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# Female Politicians Fighting Marginality: A Study of Minangkabau Muslimah Involvement in the 2019 General Election

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This study aims to describe the contestation of female politicians against cultural, social and political marginalisation within the Minangkabau ethnic group of West Sumatra, Indonesia, while actively participating in the legislative field of the 2019 general election. This study uses a qualitative approach to describe and analysed the experiences of “Bacaleg” [female politicians or women candidates] within various political parties of the Minangkabau ethnic group who are preparing to face the 2019 General Election. Data collection was carried out by documentation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions with Minangkabau women politicians, and was analysed by using qualitative data analysis techniques. The research findings show that Minangkabau women politicians have the determination and commitment to fight the marginalisation of women from cultural, social and political perspectives in order to participate in politics. Minangkabau women politicians who have managed to get seats at the national level in the People's Representative Council (DPR)] and the National Regional Representative Council (DPD), at the Provincial level in People's Regional Representative Council Level I (DPRD I)], and at the Regency level in the People's Regional Representative Council Level II (DPRD II) in the 2019 General Election have a strong motivation to improve the condition of society, especially women and children as stated in the political promises they have delivered to their constituents. Nevertheless, women candidates for the 2019 elections,



who have not yet succeeded in sitting in parliament, see their failure as “delayed success” and will continue to fight against marginality in the upcoming 2024 elections.

**Key words:** *Muslimah involvement, Minangkabau women politicians, marginalization, general election 2019.*

## Introduction

Both Indonesian women and men have the same position and rights, in terms of ideology and human rights, to equally participate in and to benefit from national development. The involvement of Minangkabau women in the public and political realm is nothing new. Even before the demand for Indonesian independence from Dutch colonialism, Minangkabau women had participated in politics for the advancement of the people (Blackburn, 2008; Siapno, 2000; Wieringa, 2002). Some Minangkabau women politicians have accomplished a great deal for their people. Take for instance, Siti Mangopoh (1880-1965) who fought with great courage against the injustice of Minangkabau woman; Rohana Kudus (1884-1972) who initiated advances within newspapers and schools for women (Arsa, 2017; Selinaswati, 2019); Rahmah El Yunisiah (1900-1969) who fought for equal opportunity for women to receive equal education to men; and Rasuna Said (1990-1965) who has become a monumental figure in advancing progress through politics and education for women (Alfian, 2012).

Then again, current socio-cultural conditions involving women in politics are quite different from the experiences of the past (Heryanto & Mandal, 2013; Reuter, 2003). Nowadays, the rise of women being continually victimised further exhibits the feeble protection of women. This lack of protection can be seen in the discounted torturing of female immigrant workers, the ever-present violence against women in public and domestic violence in private households, the number of increasing divorces, and the alarming increase in the rates of child marriage (García-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise & Watts, 2005; Kishor & Johnson, 2004; Organisation, 2002). Fortunately, these problems and injustices that have befallen women seem to make women more motivated to actively participate in politics.

On the other hand, affirmative action supports opportunities for women to participate in politics as with Law No. 10 of 2008 in reference to Legislative Elections, Law No. 2 of 2008 regarding Political Parties, and Law Number 15 of 2011 concerning Election Organisers, and Law No. 12 of 2003 regarding elections (Baldez, 2006; Bessell, 2010; Chaerowati, Yuliati & Rochim, 2019; Krook, 2006; Rina & Nurhaeni, n.d.). For instance, Law No. 12 of 2003 states that every political party participating in the Election can submit candidates for members of the National, Provincial, City, and Regency Legislative from each electoral district by



considering women's representation of at least 30%. As well, Article 6 paragraph 5 states that the composition of General Election Commission, Provincial General Election Commission, and Regency/City General Election Commission membership mandates that there must be at least 30 percent representation of women in General Election Commission and Bawaslu membership. Furthermore, Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections also mandates that the Election Organisers, Political Parties and Candidates must exhibit a representation of at least 30 percent by women.

