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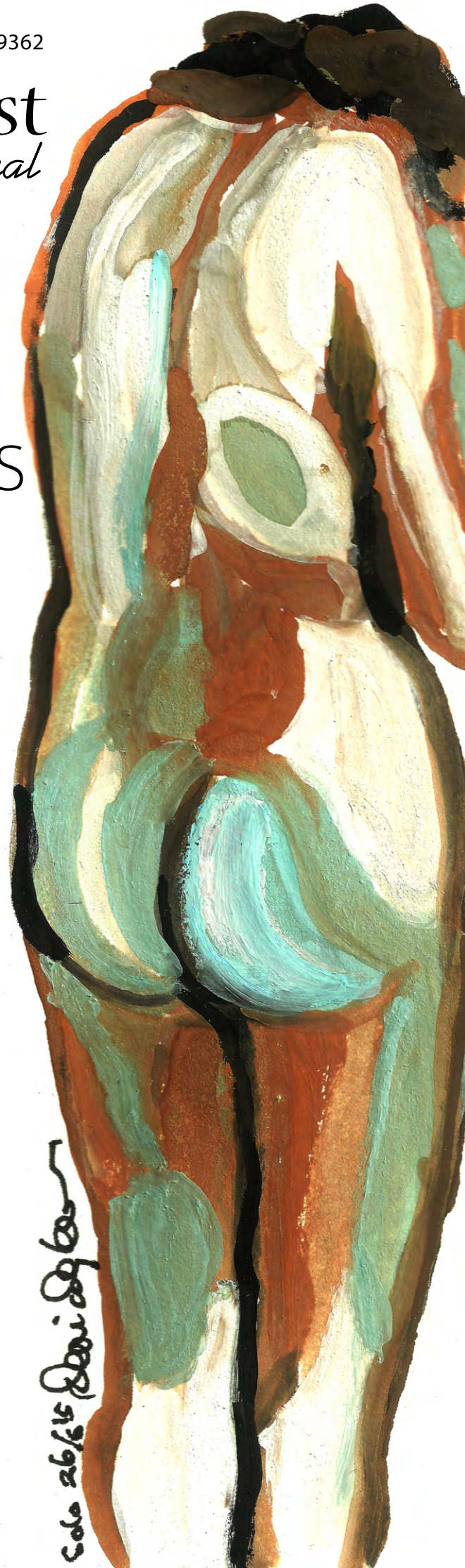
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Women as Other in the Narrative of the 2014 Legislative and Presidential Elections

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Abstract

This research explains the interaction of religion and politics during the Legislative Election of April 9 and the Presidential Election of July 9, 2014 in considering the status of women. Feminist approaches are often suspicious or cannot believe how the alliance of these two terms (religion and politics) can truly serve the mandate for gender justice and social justice. Explanation of the General Election data affirms the vulnerable status of women and other groups, both within the structure of political parties, proportion of MP's and in the executive development paradigm of the incoming President. The entire women's movement, paradigmatically and practically, needs to work together, shoulder to shoulder, in order to analyse, criticise and nurture these narratives of justice for an equal society in the coming 2014-2019 cabinet period.

Keywords: Election, women, politics, religion, cabinet.

Introduction

This research explains the interaction of religion and politics during the Legislative Election of April 9 and the Presidential Election of July 9, 2014 (from here on abbreviated as the General Election: the Legislative Election and the Presidential Election) in considering the status of women. Feminist approaches are often suspicious or cannot believe how the alliance of these two terms (religion and politics) can truly serve the mandate for gender justice and social justice. Along with undertaking a theoretical discussion, the study in this edition (82) of *Jurnal Perempuan*, also documents Focus Group Discussions (FGD) which were held on Tuesday July 1, 2014 from 1pm until 5pm Western Indonesia Time at the *Jurnal Perempuan*

Foundation office, Jakarta. These FGD were facilitated by Mariana Amirudding (Member of the Editorial Board of *Jurnal Perempuan*) along with: Ade Kusumaningtyas (RAHIMA), Husein Muhammad (National Commission for Women), Siti Khadijah Nasution (Ministry for the Empowerment of Women and Protection of Children), Manneke Budiman (FIB, University of Indonesia), Masruchah (Indonesian Women's Coalition), Muhamad Ali (University of California, Riverside), Nur Iman Subono (FISIPOL, University of Indonesia), Septemmy Lakawa (Higher School of Theology Jakarta), Siti Musdah Mulia (Megawati Institute) and Titi Sumbung (Indonesian Center for Women in Politics). A conceptual discussion of the three terms in the title above will be considered in

light of the political facts (data) of 2014, that is, facts (data) about the Legislative Election and the Presidential Election.

