sumatra. It related to corruption in regard to vote-counting. As described by a female legislator from Crescent star Party, (PBB - Partai Bulan Bintang) in the Local Board council in West Sumatra, her party does not have secure facilities to prevent incorrect or false counting of ballots in the Tempat Pemilihan Suara, the so-called TPS sites where votes are first cast. The number of TPS is based on the amount of people who vote in one location in a neighborhood community (RT, Rukun tetangga). Actually, every district has some TPS, usually four to six TPS. Because this informant represents the South Padang district, which has six TPS, she is not able to monitor the ballot counting in every TPS during the day of election. Before every TPS is closed in the afternoon, the local TPS election committee staff counts the ballots manually. However, manual counting in the TPS has the possibility of misuse. This cheating is because some interest groups want to get more votes for their parties. To avoid this deception, some parties, such as PKS, Golkar, and the Democrat Party, pay people to guard the vote counting procedure at the TPS.

Unlike these parties, this woman's party did not take action to anticipate such situations. She therefore made efforts by herself to save her party's vote by arriving unexpectedly at several TPSs, and spending a limited time there, but she admitted that she could not monitor all six TPSs. Consequently she herself had to pay other people to supervise the vote counting in those TPS where she could not watch the vote counting process. However, paying people in a timely way is difficult. As a result, actual voting
papers for her party seem to have been lost, but because the voting numbers cannot be tracked, there is no valid evidence to raise this case in the KPU. As she stated:

I believed that numbers of votes for the PBB party were lost between the TPS and KPU office. I watched three TPS only, and then I paid people to control the manual vote count in some other TPS. But fortunately, I was still elected. As I became candidate in South Padang district, I was aware of TPS, though I was very involved and consistently observed that three of the TPS tend to count the votes incorrectly; for example, valid votes that became invalid vote if people punched the PBB party logo. I remember I ate my lunch box in TPS, in order to stand by all day in that TPS. (Interview with informant No.8, Monday, July 31, 2007)

All the interviews above show that most women candidates are highly motivated to be legislators. Their goal is to change women’s situation and public policy through involvement in the parliament. Female legislators in West Sumatra are motivated by the social situation in which they are already involved in public activities before being politicians, such as becoming entrepreneurs, traders, and scholars. Meanwhile, for female legislators in Riau, the political opportunities and political situation in the reform era are aspects that drive them to be involved in politics. However in general, to get involved female politicians have to struggle to be candidates as can be seen from the difficult experiences of women politicians in the Golkar party in West Sumatra and NTT.

5.2 Current Service in Parliament

5.2.1 Independent Agenda on Women’s Issues

Female legislators have dual tasks in parliament. Even though they have an independent agenda in the House of Representatives, it is difficult for them to implement their agenda. They confess that these difficulties are bound by the policies of their political parties. As stated by one female legislator from the House of Representatives in the provincial council in West Sumatra;
Actually I had an agenda of my own that motivated me to be a legislator, notably infant mortality issues. I voiced my ideas during the campaign before I was elected. However, it is not easy, because in the House of Representatives, I am a minority member. Women legislators in this council are only five or nine percent out of fifty-five people. We are in the system and tied by the system in the House of Representatives and our political parties. (Interview, Informant no.4, Tuesday, July 25, 2006)

Another female legislator, a member of House of representative at the municipal level council stated:

Working in the parliament is team work; we cannot force our agenda onto others. First we have to persuade them that our agenda is useful for people, not only for women. We realize that as legislators we not only represent women, but people as a whole. (Interview with informant No.5, Tuesday, July 25, 2006).

Similar to the opinion above, women in parliament at the Riau, South Sulawesi and East Nusa Tenggara provincial and municipal council level have the same ‘problem.’ Their agendas for women’s issues are related to the parliamentary system. Usually legislators attempt to reach a consensus, but if this fails every legislator can exercise his or her vote in the decision-making process. This voting system, which encourages the expression of personal opinion, has become more pronounced since the fall of Soeharto. Because there is likely to be range of opinions in regard to women’s issues, this voting system can become an obstacle in implementing policies that are important to women.