Law No. 7 of 2017 shines a light on the presence of women in political contestation in Indonesia for the 2019 election. The presence of women in national political contestation cannot deny that women have participated in enlivening and colouring the political dynamics in Indonesia (Chaerowati et al., 2019; Selinaswati, 2019). In various regions in Indonesia during the 2019 election, several names and pictures of female figures were found displayed in public spaces. This phenomenon will continue to strengthen justice and gender equality in the family, social and national settings as a result of the continued support of the emancipation movement and the demand for the importance of participation of women in politics.

Political rights are the rights of all Indonesian people, regardless of whether they are male or female. Women have the right and the potential to make a real contribution to politics (Dahlerup, 2013; Enloe, 2014; Shell-Duncan, 2008). However, the attitude towards the phenomenon of the increasing number of women in political contestation nationwide still invites discussion, debate and often leaves doubts. This impression of women in politics is illustrated in the 2014 Election. There were only 97 (17.3%) women members of the House of Representatives from a total of 560 available seats. The number of women holding seats had decreased from the previous 2009 election, where there were 103 female members of the Legislative (18.4%).

The same declining conditions of women holding political places are also found in the broad jurisdiction of the government. Data from the 2014-2016 Civil Service Agency (BKN) shows a trend of women serving in higher positions is declining in the government (Mason & Shetty, 2019; Simangunsong, 2017). Women filled only 22.38% of operational positions with the most substantial proportion of female structural officials being at the lower levels, namely echelon III and echelon IV. It would seem that women are extended less trust with higher government positions. In other words, essential positions in the government that should produce gender-responsive policies are not yet open to women.

Interestingly, based on a study conducted by the World Bank, there is a close relationship between the degree of representation of women in parliament and a decrease in corruption cases (Dollar, Fisman, & Gatti, 2001; Goetz, 2007; Stockemer, 2011; Sung, 2003; Swamy,



Knack, Lee, & Azfar, 2001; Treisman, 2000). The rate of corruption is minimal in countries with a high representation of women in the legislature and executive government branches. Scandinavian countries with more than 40% representation of women exhibit more efficient government and are accompanied by greater prosperity of and welfare for the people. In Indonesia, a similar hope of success arises, namely how women can bring changes in existing plans and political discourse. Because of this hope, the emergence of several women candidates in the 2019 elections has received particular attention in Indonesia, and in turn, is expected to increase the involvement of women in the political arena both locally and nationally.

Women in the Minangkabau tradition are seen as “*Limpapeh rumah nan gadang, umbuang purauak pagangan kunci, ka pai tempat batanyo, ka pulang tampek babarito*” [playing important positions in domestic and public sectors]. Minangkabau women are very likely to represent themselves in politics, or even become political leaders because of their equal and robust position given in this matrilineal society. The matrilineal system gives a central position to women as being legally, socially and culturally equal to men. This structure of equality is manifested in the Minangkabau culture by the ownership of inheritance given to women, and by the power of executor being given to the children who are in the line of women. A Minangkabau woman with similar qualifications and resources as a Minangkabau man has the same opportunity to become a political leader. However, in reality, there are not any woman governors, mayors or regents in the various cities and regencies of West Sumatra. Similarly, the result of the 2014 election showed, on average, an 8.22% representation of women in the legislative arena, and disturbingly, there are still cities and regencies which do not have any women representatives in the government. Therefore, the focus of this research is the contestation of Minangkabau women politicians and their fight against marginalisation in the 2019 elections in the Minangkabau Highlands of West Sumatra, Indonesia, a people known for their favorable treatment of women.

## Method

<sup>1</sup> The study aims to describe and analyse the contestation of Minangkabau women politicians in countering marginalisation in the 2019 General Election. This research utilised a qualitative descriptive approach, where the direct involvement of the researcher as a planner, executor of data collection, data analyser, as well as being a pioneer of research results in the field was needed. The endearing relationships among researchers and research subjects (informants), in this case, the “*bacaleg*” [candidates] before, during and after entering the field, was the primary key to the success of data collection.

