

## Research Article

# Political Violence Against Women: Challenges Faced in General Elections and Politics

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## Abstract.

This paper aimed to analyze and describe the discrimination faced by women in politics and general elections. The research method used was a literature review of scientific papers, books, newspapers, and other reading materials relevant to the research. The data collected was examined and reviewed. The study used the theories of Anne Philips and Nadezhda Svedova regarding women's political representation. The results and conclusions of this paper found that women's political representation is still deficient, caused by several factors such as patriarchal and masculine culture, dynasty politics that prioritize kinship, recruitment systems that are not women-friendly and financial limitations.

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## 1. Introduction

General elections (Elections) in countries that adhere to the principles of democracy must be based on the principle of people's sovereignty in which people have the right to receive equal treatment, not distinguished by the male and female genders. Equality of rights based on democratic principles that recognize gender equality and justice in organizing elections will determine the success of a democratic country because elections are one of the indicators of the success of a country's government, where the direct election process involves the community in decision-making. Regarding participation, this becomes an essential aspect of organizing elections based on democratic principles. Community participation in the electoral process and politics is the government's urgency to ensure that the community is actively involved in all forms of political activity.

The participation of the community, especially the representation of women in elections and politics, is needed because all public interests in the form of decision-making and policy formulation need to involve women's participation to fulfill women's rights as

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Indonesian citizens. Women can also convey their aspirations towards all the problems experienced by women themselves, which only they know how it feels. However, until now, women's representation has still been an issue or essential problem that the Indonesian government needs to fix. This is by the theory put forward by Anne Philips, which states that women's representation in parliament is very important because the representation of women will lead to women's interests in politics where women have different interests from men. The participation of women in politics will set an example for other women to be more confident, which can then reveal the roots of assumptions that state the right and wrong things for women.

Women's representation in elections and all forms of political activity in Indonesia can be said to be still low. The low representation of women in politics has many influences on the process of formulating policies related to gender equality. Currently, women's participation or representation in parliament in Indonesia, according to 2021-2022 Central Statistics Agency (BPS) data, is still below 30%. The low representation of women in politics certainly has factors and challenges faced by women in the process. The challenges faced by women today are still dominated by patriarchal culture and masculine politics. In addition, the existence of dynasty politics that prioritizes kinship, recruitment systems that are not women-friendly, financial, and others cause women's representation in politics to remain low. The writing of this journal is also relevant to previous research conducted by Sulfiana in 2023, with the title "Gender Discrimination Against Women in Indonesia's Political Faces," with the results showing that the patriarchal culture has taken root since ancient times. Times inherited from generation to generation make men feel superior to women.

A patriarchal culture places men's positions higher than women's, so discrimination and discrimination against women often occurs. Apart from that, research conducted by Anifatul in 2019 with the title "Women in Political Participation in Indonesia" shows that the results of this study indicate that the lack of women's role in the context of national politics is not because of religion or culture, but some men who have interests in national politics use religion and culture to discriminate against women. Coupled with the existence of doctrines or rules from culture to religion, especially Islam, these two factors are exploited by some men to discriminate against women so that it seems that women's roles are only complementary or only written compliments. The same research results were also shown by a study conducted on the role of women's very potential in determining the fate of the nation, but until now, Indonesian women face various obstacles to being able to actively participate in the political sphere, such as Other internal barriers that emerged were lack of political awareness, weak political education,

fear of political risk, women's double roles, limited funding sources, and weak networks. Meanwhile, external barriers include political parties that are less gender-sensitive and political party leadership that is dominated by men. No less important external barriers are cultural and social barriers, which see the political realm as not a place for women.

Based on the results of research conducted by several researchers, which explains that the novelty of this paper is that it describes in more detail what the conditions of women's representation in politics are like, which until now still get violence such as discrimination and marginalization of women accompanied by examples of cases that occur or reality happening, where these case examples illustrate political violence against women in real terms. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to analyze and describe the challenges faced by women in politics and elections; where these challenges pose problems in the form of violence, such as discrimination and marginalization of women in politics, which will have an impact on policies that are not women-friendly, so that participation women in the political arena will be even lower.