Female legislators realize that, since they have been elected, they have not yet accomplished their agenda to the benefit of their constituents. Their chances to voice their ideas about women’s issues are still inhibited by some obstacles as mentioned earlier. However some of the women legislators stated that one of the issues that can expedite the women’s program is through involvement in the financial division or
‘Budget Team’ in the Parliament. As a result, they can force an increase in the budget for women’s programs;

One of the roles of the House of Representatives is to enact the law related to the budget for the development program every year. Thus in order to succeed in getting our agenda about women’s issues, we work to give a higher budget portion to women’s education and women’s economic and empowerment programs. (Interview with informant No.5 on Monday, July 31, 2006).

Even though female legislators have reasons why their activities are constrained by the political system, for some women activists getting the agenda enacted still depends on the activities of the women legislatures and themselves. According to women’s activists, this ‘failed agenda’ is owed to the limitations of female legislators themselves. They do not maintain good relationships with women’s activists or try to address women’s problems at the grassroots level. As stated by Zalekha, an activist from Women’s Legal Aid Institution Advocating for Women (LBH APIK Sumbar-Lembaga Bantuan Hukum_Assosiasi Perempuan Indonesia untuk Keadilan, Sumbar), female legislators seem to avoid building networks with other women activists.

Actually many women’s problems are not covered by female legislators. Most of them just voice their political party’s policies. As politics is full of deals, women legislators are tied by the system that was constructed by a patriarchal mindset. Unfortunately women do not realize that, they just follow the rules in the House of Representatives. (Interview with other informant No.11, on Tuesday, August 15, 2006).

In a similar view to the statement above, another activist, Fitriyanti, from the Organization of Women’s Political Coalition in West Sumatra (KPPI Sumbar, Koalisi Perempuan Politik Indonesia, Sumbar) stated that:

We have tried to get in touch with women in parliament; we ask them to conduct ‘coffee mornings’ with all of the women’s activists in West Sumatra, at the same time once a month. We believed that this is the way for them to get more detailed information about women’s problems at the
grassroots level from women's activists. We offered this meeting because we can chat and discuss about women's problems. But this idea was never realized; maybe they are busy with their duty as representatives or they simply ignore the request, even though we asked several times. (Interview with another informant No. 10, Friday August 18, 2006)

The statements from women's activists show that female legislators and women's activists do not get along well. Their independent agenda cannot be accomplished because they are constrained by the political system and are not collaborating with women's activists to get the political support they need.

5. 2.2 Cultural factors

Cultural attitudes are assumed to be one of several aspects that act as barriers for women who want to be active in politics. However, women in West Sumatra believe that their culture provides them more opportunities to be active outside the household. Most women in West Sumatra seem to believe that their capability of being female legislators is inspired by their customs.

We believe that Bundo Kanduang, as we know in our adat, is a woman who is leading her extended family. Thus there is nothing wrong if women imitate Bundo kanduang's ideas in politics right now. (Interview with informant No. 7 Tuesday, July 25, 2006).

Similar to her opinion, other female legislators in West Sumatra feel proud of the history of women's activities in West Sumatra. They think that the matrilineal system gives them legitimate models for political participation like the former Minangkabau women who fully participated in the nationalist movement, political arena, and the education field a century ago. As she stated:

Historically, West Sumatra has documented Minangkabau women who were involved in politics and the nationalist movement. During the PRRI period, many women helped in the guerilla war. Thus, female involvement in politics is common for Minangkabau people, and we have many women
as heroes. Even in our tambo\(^6\), we have a female who wields power in the Minangkabau kingdom (Interview with informant No.3, Tuesday, July 25, 2006).