This research was conducted in Padang, the capital of the province of West Sumatra, with the subject of research being Minangkabau women politicians who were *bacalegs* candidates for



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Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR) [People's Representative Council] and the Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (DPD) [National Regional Representative Council], at the Provincial level of West Sumatra for Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah I (DPRD I) [People's Regional Representative Council Level I], and at the Regency level of Padang City and other cities for Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah II (DPRD II) [People's Regional Representative Council Level II] in 2019 Elections. The selection of research samples was a snowball sampling technique whereby research participants recruited other participants for the study. The data collection instruments were documentation, interviews, observation and focus group discussion. The collected data were analysed using qualitative analysis techniques.

## **Findings and Discussions**

### ***Minangkabau Women Politicians Fighting against Marginalisation***

The appearance of women politicians in their contestation of local and national politics in the 2019 elections in Indonesia is not a unique phenomenon. Manuel Castells, in his highly relevant book *The Power of Identity*, initially published in 1997, predicted that one of the world's political transformations towards the 21st century would be marked by the phenomenon of the collapse of the patriarchal order in various parts of the world. The collapse of the patriarchal order here is not solely in terms of the appearance of women in the public sphere to balance the domination of men in both numbers and capacities, but the fundamental change in social political and cultural formation in both the private and public spheres which places male domination in the division of labour and roles.

In this context, the political sphere which has been interpreted as a “man’s world”, both in the sense of being fulfilled by men’s activities or influenced by the character of masculinity, is undergoing a massive transformation that not only places the presence of women but also the appearance of feminist discourse in the political arena. The rationale for the need for women’s participation in politics is that women have special needs that can only be understood by women themselves because of their life experiences and biological specifications. With an adequate number of females in the executive and legislative government institutions, it is hoped that women will be able to pay more attention to women’s problems that are often forgotten by men.

### ***Against Cultural Marginalisation***

Political parties in West Sumatra who participated in the 2019 Election must have women as legislative candidates to meet the demands of the law. A long-established tradition that is deeply imprinted in the minds of women that politics belongs to the world of men, and even though the obligation by law to meet the quota of 30% of female representation creates an



excellent opportunity for women, still leads to not many women being able to participate in politics. Just as Mimi Suharti, who claimed not to have any political experience, accepted the offer of the Islam-based political party, Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (PPP) [United Development Party], as their candidate for the West Sumatra Provincial DPRD in the 2019 Election. Mimi Suharti stated, *“I did not want to, but after I thought about it, I tried my best to convince myself and the children and families, I finally accepted the offer. I am of the view that this might be my way of life after retiring from Public Officer, as a lecturer at one of the state universities in Padang.”*

The same conditions were also experienced by other candidates, such as Yasnida Syamsuddin, who succeeded in becoming a member of the Legislative Council in the Padang City DPRD in the 2004 Elections but failed in the 2009 and 2014 Elections. Although she failed twice she still tried to convince herself and her family to accept the offer from the Islam-based political party, Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB) [National Awakening Party], for the West Sumatra Provincial Parliament 2019 Election, even though her brother and sister advised: *“You need to reconsider participating in the 2019 Election because you have twice failed to deter, to spend time and age alone. Politics is a world for men, not suitable for women; it only adds to the sins that many get rewarded”*. However, Yasnida Syamsuddin tried to refute the opinions of her siblings and tried to convince herself and her family because she had quite a large following as a mentor of the *Majlis Talim* in Padang and also activists of various organizations that were concerned with empowering women and protecting children.

The same thing was experienced by other legislative candidates such as Yeni Fitriani, Nel Syofyan, Triyana, and Herawati, who also struggled to convince themselves and their families to accept offers of various parties participating in the 2019 Election. Yeni Fitriani initially refused the offer to become a Golkar Party legislative candidate for 50 Kota regency DPRD so that that the party would focus on accompanying her retired husband. In the 2014 election, YF participated as a legislative candidate but failed, then was eventually tempted to strengthen the position of women in meeting the 30% requirement. Likewise, Triyana received the Democratic Party's bid for the Padang City DPRD, Nel Syofyan from PAN for the West Sumatra Provincial Parliament, and Herawati from PKS.