## 2. Research Method

In this study, the researcher uses a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is defined as a method to explore and understand the meaning of a number of individuals or a group of people who are considered to come from social or humanitarian issues. Type of this research uses library research (library research); library research is research conducted through data collection activities through scientific papers, books, newspapers, and other reading materials relevant to the research, which aims to examine or collect data that is literary in nature, or a review carried out to solve or critically and thoroughly examine a phenomenon in order to support and strengthen ideas, where the data will be analyzed descriptively. Thus, by using this literature study method, it can be concluded that the main type of data used in this study is secondary data or data obtained indirectly from the source or through intermediaries. This study will collect theoretical and scientific information through reading materials relevant to the research. So that valid and reliable results can be obtained.

## 3. Result

The still low representation of women in politics in Indonesia is caused by many influencing factors. But we need to know that politics does not see gender. In reality, politics in Indonesia is built on a political system that is still thick and closely related

to patriarchal culture or tends not to be women-friendly. Politics in Indonesia, which is based on the principles of democracy that uphold justice and gender equality, should not only motivate men to be actively involved in politics, but the question is whether, in the process, women are given the opportunity to actively participate in politics. In fact, there are still many obstacles and challenges faced by women. Women and politics are actually two things that cannot be separated. However, the problem is that politics has not yet fully provided women access to participate in politics. Women have special needs that can only be understood and felt by the women themselves, which is an important thing to fight for. Judging from the position of women in parliament or politics, we can see that women play a role as a representation of the identity that exists in women themselves and women's interests in general that cannot be fulfilled in politics.

The low political participation of women in the five-year democratic party in the country is still homework in itself. Even though a number of regulations, ranging from the Law on General Elections and the Law on Election Administrators to the Law on Political Parties, must clearly pay attention to at least 30% of women's representation, Although many regulations provide opportunities to increase women's participation in politics and elections, women's representation in the national political map is still minimal. A number of parties encourage the participation of women in the 2024 Elections. The minimal representation of women in the national political map, of course, is a reason behind the still-low representation of women in politics and elections.

The causes of the low representation of women in politics are the existence of several obstacles and challenges for women's participation when they have become or before being involved in political and electoral processes. The recruitment system of political parties is still not women-friendly, as well as work systems such as holding meetings until dawn, even though there are still many tasks or interests that must be done by women and even men, in which case, the work culture used is still bad. In addition, the existence of an affirmative action policy regarding 30% representation of women in politics, up to now, it is still a policy that is only considered, not an obligation that is required to be a requirement for women's involvement in politics.

### **3.1. The persistence of patriarchal culture and masculine politics in society.**

The patriarchal perception in social meaning places the role of social actors as very important. Sastryani (2007:65) in Israpil (2017) states that the patriarchal perception is a system of social grouping that prioritizes the father's lineage or the essence of

men to be the main thing to be placed as the central actor of the social system. Berry (1992:124) in Israpil (2017) also states that societies that adhere to social systems always use patriarchy as a benchmark in looking at the interaction of social structures and functions. Everything that is attached to someone in society always prioritizes patriarchal values, such as laws based on the father's line, using the father's name, inheriting the father's inheritance, traditional leaders, or other forms dominated by men or fathers. This builds a stigma in the social system in which men or fathers are companions for women. This view raises a gender perception that sees that men and women have different traits; men become more dominant to get rewards, respect, and even strategic positions. Meanwhile, women are limited to doing household chores and maintaining the emotional and psychological conditions of men so that they remain dominant in their patriarchal view.