This interview illustrates that female legislators in West Sumatra believe their customs do not curb them from being active outside the household. The cultural attitude in West Sumatra is evident from the opportunities provided for women to be active outside. When questions were asked about the links between the phenomena of female legislator and Bundo Kanduang, the traditional leader in The Association of Adat Council of the Minangkabau World (LKAAM) mentioned that most female legislators do not resemble Bundo Kanduang in Minangkabau custom:

Actually Bundo Kanduang is a woman who voices her people's interest and many people listen to her voice. This is because such women have knowledge, wisdom and expert about their people's concerns. If we related the Bundo Kanduang function to parliament, it seems that most female legislators do not display an essential ability that resembles the role of Bundo Kanduang. (Interview with other informant No. 7, on Thursday, August 3, 2006).

According to her, most female legislators in West Sumatra are not seen as representative of the typical ‘Bundo Kanduang’ ideal. Nevertheless, she agrees that Minangkabau people and Minangkabau customs with the matrilineal system provide more opportunities for women to be active in public space.

The observations in West Sumatra and Riau found differences in the way that women behave in parliament. As I attended the budget meetings and the annual meeting in parliament over several weeks, most female legislators from West Sumatra became speakers in those meetings. They represented and voiced their public policy ideas and their party's interest in the parliament. Meanwhile, in the meetings in Riau, out of three

\(^6\) Tambo is defined as historical account of the origin of Minangkabau adat and royalty. (Sanday 2002)
female legislators at the provincial level council, only one often articulated her ideas in the two meetings that I attended.

During several weeks, in July and August 2006, four female legislators in West Sumatra province and five female legislators at the municipal level council more often made statements and wrote articles in the local newspaper than did female legislators in Riau province. Although their statements and their articles in media related to the current issues in their area at that time, it seems that women representatives in West Sumatra are more active in writing articles than women in Riau.

In the observations during July and August 2006, I found that three articles were written by two out of nine female legislators in West Sumatra. Also there were five statements of female legislators related to current issues that were produced by four females in the local newspapers, such as *Padang eskpress*, *Singgalang* and *Haluan*. In Riau province, only informant number 11, one out of three female legislators, had a statement in *Riau Pos* and none of them wrote any articles. Hence, the public presence of female legislators in West Sumatra is greater than in Riau province.

It also can be seen from their cultural ideology about women’s position. Women in Malay Riau are prepared to be a ‘good women’ as they can handle their household and have deep religious knowledge. As mentioned by the Informal leader in Riau;

> It is common for Malay culture to protect and to supervise girls and women in order to maintain their ‘marwah’ (dignity). Thus women cannot go outside freely, and there is a belief that if they do so they may be assaulted. If they want to be present in a public space they have to prepare themselves through a deep knowledge of Islamic religion and Malay culture. (Interview with other informant No.5. on Tuesday, August 8, 2006),
The statement above demonstrates that Malay culture’s ideas are perceived as being closely linked with Islam.

5.2. 3. Religion

Religion is also assumed to be one of several aspects that act as a barrier for women who want to be active in politics. But in West Sumatra, the activities of female legislators are affected by the combination of Islamic teaching and their matrilineal customs. The mix of patriarchal and matrilineal systems is evident in their statements. Most women legislators tend to say that as long as they can fulfill their domestic tasks and their husbands allow them to be active outside the household, they feel it is acceptable to be a politician:

Islamic teaching does not prohibit women from being active outside. It depends on the personal interpretation about the verses of holy Koran regarding women’s role in the public sphere. For me, as long as I am not breaking the rule of Islamic teaching, such as going against my husband’s will, it is all right to be a politician. (Interview with informant No. 7, Monday, July 31, 2006).

This statement is similar to statement by informant numbers 1, 3, and 6. Another female legislator stated that basically, Islamic teachings have been interpreted differentially, including those regarding women’s role in public and domestic spaces. Female legislators from political parties with religious platforms, such as the PKS, confess that they do not have a problem as a politician. PKS is branded as the da’wah party or preaching party, spreading Islamic values through many party activities. Yet PKS has more female legislators compared to other parties, especially in at the level of municipal legislative councils.