Political-Etymological Description: Religion, Agama, and Dien

In his opening remarks, Muhamad Ali dissected the etymology of the three words which possess a complexity of different meanings and implications in the religious life of Indonesians, namely: *religion* (from English), *agama* (from Sanskrit), and *dien* (from Arabic). *Agama* is a new word which emerged in the modern paradigm. And *religion* as a Western concept then influenced the concept of *agama*, that is, in the context of Westernised Christianity. Religious (*agama*) belief then became a belief for the private sphere, at least in Asia. While from an etymological point of view *agama* comes from Sanskrit – it was then taken to be identical with *religion*. Likewise the Arabic word is taken as identical with *agama*. The relation of politics and religion is hard to change. Etymologically, religion and politics can be differentiated, but they cannot be separated. In Asia, especially in Indonesia, religion is an administrative affair, that is, a clerical affair. In this way religion enters the political sphere. Indonesia is truly a secular State, as has been explained historically and sociologically. Why? Because Indonesia has a ministry of religion, which is the most concrete example of secularisation. While the

definition of a religious leader and political leader become one and the same in a religious State, Indonesia has not adopted such a system. Consequently, religious and political leadership is separated. Indonesia has not allowed its religious and political leadership to unite. This is the democratic road, administratively and politically, in which religion is kept separate.

Primordial and Visual Religious Narratives in the General Election

But if seen through a cultural and social-historical lens (that is, considering the issue of *mindset*), the Indonesian people still unite religion and politics into one entity. As a result, whether or not they want to, political parties must play the religious card, the language of the people is the language of religion. Since all parties use religious language, religion becomes a weakness. Religion functions to divide, differentiate and split minority ethnicities, genders and sects. However, religion also has a positive impact, such as providing a source of norms which are relatively universal. These norms, examples being justice, equality and security, can be used by followers of other religions and also by the non-religious. Siti Khadijah Nasution from KPPA rationalised this. Religion is a double-edged sword, it depends on how politicians and political parties choose to play this card in winning over the masses. The biggest issue is that conservative language



has been used by the secular parties to attract support without understanding the normative message therein. This is a setback. It has ushered in a democratisation of the tapering of identity politics. Furthermore, sectarian questions are raised to attract support or to weaken the base of political opponents: Who are your parents? What is your religion? Muhamad Ali explained this in the FGD.

In the last Legislative Election and Presidential Election, identity politics was used to a massive extent. Women parliamentary candidates (*Caleg perempuan*), both from religious parties like PPP, PKB, PAN, PKS, PBB and secular parties like Partai Demokrat, Golkar, Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan, Nasdem¹ and others used primordial narrative devices such as their origin, Arabic naming, and photos where they wore a veil in order to canvass the support of the people.



Currently, there are approximately 202.9 million people in Indonesia who identify as Muslim (around 88.2% from the total population of Indonesia, 237 million people). The majority are Sunni, around 1 million people are Shia, and approximately 400 thousand people are Ahmadi. Generally, there are two further categories which can be seen, modernist and traditionalist – although this is not to deny the other tendencies within the Islamic tradition. As a country with adherents of the largest religions in the world, particularly as the country with the largest Muslim population, Indonesia was surprised by the April 9 Legislative Election. Firstly, the PDIP's share of the vote decreased and the share of the vote of religious parties increased. In 2009, the total share of the vote for self-identified Islamic parties was 29%, the lowest point for them in many general elections. While the polling predictions this year suggested their vote would be 15-25%, the results in the Legislative Election proved there had been a dramatic increase to 31-32% of the total national vote – where PKS declined by only 1 percent.