The patriarchal culture that still exists today is still an obstacle for women to take on roles in the social system, including the political world. In addition to being an obstacle for women, patriarchal culture also triggers conflicts to acts of violence directly felt by women. Many women have become victims of criminal acts by men, such as rape; this happens because it is based on a stigma that views women as low, so men act arbitrarily. The assumption is that women are usually exploited, disadvantaged, and have a lower status compared to men. Patriarchal culture influences people's mindset, which raises various gender injustices for both men and women. These gender injustices are indirectly and concrete in various social lives, such as the assumption that women do not have an important role in decisions and even political policies. In addition, most of the problems that occur are due to the politics of masculine policies taken by the government. Not many policies taken are friendly to women. This kind of situation is a big challenge for the government to realize a democratic state that upholds justice and equality for men and women, where women's voices must be taken into consideration and involved in all government affairs for a democratic state because basically changing a person's mindset and culture is something that is very difficult to change.

### 3.2. Politics Dynasty

Basically, the political dynasty system is a political strategy that is built and carried out to gain power. By implementing a political dynasty system strategy, it is hoped that the power gained can be passed on to descendants or families. The rise of political dynasties raises concerns about the unequal distribution of political power that opposes democratic representation in politics. The emergence of political dynasties cannot be

separated from the role of political parties and regulations. The oligarchy that exists in the party recruitment system affects the party cadre mechanism. So far, the candidate system by political parties has been dominated by the wishes of political elites without considering the quality and capabilities of candidates. Weak regulations also cause the practice of political dynasties to spread.

The opportunity for women to be elected to get strategic positions in politics is still very limited because public preferences greatly determine the election of women. There are several aspects that need to be considered; the first is how the support that female candidates have in helping candidates win, such as in regional elections. Such support can also be seen from the candidate's background, such as coming from party cadres, having ties to certain political dynasties, or having close ties with political elites who have great influence in the area. Candidates who have oligarchic networks in their regions, especially those close to a political dynasty system, tend to make it easier for candidates to win when compared to candidates who are independent; even though the candidates are very competent in terms of capacity, this becomes something that is not considered if they have a special closeness with political elites who rule the region. This can be interpreted that one of the requirements for nomination is the large amount of support from the community, which will also affect the capital needed by candidates in nominating. Therefore, it is not uncommon for women to have obstacles to advance in politics due to financial constraints.

The obstacles felt by women when they have the desire to advance in politics like this are things that need to be considered by the government, which when the interest of women themselves is no longer high, it will affect the democratic system owned by Indonesia, especially in politics and elections.

### **3.3. Components of party political recruitment and cadre that have not been able to carry out functions that promote gender justice.**

The recruitment process possessed by political parties must certainly be different and have their own mechanisms. This is in accordance with the function of political parties, one of which is political recruitment. Political parties become a means of liaison for candidates to enter politics. Political parties must be able to be responsible for being able to accommodate candidates until they achieve their goals to gain power regardless of gender. This means that political parties must also be able to invite individuals to actively participate in every political activity; political parties participate in building and

increasing political participation in society, which also affects the size of the level of women's representation in politics. As long as it functions, political parties carry out recruitment in order to provide equal opportunities for men and women to participate in politics and see the modern conditions that prioritize gender equality between men and women to get the same rights in the political sphere.

The implementation of the affirmative action policy, fulfilling the quota for women's representation in parliament of at least 30%, which has been implemented, has an influence on political parties in recruiting female cadres. But in reality, the presence of this policy is only as far as being considered by political parties, not used as something that must be considered. Fulfillment of the 30% quota only pays attention to quantity without assessing the quality of integrity and capacity of female candidates. This is an urgency that must be addressed by political parties, which will have an impact on the quality of the political parties themselves. If we look at the reality, there are still many political parties that apply a closed recruitment system for their parties. For example, the PDI Perjuangan recruitment system conducts a selection process for legislative candidates at the East Java Regional Legislative Council, where the PDI does not open registration openly; thus, the PDI takes candidates from its party cadres only, where this kind of system appears that the distribution of power lies with the party structural who can propose candidates from his cadres alone. This is certainly an obstacle for women who have the desire to run directly in parliament. Women suddenly lose confidence when they find out many political parties are still implementing this kind of system. Women feel their access to advance as candidates is very limited