In my opinion, it does not matter if women are active in public, including politics. As our party, PKS gives us opportunities to be involved in politics; this means that we are preaching too at the
same time. Thus, we do not have a problem in our religion in being politicians. (Interview with informant No.6 Tuesday, July 25, 2006).

Thus, their religion is not a hindrance to carrying out activities outside the household, including in the political arena. Their cultural background, mixed with their interpretation about Islamic teachings and matrilineal systems, provides more opportunities to be active, including in politics. Even though women legislators have positive ideas about Islamic teaching, many male politicians still maintain the biased interpretation of women’s role in public. According to male politicians, the main priority for a woman is supposed to be to stay at home doing domestic tasks rather than being active in public. By contrast, when the matrilineal system is at the basis of custom, it also provides for women to be active outside.

However, Minangkabau men seem ambivalent about the matrilineal system. They prefer the Islamic worldview which makes them the master rather than the matrilineal worldview in which they share power with women who have more equal roles. Their ambivalent ideas about women’s roles tend to impose a double burden on women. This double standard mindset can be seen from the statement of one male legislator from Golkar Party at the provincial level:

As a politician, we must have the capability such as education background, political experience, networks, economic support, and the most important is time. Politicians have to be available 24 hours in serving the members of their parties. Politicians have to attend many events such as campaigns, meetings, and many occasions in implementing their public relations and showing sympathy with the members. For women politicians, they have a problem with managing time, as they are responsible for their household. Women do not have much time to be active as politicians. In contrast, male politicians can spend almost all their time in political activities without considering their responsibility to their household. The household has already been handled by their wives. (Interview with other informant No.1, Thursday, July 27, 2006).
The statement confirms the cultural dualism in West Sumatra. On one hand, the matrilineal system provides more opportunities for women to be active in public as they have the icon of the ideal Bundo Kanduang as an example. On the other hand, the patriarchal idea occurs in mostly male politicians, who think that women have more responsibility to their household and are not so sympathetic to the notion that household responsibility should be shared with the husbands. This mindset still limits women politicians in West Sumatra when they are completing their role as a representative, as can be seen from this statement:

As long as we can finish our duties in the household, and our husbands allow us to be active as politicians, I can enjoy my activities. Fortunately my husband and my children fully understand my job as representative, so I can work outside contentedly. (Interview with informant No.6, Tuesday, July 25, 2006).

The statement showed women feel guilty if they cannot fulfill their tasks as housewife before involvement in activities outside of their houses. The domestic task is a priority which correlates with family life. The correlation has driven researchers to observe the family life of female legislators. Among fifteen female legislators, three were not married or single women. Two female legislators were becoming grandmothers, which meant that they were not busy with their children and household. Two of them do not have children, two female legislators have one child, one has four children and the rest of them have two children. Their family status and the number of their children indicated that most of these female legislators are not busy with their household tasks, such as taking care of children. Most female legislators are available to spend their time in their political activities, even though they still are tied by custom and are forced by their own self-perceptions to be fully responsible for their tasks in the household.
Chapter 6
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Discussion

As described above, the original motivation for pressuring the Indonesian government to require (and ultimately only encourage) political parties to ensure that at least 30% of their representatives in the election process are female was to improve the climate for regulatory and budget proposals that would improve the lives of Indonesian women. This strategy has two obvious components: First, the women must be actually elected, and before they are elected, they must be nominated. Second, once elected, the women must direct significant attention to the issues of Indonesian women, particularly women from less advantaged social conditions than they. Both of these topics will be addressed in turn.