This confirms the rise of Islamic ideology in the Indonesian political context, and consequently its use as a political device in the Presidential Election. Almost all parties, both secular and religious, employed a religious (Islamic) visual narrative to increase their support. For example, the figure of Gus Dur became part of a primordial contest in the visual narratives of parties such as PKB and PPP. In fact, in the Presidential Election, the first² Presidential Candidate, Prabowo-Hatta,³ used primordial narratives and religious narratives to win the vote of religious schools⁴ on the basis of being *Gusdurian*.⁵ This was later protested by the family of Gus Dur. Likewise, the second Presidential Candidate, Joko Widodo- Jusuf Kalla also used Ramadhan and an Islamic visual narrative to increase electability.

1 Translator note. The Islamic parties. PPP: United Development Party, PKB: National Awakening Party, PAN: National Mandate Party, PKS: Prosperous Justice Party, PBB: Crescent Star Party. The secular parties. Partai Demokrat: Democratic Party, Golkar: Party of the Functional Groups, Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan: Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle, Nasdem: National Democratic Party.

2 Referring to the numbering in the ballot. Prabowo drew number 1, Joko Widodo drew number 2.
3 Prabowo was candidate for President. Hatta was his running mate and candidate for Vice-President.
4 Pesantren-pesantren
5 That is, being like Gus Dur

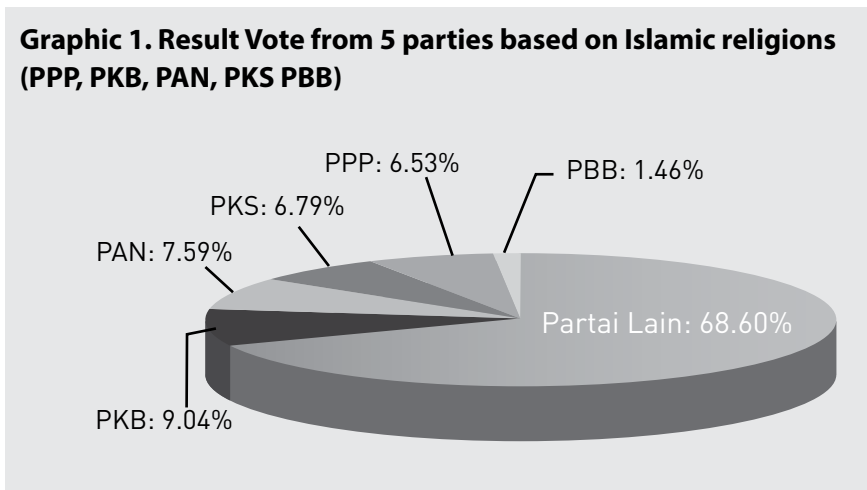
The faces of politicians were changed according to the group who was being approached. If the audience was conservative, then a religious face was used. Meanwhile, if the audience was nationalist, then an inclusive, pluralist, universalist face was used. The various forms of primordial and visual narratives mentioned were used as an instrument of practical politics, even though their normative load was often forgotten, or was purposely passed over in order to broaden electability. There were almost no Islamic parties who campaigned with a sharia agenda. The one party which did put sharia on the agenda was the Crescent Star Party (PBB) which only received 1.5% of the vote in the last Legislative Election. The National Awakening Party (PKB) was one of the winners out of the Islamic based party, closely supported by members of the Nahdlatul Ulama⁶

- because it has a primordial link to Gus Dur
 - with a vote which increased from 4.9% in the 2009 Legislative Election to 9% in the 2014 Legislative Election. This success was mainly because of the closeness to Nahdlatul Ulama which possesses a large base especially in East Java. Apart from PKB, PAN achieved 7.5% - experiencing a reasonably significant increase, while PKS only achieved 6.9% and PPP only 6.5%.

The April 9, 2014 Legislative Election did not indicate an increase in Islamic ideology, however, the resilience of Islamic parties under democracy demonstrates their ability to adapt in a dynamic political climate. They have been a part of the national government during Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidency, and they have become more and more pragmatic because they have tasted power under democracy. This is what has caused them to drop a sharia agenda.