### ***Against Social Marginalisation***

Besides fighting marginalisation in the cultural setting, the Minangkabau women politicians also have to fight marginalisation in the social setting. It is believed that one of the supporting factors for the success of the candidates to get votes is to have a social investment, but sometimes the opposite is true. The mindset within social settings involving both men and women underestimate female candidates and shows that the support of the social environment



for Minangkabau women politicians is not yet secure. When female candidates asked for opinions and support, some residents blatantly refused, and some stated “*kok masih ado bareh nan kadi tanak di dapua, ndak usahlah ikut mencaleg pulo lai bu.*” [the position of Minangkabau women is as household. It is not essential to work outside because the responsibility is on her husband], meaning that if the candidates were not urged, they do not need to participate, and they should even be barred. Unfortunately, among women candidates, they compete with each other and do not support each other, and some even have the audacity to slander other Minangkabau women politicians. As well, sadly, during the campaign period, some residents even demand that female candidates give compensation or bribery money for their vote.

### ***Against Political Marginalisation***

Political funds determine the polling position of the candidate. Even though they have been ranked number one as with Yasnida Syamsuddin, this does not guarantee the electability of a woman. This scenario is evidenced by the decrease in the percentage of representation of women from 2014 to the 2019 election.

In the fight against political marginalisation, political education must be provided for Minangkabau women both in terms of political organisation and of democracy through legislative, executive and judicial institutions that are aspirational and supportive of the interests of women. The first effort that can be done by the provincial government is to continue to disseminate and increase the employability of women in West Sumatra through training. However, this effort cannot instantly provide political understanding for women; rather this endeavour needs to be done simultaneously and continuously to realise the right of everyone to achieve equality and justice. Another effort that can be done is to realise the laws and regulations that are partial and affirmative towards increasing the representation of women.

### ***The Success of Minangkabau Women Politicians in Sitting in the Parliament in 2019 Election***

The Permanent Voters List (DPT) approved by the West Sumatra Provincial KPU displayed 3,718,003 constituents, which consisted of 1,188,128 women (50.6%) and 1,836,875 men (49.4%). The number of DPTs that have been passed using their right to vote in 16,702 polling stations spread across 19 cities and regencies in West Sumatra Province. Female candidates should respond to the sheer potential of women voters by showing their commitment and ability to respond to problems faced by women such as the problem of poverty for women, increasing violence against women and children, high infant mortality





rates, limited development and benefits for women, and gender discrimination in various areas of life.

However, this tremendous opportunity for women candidates has not yet succeeded in bringing fulfillment to Minangkabau women politicians. The results of the vote count show a smaller number of women in the legislatures in the DPD, DPR, West Sumatra Provincial DPRD, and City/Regency DPRD. The following table illustrates the dynamics of the struggle and success of Minangkabau female politicians against marginalisation.

**Table 1:** Number of candidates for DPD RI and DPR RI from the Province of West Sumatra in the 2019 elections

No	Parliament	Men	Women	Total
1	DPD RI	41	2	43
2	DPR RI	114	75	189

Of the two female candidates, Emma Yohanna was successful in becoming the only female candidate to become a member of the Regional Representative Council of West Sumatra Province. She had the most votes even among the four DPD RI male candidates who managed to qualify as legislators. This time was historic for Emma Yohanna had succeeded in becoming a member of and the constituent of Minangkabau women politicians for the third time with the DPD RI having the two prior periods being the 2009 and the 2014 elections. Three other DPD female candidates who passed to become members of the DPD RI also accompanied her indicating that 25% of the representatives of West Sumatra province for the DPD RI are women. Emma Yohanna's success is undoubtedly supported by her ability to fight cultural, social and political marginalisation.