6.1.1 Nomination and election of women members of parliament.

Regardless of the goal of the Indonesian political system through reserving 30% of provincial and national candidates of parliament for women, female legislators in West Sumatra face the same barriers to being elected as do female legislators from Riau, South Sulawesi, NTT, and other provinces. The gendered organization of local society, whether it is a matrilineal system like that practiced in West Sumatra, or a largely patriarchal system like that found widely in Indonesia, has little effect on the probability of whether or not the voters choose a woman to represent them in a regional or national parliament. In addition, the political party systems in Indonesia do not provide the same opportunities for women as for men politicians. This is particularly true for women from the major parties, who are only involved as candidates in the elections, but rarely elected.
Meanwhile, female politicians from the new parties formed since 1998 have more opportunities to be elected as members than female politicians in larger and older parties. Therefore, the reservation 30% quota for women in which female parliamentary candidates are nominated and elected is better implemented by new parties than by major parties.

The views of political party leaders, who are mostly men, and the overall culture of male supremacy in Indonesia often serves to frustrate the aspirations of women seeking political office in the republic, even in West Sumatra. The nature of the West Sumatran matrilineal system gives Minangkabau women much more influence in their families than is typical for women in Indonesia. On the other hand, the unusual culture of the province has evidently not affected the politics of the province. Women’s privileges are only found in cultural terms in which women are seen as a type of ‘Bundo Kanduang’, a wise person, who can become a center of the extended family, but is primarily involved in wedding ceremonies and other cultural events. In these contexts, women play an important role as decision makers in their communities, the so-called Nagari. However, these women’s privileges, as decision makers in their communities, do not epitomize political power. This can be seen if women try to be active in politics, for then the male power systems control them.

The existence of women as agents in parliament does not prove that change for the better for women generally is at hand. This can be understood because the idea of women as Bundo Kanduang in matrilineal society is fading, in part due to the biased

---

7 Nagari is defined as a group of people living one area which consists of several villages. The nagari is led by a leader usually called by the title ‘Datuk Penghulu’ and the title for the woman recognized as leader is Bundo Kanduang
interpretation of texts and adat writing by informal leaders (datuk penghulu) in West Sumatra under central government direction. This biased interpretation has an impact on women’s role in Parliament. Ultimately, the decision of an Indonesian woman to participate in the political system does not strongly correlate with her commitment to the issues of Indonesian women overall.

A major reason why increasing the number of women in Indonesian regional and national parliaments has not correlated to greater concern for Indonesian women is that relationships with the political system tend to support male domination. The public policies produced in the House of Representatives are the voice of Parliament’s members who are mostly men politicians. Or in other words, politics is a male’s world.

The idea that politics is a male’s world affects women as politicians, not only when woman are involved as Members in Parliament but also in the process of being elected as Members of Parliament. For example, as described above, among the nine female legislators in West Sumatra, five were elected to parliament largely because they are related to a politically-important man. In Riau, only one out of the three female legislators there has such a family background, and also in NTT province. Thus, the male connection shows male relatives are important in the election process, even in West Sumatra with its matrilineal system.

In common with many societies in Indonesia, family relationships are important in raising money, soliciting endorsements from influential people, and ultimately, persuading people to cast their votes for a woman seeking office. In West Sumatra, family relationships with men are not only important for women seeking office; they are probably the most important factor. Male relationships such as mamak (mother’s
brother) who are honored in the Minangkabau community can help a niece to be elected since he can persuade the people to give votes to this female politician. Therefore, female legislators are not independent from males, since most of them become legislators because other people 'helped' them in regard to building networks, affirming social position and supporting their bid for election.

The nomination and election of women members of Parliament is more dependent on the policies of political parties than on the policies of the central government, such as the 30% quota system. Unfortunately, the policies of political parties are under the tight control of the leaders of national political parties, and they are in the capital, Jakarta. From Jakarta, every party maintains branches in the local provinces. In the provinces, each party concentrates on recruiting and supporting only those persons who support the platform and policies of the party nominating them. Therefore, the qualifications of candidates and political party's policies have similar phenomena within provinces. This also becomes another reason why electing women to political office has had little effect on women's issues in Indonesia. The Indonesian political system is dominated by the major political parties, which are themselves less sympathetic to women's issues. The degree of centralization in every political party results in local branches referring to political leaders in the central government or Jakarta.