Competition over the politics of value - the normative mandate derived from the mentioned exploitation of symbols - is almost non-existent.

In the FGD, Muhamad Ali suggested there is a need to develop such a politics of value - that is, you must practice what you preach. Comparing political Islam globally, he continued that, America is a secular State, but its people are religious. Even so, according to him, it must



Source: Adapted from The National Commission of Election: Result of Legislative Election 2014 & Other Political Parties.

be acknowledged that religion has become a barrier to democratisation in the Islamic world, particularly in the Middle East, as it is a divisive issue there. "Indonesia must become a model of democracy. Indonesia is far better than the Middle East - in the context of religion, politics and democratisation. However, Indonesia has not yet made a rapid leap - due to the obstacles presented by corruption, gender inequality and many problems with the irregularity of the exercise of authority which continue to arise. Democracy has to be a path, rather than a destination. If Religion and the State unite, then there will be discrimination. Indonesia is still better than the Middle Eastern States, because it has not unified the religious and political administration", he said.

The Revolutionary Mission of Religion in Politics: Mandate for Equality and Justice

In contrast, during the FGD, Manneka Budiman commented differently, stating that "in truth, it will be forever impossible to separate religion and politics. It will never happen, it can only be an ideal. We will be stuck in an illusion.

6 Nahdlatul Ulama is the largest traditionalist Islamic social organisation in Indonesia.

It can never really happen. Differentiation is possible, but separation cannot be done. The religious structures within the State are far older than humans. Religion helps people to 'survive' – when the realities of life are hard, then religion provides answers". According to Manneka, up to this day Indonesia has not been successful in harnessing the constructive potential of religion. In Indonesia's history, religion was born as a revolutionary idea – increasing the level of civilisation. In the historical context, religion also arrived with a revolutionary potential. But then, with the increasing institutionalisation of religion, religion became a reactionary and conservative force – from a liberating to a repressive force. "If the passion does not come, then conservative political elites hold a monopoly – which can be fought effectively by religion itself", added Manneka. This religious passion has long been buried and institutionalised. This religious influence cannot be separated from the mentality of the community – that is, to change the political conditions towards equality and welfare. The intervention of religion in the State can be seen from two sides. Does this intervention benefit the State or religion? "The existence of the Department of Religion confirms the existence of intervention in the State or alternatively the existence of State control of religion", said Manneka. Identity politics can mean 'liberation', that is, it can be progressive and fight the domination of whoever is powerful. Or it can mean repression, when it becomes dangerous, bringing primordial, sexist and sectarian symbols against minority others such as sects and gender minorities. Thus, religious symbols must be looked at in their context. Prophets, in fact, are born to fight the powerful religious and State elite who are corrupt, authoritarian, totalitarian, arbitrary and unjust towards women and vulnerable groups.

They were not founders of societies for ethical culture nor the proponents of humanitarian projects for social reform or cultural ideals. The salvation of the soul alone was the centre of their life and work. Their ethical ideals and the practical results of their doctrines were all based on that alone, as were the consequences of purely religious motives. We shall thus have to admit that the cultural consequences of the Reformation were to

a great extent, ...unforeseen and even unwished-for results of the labours of their reformers. They were often far removed from or even in contradiction to all that they themselves thought to attain. (Weber, 1930: 89-90).

Max Weber exemplified this 'survival' (sintas) in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930) which explains how the passion of Protestantism, that is, religiosity, changed Europe to become a set of States which progressed the narrative of welfare and justice. In turn, this gave rise to the concept of the welfare state. In the Islamic world, 'Islam' and 'Muslim', are not uniform in their etymology but multifocal and diverse, both in relation to interpretation and traditions. Claims of purification and universalism, as signs, have long possessed dynamism in the Islamic world of Indonesia. Husein Muhammad explained in the FGD about the meaning of such signs in one project of 'survival'(sintas) for justice as was explained by Manneke Budiman earlier:

"The construction of religious reasoning is a construction from Medieval Arabia. It has remained stagnant. Indonesia needs to undertake a reconstruction of norms and religious terminology to find a comprehensive interpretation which is not jumbled. That is, 'sintas'. Each of us has a pathway, that pathway is sharia. Dien is different from sharia, dien is one while sharia is plural. Religious values are eschatological values, universal and personal. Sharia is contextual, dien is universal. The sacralisation of something which is profane makes religious life dangerous. The culture of the Muslim community is a text-based culture – textual civilisation; for example, it is haram for young girls to walk alone. Khilafah is a comprehensive State – universal, the ruler is the second religion. Earlier in the 20th century there appeared questions of the relation between religion, culture and politics. Islam did not possess a concept of politics. Religion based on texts is critical – against tyranny, discrimination, exploitation, naïve speculation, and for remembering the common interest. In every political, economic and cultural measure, the function of the prophet is to cut the chains of oppression. Religion has prophetic functions – to free us from tyranny and ignorance – towards belief and justice. Religion falls down if it mixes too freely with politics. Indonesia's platform is already beautiful – Pancasila".

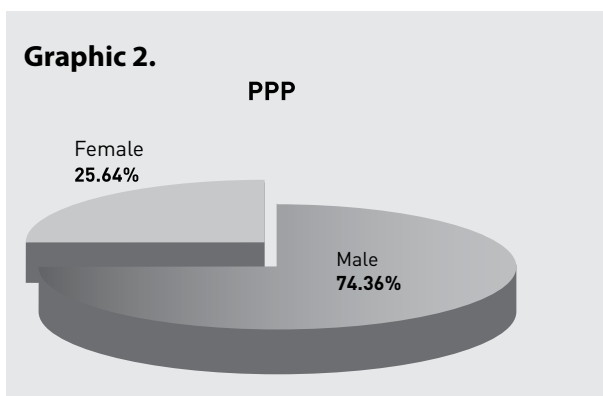
From a Christian theological point of view, Pendeta Septemmy Lakawa (STT Jakarta) explained in the FGD that relations and conflict in religion and politics are like relations between signs/symbols. Religious conflict involves many dimensions. And conflict is not just triggered by one thing, by religion, but is triggered by many factors. And identity and religious symbols become a tool which can most easily be used as a weapon in conflict. The rise of Muslim intellectuals indicates a new relation and new life in religious practice. There is a massive dualism regarding political action, between whether this is acceptable or not. If we talk religion, then we need to discuss 'power'. Septemmy continued:

"Who controls religion, who controls political institutions – they will be strong. The scriptures were quite political – religion is a reality beyond. So the religious imagination strengthens in the context of political repression. Indonesia's history provided possibilities for religious imagination. In Christianity, there is theology and philosophy. There are around 400 hundred schools of theology, as minority in numbers, this theological education should be structured under DIKTI⁷ because theology makes it possible to imagine beyond doctrine. The pastor is a servant – who gives religious interpretation to free the congregation. Theology and philosophy must become sources of strength for religion, and a bid to refuse attempts to domesticate religion – in the public sphere. The voice of the people (rakyat) is not the voice of God – because the symbols which are used by the people are masculine symbols. This issue has been almost non-existent up until now, and there is no discussion about what 'our dreams for Indonesia' are like? These issues have not emerged in the public sphere, so they must be made to emerge; this is a test case for whether it will become too dangerous, or not. Profane and sacred authorities can meet. This is problematic if they meet in a State which is corrupt. And this becomes an instrument of destruction for women and vulnerable groups. We hope that the character of politics can be based in values of equality and justice."

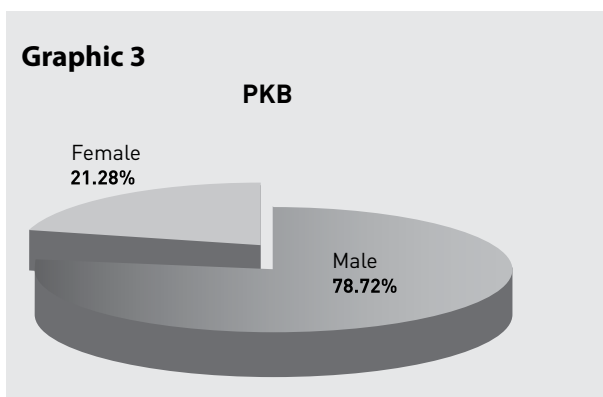
The status of Women in the Legislative Election and the Presidential Election