### **3.4. Discrimination against women is the marginalization or marginalization and poverty of women from participating in politics.**

One form of discrimination against women is the marginalization of women's rights to be involved in politics. Women have a strong foundation in law to be involved in politics, but the reality is different; even though the policies that exist seem friendly to women, these policies are only existing policies; the government only pays attention not requires, such as the policy of Law no. 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower article 81 paragraph 1 which reads: "Female workers/laborers who during menstruation feel pain and notify the employer are not required to work on the first and second days during menstruation." The policy exists, but in reality, the policy is there and not there, like the emergence of a sense of distrust when a female employee has to go to work.

As expressed by Vina, quoted from the DW website, the employee had worked in an office that did not have this leave. As a result, when experiencing excruciating menstrual pain, she still had to work in the office because of work demands and the uncomfortable feeling of having to take leave because of menstrual pain.

Women-friendly policies do exist, but it seems that there are policies and there are no policies. The existence of these policies, which have often been voiced, women are often still seen as weak humans, limited, and even unsuitable to occupy strategic positions in politics. In addition, the leave allowance provided to women giving birth in Indonesia only applies for three months. Meanwhile, babies are still guaranteed the right by the state to get Exclusive Breastfeeding for six months. Therefore, workplaces should have special facilities for breastfeeding and/or pumping breast milk. Unfortunately, there are not many companies that have nursing rooms; not infrequently, these mothers have to occupy warehouses, prayer rooms, or toilets to breastfeed or pump their breast milk. Of course, these spaces are far from comfortable and tend to have no privacy. This fact shows that until now, women are still faced with challenges that have a major impact on the lives of the women themselves. Therefore, women still do not have equal access and opportunities as men to occupy strategic positions in politics, and these conditions make women feel increasingly marginalized for their rights.

### **3.5. Impact of the Problem of Low Representation of Women in Politics and Elections**

The minimal representation of women in the national political map will certainly have serious impacts on politics in Indonesia such as First, the low number of women in party management at various levels causes the low bargaining position of women in decision-making processes within the party, which is an important issue that must be considered by women, because the position of women in politics is an important figure to participate in politics and elections. Increased participation of women in elections will be highly correlated with gender-equitable political decision-making. Second, the political skills of female politicians are still low, so they are less sensitive to developments in the political situation, including internal party dynamics, and are less able to lobby and tend not to be assertive or wise in defending their interests because basically, many of the problems experienced by women will have an impact on the political situation in Indonesia, which may only be felt by women, which cannot be equated by men. Therefore, this is an important thing in the context of making gender equality policies.



## 4. Conclusion

The representation of women in elections and all forms of political activity in Indonesia can be said to be still low. The low representation of women in politics certainly has factors and challenges faced by women in the process. The challenges faced by women today are still dominated by patriarchal culture and masculine politics. In addition, the existence of dynasty politics that prioritizes kinship, recruitment systems that are not women-friendly, financial, women-friendly policies that are not heeded, which cause women to be reluctant to participate and others which cause women's representation in politics to remain low. Politics, up to now, still does not fully provide access for women to participate in politics. Women have special needs that can only be understood and felt by the women themselves, which is an important thing to fight for.

The position of women in parliament or politics, we can know that women play a role as a representation of the identity that exists in themselves and the interests of women in general that cannot be fulfilled in politics, which will have an impact on policies that are not friendly to women, where these conditions will also have an impact on the representation and participation of women which will be even lower, therefore, the government must take concrete steps that guarantee the fulfillment of women's rights and existing policies regarding the fulfillment of women's rights and needs are not just policies that are written, but there are real actions or actions that tackle the problems faced by women, so that women's access to participate is also guaranteed, and will increase the political participation of women in particular.

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## Declaration of Conflict Interest

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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