Female political candidates in Indonesia are probably more highly motivated to be political representatives than their male candidates, specifically because they face greater opposition even to being nominated. Even though they have an equal legal right to seek and win office as men, in practice they are still seen as candidates that can rightly be
cheated by male politicians. Therefore, they work twice as hard as male politicians to maintain their goal to be a candidate and then to be elected.

Most of the female legislators from West Sumatra expressed their sensitivity to the social situation, and indicated that their disadvantaged situation increased the effort that they expended in campaigning and serving in parliament. In addition, many of these women understood that they were intruding on ‘man’s space’ long before they became a politician, particularly if they came to politics from business, including building construction. By comparison, regardless of whether the female legislators in Riau province had previously been merchants or lecturers, their election was primarily due to fortuitous political opportunities. All three female legislators in Riau province came from new parties that were formed after the Reform Era, and none was nominated by a major party that had operated under Soeharto.

6.1.2 Legislative programs of women members of parliament.

Once in office, women members of parliament may show great, little, or no interest in issues of particular concern for their female constituents. In addition, they have great, some, or no success in persuading the rest of parliament to enact such measures; moreover, their ultimate success in getting legislation passed will likely begin with their influence, or lack thereof, within the political party that nominated them for office.

In interviews, women legislators in West Sumatra and Riau expressed similar levels of concern for women’s issues such as women’s health care, education, literacy, infant mortality, and female empowerment. None of the women were satisfied with the attention devoted by Parliament to such issues. Moreover, the women who said they had
a particularly independent agenda also recognized that their success required dedicated
effort in ultimately persuading people within their party and the Parliament to support the
agenda. Their effort is still limited for improving budget for women’s program.

The matrilineality of the society from which the West Sumatra legislators were
elected has relatively little effect on the success of the women as legislators, most likely
because of the strong correlation between the parties’ policies and decision process in the
Parliament and of the political parties that nominated the women, and the overall
domination of the parliament by men. Contributing to this affect is the fact that women
are extremely under-represented in regional and national parliaments in comparison to
their overall occurrence in the population, as previously described. In addition, women
legislators have little influence among their male colleagues, and can rarely build
coalitions with other politicians to help get their agenda heard, much less enacted.

Finally, whether or not they are trapped by their culture, women legislators
appeared to worry greatly about alienating their colleagues by expressing feminist views.
In addition, many of the women, regardless of their home province, expressed concern
about adequately fulfilling their duties to their spouses and children. Few male
legislators, most likely, make the same tradeoffs or have the same concerns for their
families.

Although matrilineality has little direct effect on events in Parliament, it does
appear to influence the activities of female West Sumatra legislators outside the
assembly. Female legislators here seem more active in expressing their opinion and
being involved in meeting in the Parliament than female politicians in Riau. For
example, during a seven-week observation, three West Sumatran women were included
in decision-making meetings in Parliament, two of the nine female West Sumatra legislators wrote articles that were published in newspapers, while four of the women were quoted a total of five times in local newspapers. By comparison, during the same period, only one of the three female legislators from Riau was quoted once in a local newspaper.

One possible reason why the West Sumatra legislators had a higher public profile than their counterparts in Riau is that, although the provinces have similar populations, the female contingent from Riau is only a third as large as the one from West Sumatra. Another may be that the Riau legislators are representing small and relatively insignificant parties, although that factor might also, at times, increase their political prominence. Yet another possible explanation is that the matrilineality of West Sumatra provides a greater public role for Minangkabau women than is typical among Indonesians, and makes their being outspoken a more 'natural' and expected occurrence. By contrast, the ideas of Malay culture are closer to Islam. They also adapt Islamic teaching without combining it with a matrilineal system, as in the case of Minangkabau culture. As a result, many people's mindset in Riau province follows pure patriarchal concepts from Malay culture and Islam. Meanwhile, in West Sumatra all this occurs as the Minangkabau combine their pre-Islamic culture with the Islamic faith that most of them accept and practice.