Then what about rights, the roles of, participation of and status of women in the

Legislative Election and the Presidential Election? Women were actively involved in the Legislative Election, although the mechanisms of the political parties mainly disappointed women, as was reported in many studies in *Jurnal Perempuan* 81 "Women Politicians" May 2014 (see Anita Dhewy's research). The amount of women who serve within party structures is too small and the amount of women members in the parliament is decreasing. The 2014 Legislative Election is not a surprise for the women's political movement as the amount of women in parliament decreased from 18% in 2009 to 17% in 2014. How about the room given for political action of women by Islamic parties? The proportion of women members of parliament (MP) from PPP came to 25.64%; PKB came to 21.28%; PAN came to 15.52%; while the smallest proportion was PKS with 2.50%. 97.50% of PKS seats were dominated by men. This result remains unsatisfactory, and the case of the status of women in PKS affirms an increase of misogyny in religious political parties.

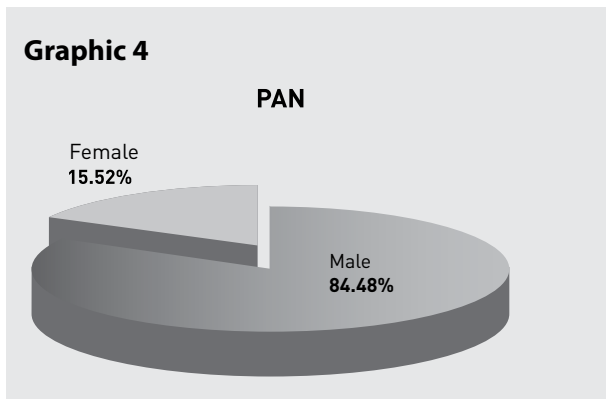


Source: Adapted from The National Commission of Election: Result of Legislative Election 2014.

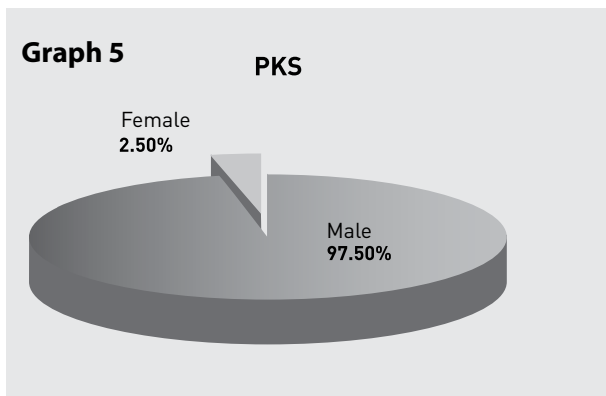


Source: Adapted from The National Commission of Election: Result of Legislative Election 2014.

7 The Directorate General for Higher Education



Source: Adapted from The National Commission of Election: Result of Legislative Election 2014.



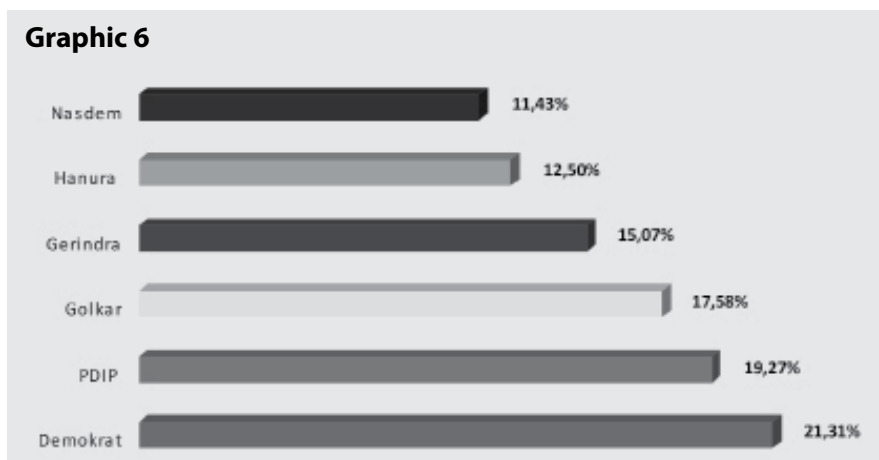
Source: Adapted from The National Commission of Election: Result of Legislative Election 2014.