The combination of Islamic teaching and material culture does affect the Minangkabau people's mindset, which is still dominated by ideas of Muslim patriarchy. Recently, in several aspects of related to the life of women in West Sumatra, such as their role in the domestic and public spheres, Islamic teaching seems to have exercised
stronger influence on the lives of Minangkabau people than the matrilineal culture. Unfortunately, many Islamic values have been interpreted by male interpreter in ways that bring more benefits to them than to women. People retain the idea that the main roles of women are in the domestic space and those of men in the public space. This view of gender roles was developed a very long time ago but it still operates to affect women’s role in public space because a biased interpretation by men forces women to carry out domestic tasks first before they undertake activities outside.

6.2 Conclusion

Despite the continued importance of matrilineality in West Sumatra, and continuing national efforts to increase political participation by Indonesian women, Minangkabau women seeking political office are still largely dependent on their family relationships and on politically-powerful males in winning office. The West Sumatra matrilineal tradition exists as part of a dualistic local social order; matrilineality heavily influences custom and the provisions of adat. However, as typical throughout Indonesia, men impose and perpetuate social standards that prevent women from gaining power or even from having their concerns heard in public bodies. While Minangkabau men accept that women can be more publicly active than is socially acceptable for women in other parts of rural Indonesia, they also believe that the best place for women is in their homes.

The female legislators of West Sumatra epitomize the dualistic nature of this regional matrilineality. Compared to other female legislators in other provinces in Indonesia, female politicians can publicly voice their opinions. However, like their counterparts in Riau and other provinces, they cannot ultimately change the overwhelming domination of parliamentary power by men and the views of men. In
addition, cultural factors like concern for ‘wifely duties’ further burden their overall effectiveness in parliament. Ultimately, Minangkabau people, male and female alike, live in a dualistic social order; Islamic values favor male leadership, and consign women to domestic concerns, while traditional matrilineality permits women to serve as community leaders, although it also prioritizes the duties to spouse and children that both traditions impose on women.

Another interesting phenomenon pertaining to interpretations of Islamic teaching regarding women in politics can be seen in the PKS. The members of PKS adhere to a form of Islam modernism that is willing to see women have more opportunities to be active in politics, even if this is only at the local level. This characteristic of PKS is found not only in West Sumatra but also throughout its branches in Indonesia. Finally, the educational background of female legislators interviewed in this project shows that most have higher education. Since attainment of educational qualifications usually indicates that people are intelligent and are highly motivated, it seems it should lead to opening up more opportunities for women in the future to participate in politics. As yet, however, results in Indonesia generally are disappointing, primarily because of the way the political system functions. Nonetheless, it is encouraging to see that there are more women elected at the local level now than there were ten years ago, in the final years of the Soeharto era. If this trend continues for another decade and improved economic and educational status provides opportunities for women to be active outside the household, then women politicians may be able to inspire and motivate the younger generation, especially their daughters, to be more active in politics and thereby to address
problems and issues of particular concern to women. This will be the case even though the matrilineality has little effect on women politicians.

6.3 Further Research

In general, the matrilineality of West Sumatra has only a marginal effect on increasing female political participation by serving as regional and national members of parliament, in comparison to the more fully-patriarchal societies common in provinces such as East Kalimantan and East Java. Further research to explain why this is so, along with the larger question of increasing national and provincial issues for the special concerns of women, would be interesting and rewarding.
Glossary of Minangkabau Terms and Abbreviations

Spellings are based on local pronunciation in Bahasa Indonesia.