What about the status of women in the non-religious parties, which are often referred to as nationalist or secular parties? The result was also not that surprising. Women MP's from the Partai Demokrat surpassed one sixth of its MP's,

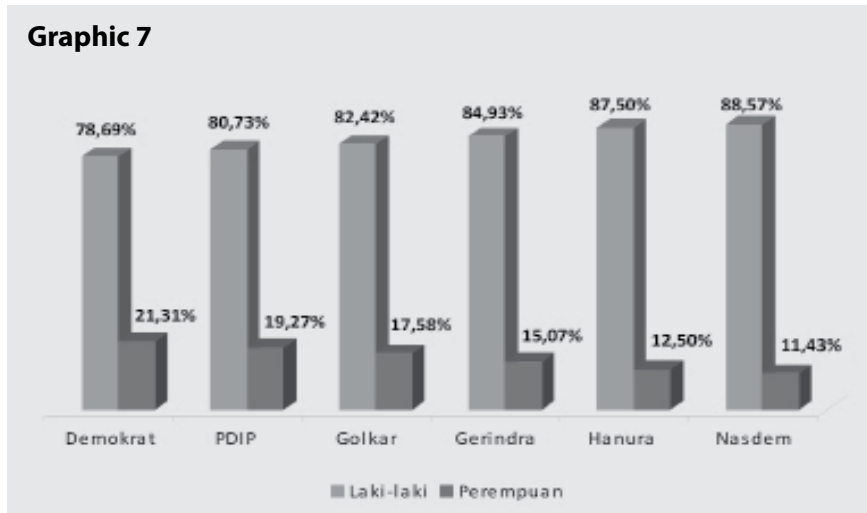
at 21.31% as seen in Graphic 6 following. They were followed by Partai Demokrasi Indonesia - Perjuangan with 19.27%, Golkar with 17.58%, Gerindra with 15.07%, Hanura with 12.50% while the lowest was Nasdem with 11.43%. Within the structure of parties and in the parliament, seats are still dominated by men. Women, sexual minorities and other vulnerable groups were almost unseen in the 2014 General Election.

What about the Presidential election? Were women still unseen? The July 9 Presidential Election shows how women participated and worked hard to be involved in the vision and mission of both sets of candidates. This issue was reported by Mariana Amirudding who initiated monitoring of the vision and mission of each pair of candidates in an effort to build a political paradigm for the status of women. The results from SMRC polling shows that more women than men chose Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla in a survey before the Presidential Election which was undertaken by SMRC and Tom Pepinsky (Graphic 7).