*adat:* custom and tradition (a word with multiple uses and meanings). Customary law, practices which have become unwritten local law.

*Bundo Kanduang* or *Bundo Kandung:* queen mother of Minangkabau legend; queen who allegedly ruled over the kingdom of Pagarruyung, which united all Minangkabau under one *adat*

Datuk: honorary title given to men-informal leader in Minangkabau community and also in Malay culture

DCT: Daftar Calon Tetap, the list of candidates for election

Dharma Wanita: Civil Servant's Wives Association, formed by Indonesian central government

DPW: Daerah Wilayah Pemilihan, election region. Every province consists of around 3-5 regions.

Golkar: Golongan Karya, a ruling party during the Soeharto regime (1966-1998), is the biggest party in today's ruling coalition in Indonesia. In the 2004 legislative election Golkar was the winner with 21.6% of total vote or 128 seats out of 550 seats

LBH APIK: Lembaga Bantuan Hukum-Asosiasi Perempuan Indonesia Untuk Keadilan, Legal Aid- Indonesian Women Association for Justice, a Non-government Organization

LKAAM: Lembaga Kerapatan Adat Alam Minangkabau; Association of Adat Council of the Minangkabau world, a government-sponsored adat organization.
KPRI: Koalisi Perempuan Politik Indonesia (Women Coalition for Indonesian Politics) a non-government organization.

KPU: Komisi Pemilihan Umum: Election commission that manages the election process

Kaum: the smallest unit of kin comprised of an extended matrilineal group that shares ancestral property in common, is related to a common ancestress, and possesses a title in common

Minangkabau: an ethnic group in West Sumatra

Nagari: traditional confederation of Minangkabau villages

NU: Nadhatul Ulama, an Islamic traditionalist organization

New Order: The period of the Soeharto regime in Indonesia, 1966-98

Partai Demokrat: Democrat Party, founded in 2001. In the 2004 national election, Partai Demokrat won 7.5% of total votes or 57 out of 550 seats

PAN: Partai Amanat Nasional, National Mandat party, is a moderate Islamist political party that was established in 1998. In the last legislative election, April 5, 2004, the party won 6.4% the popular vote or 52 out of 550 seats at the national level.

PBB: Partai Bulan Bintang, Crescent Star Party. In 2004 legislative election, PBB was the 8th ranked political party position and as one of the moderate Islamist political parties it won 2.6% of the total votes or 11 out of 550 seats nationally in 2004.

PDI-P: Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, Indonesian Party for Democratic-Struggle. This party is led by Megawati Soekarno Putri, who was Indonesian President in 2001-2004 and is the daughter of the first Indonesian President Soekarno. Nationally, in the 2004 legislative election, PDI-P obtained 18.5% of the total votes, down from 33% in the 1999 legislative election.
PKB: Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, National Awakening Party, is the third largest political party in Indonesia, after Golkar and PDI-P. PKB was founded by Abdurrahman Wahid, former Indonesian president from 1999-2001. PKB received 10.6% of total votes or 52 of 550 seats in the national 2004 election.

PKK: Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Family Welfare Guidance)

PKS: Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperous Justice Party) was founded in 1998 as Justice Party, then reconstituted as the Prosperous Justice Party in 2003 after failing to meet the required 2% of electoral threshold in the 1999 election (needed to contest the 2004 election). Most members of PKS are young moderate Muslims which offer new insights about Islamic teaching, including women's participation in politics.

Rantau: migration area outside of Minangkabau homeland

TPS: Tempat Pemilihan Suara, local voting site and the first place for ballot counting
References


UNESCO. Retrieved on May 6, 2006 (http://jakarta.unesco.or.id/LOCALRAD/BAHASA/NEWS/)


Mc-Glen, Nancy E, Karen O’ Connor, Laura Assendelft, and Wendy Gunther Canada.


‘Sex-Ratio of Parliamentary Candidates and Legislators in the 2004 General Elections.’