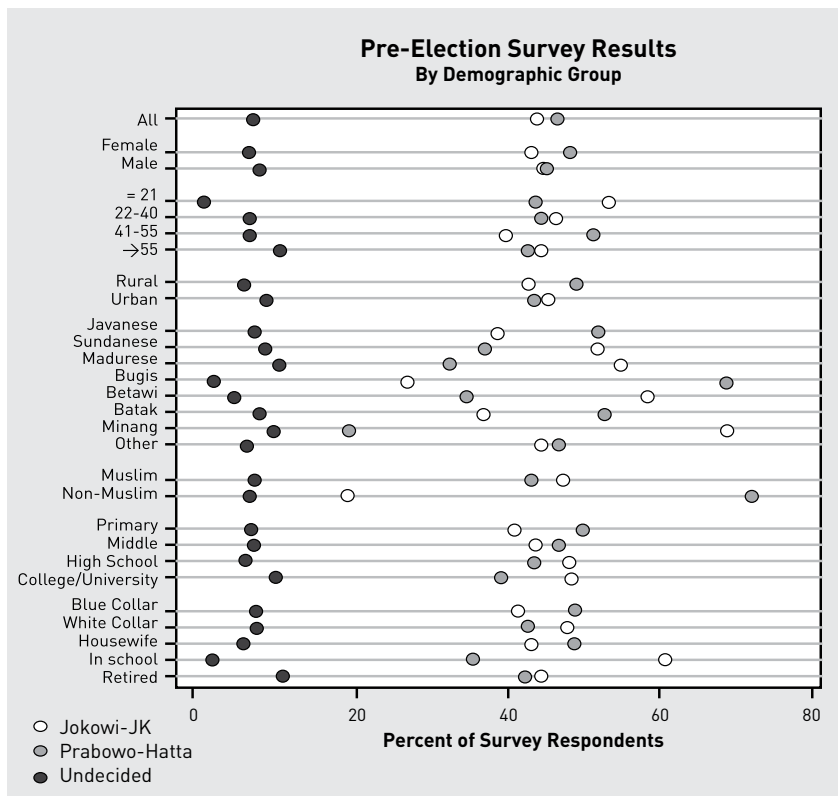
The question which follows is, with the announcement of the results from the Election Commission's manual count in favour of Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla (Prabowo-Hatta: 62,576,444/46.85% and Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla: 70,997,833/53.15%), will the new cabinet, executive strategic policy and political direction of 2014-2019 be favourable to women and minority groups?



Source: Percentage of Women in Legislation of 6 non religion-based parties viewed from amount member of parliament of each political party. Adapted from The National Commission of Election: Result of Legislative Election 2014.



Source: Percentage of Women in Legislation at 6 non religion-based parties viewed from amount member of parliament of each political party. Adapted from The National Commission of Election: Result of election of legislative 2014.



Conclusion

In the Focus Group Discussion, Masruchah from the Indonesian Coalition of Women commented that political rights are fundamental rights. “Political parties now, in fact, do not hold the spirit of freedom with the entry of religion into politics. There are 362 discriminative policies faced by women, like *jilbabisation*⁸ - curfews - bans on prostitution and very vague,

brief and unclear local regulations. Politics has become uncertain, insensitive to gender, and the greatest victim are women”. “This situation shows that in the end, the Other is controlled by religion. The fact that religion is an instrument of violence is proof that the politicisation of religion has triumphed and oppressed women. And triumphed post-*reformasi*⁹ continued Mascruchah. Ade Kusumaningtyas from

8 The trend of wearing the veil, the jilbab.

9 The ‘reformation’ in Indonesian politics in 1998.

RAHIMA, said that “the sociological reality is not created free of history. Identification, for example the coloniser, is identical with who, so then divisions appear. The Law No. 1/1974 about Marriage, for example, is a human creation, so it must be left open for discussion”. “This is regulation – a man-made product. We need to consider how our personal religious experience is manifested in the public sphere. In this way diversity can be protected”, Ade commented. From the world of feminist activism, Titi Sumbung added that:

“Politics is an instrument of power that serves. But now politics is used as an instrument of repression. The passivity of law enforcement. The Draft Law about Gender Equality, for example, has until now not been accepted – because the concept of equality is unacceptable especially for PKS”.

The director of the Megawati Institute, Musdah Mulia, commented that the efforts to give voice to gender justice must be constantly raised and protected. “This is new ground for jihad. Divinity means spiritual values. The

relation between religion and politics is not at an end. Religion seems to be used by political parties as an instrument of repression. The State is neglectful in efforts to develop religion which is compatible with democracy and a narrative of justice and equality. Sharia regulations in regions which are saturated with patriarchal, feudal and sectarian values – which is evident since the implementation, is done in a hurry and does not involve both Quranic scholars (*mufasir*) and gender experts. This is unconstitutional. It leads to the shaping of the State towards theocracy” she explained.

Explanation of the General Election data affirms the vulnerable status of women and other groups, both within the structure of political parties, proportion of MP’s and in the executive development paradigm of the incoming President. The entire women’s movement, paradigmatically and practically, needs to work together, shoulder to shoulder, in order to analyse, criticise and nurture these narratives of justice for a society which is equal in the coming 2014-2019 cabinet period.

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