Of the 189 candidates, 14 were successful in gaining seats in the DPR RI, with three being won by women candidates: Nevi Zuairina (from PKS), Lisda Hendrajoni (from Nasdem party) and Atari Gahutri (from PAN). 11 seats were for male candidates. As shown in the following table, the DPRD of West Sumatra Province in the 2019 election has similarly participated in the campaigning of Minangkabau female politicians to fight for 65 seats in the West Sumatra Provincial DPRD.



**Table 2:** List of Legislative Candidates for West Sumatra Province DPRD Representing Various Parties in 2019 Elections

No	Election Area	Men	Women	Total
1	Sumbar 1	110	48	158
2	Sumbar 2	55	41	96
3	Sumbar 3	60	44	104
4	Sumbar 4	79	42	121
5	Sumbar 5	50	27	77
6	Sumbar 6	96	59	155
	Total	450	261	711

From the candidates who competed for 65 seats in the West Sumatra provincial DPRD, only three female candidates were able to secure seats in the Provincial DPRD. They were Yunista Syahiran (from the Gerindra Party), Leli Arni (from PDIP), and Siti Izzati (from Golkar Party). The number of women legislative members in the 2019 election decreased from the 2014 election to a total of only seven representatives.

Furthermore, eight wives of the regents of Cities/Regencies and West Sumatera provinces are advancing to become candidates for female representatives of DPR RI, DPRD of West Sumatra Province, and cities/regencies. Three candidates from the group of women legislative candidates managed to qualify as legislators for the Indonesian House of Representatives. They are Nevi Zuairina, wife of West Sumatra Governor Irwan Prayino, Lisda Hendrajoni, wife of Pesisir Selatan regent and Yunista Syahiran, wife of West Pasaman regent. According to interviews conducted with the five other regional heads who failed to become members of the legislature, they positively considered this failure as "*Delayed Success.*"

The above details show the success of Minangkabau women participating in politics. The details further show that these women are also able to fight cultural, social and political marginalisation. To succeed, they must have adequate personal investment, material investment, social investment, and last but not least, power investment. It was often disclosed in interviews that the elected female Minangkabau politician had either marital relations or blood relations with the incumbents, and with other political leaders. This belief unfortunately indicates that men still control politics and that Minangkabau women politicians cannot win without the support of leading male politicians.



**Table 3:** The dynamics of Political Representation of Minangkabau Women in Provincial DPRD, Cities and Districts in West Sumatra 2009-2014 and 2014-2019

DPRD 2009 dan 2014	2009			2014			Information
	P	KRS	%	P	KRS	%	
West Sumatra Province	7	55	12.7	6	65	9.2	Decrease
Padang	3	45	6.7	7	45	15.5	Increase
Padang Pariaman Reg.	3	35	8.6	2	40	5	Decrease
Pariaman	2	20	10	1	20	5	Decrease
Padang Panjang	4	20	20	4	20	20	Still
Tanah Datar Reg.	3	35	8.6	3	35	8.6	Still
Agam Reg.	3	40	7.5	1	45	2.2	Decrease
Bukittinggi	4	25	16	2	25	8	Decrease
Pasaman Barat Reg.	1	35	2.8	1	40	2.5	Still
Pasaman Reg.	1	30	3.3	2	35	5.7	Increase
Payakumbuh	2	25	8	2	25	8	Still
Lima Puluh Kota Reg.	2	35	5.7	4	35	11.4	Increase
Pesisir Selatan Reg.	0	40	0	3	45	6.7	Increase
Mentawai Reg.	0	20	0	0	20	0	Still
Solok	2	20	10	1	20	5	Decrease
Solok Reg.	1	35	2.8	3	35	8.6	Increase
Solok Selatan Reg.	2	25	8	0	25	0	Decrease
Sawahlunto	4	20	20	4	20	20	Still
Dharmasraya Reg.	1	25	4	1	25	4	Still
Sijunjung Reg.	2	25	8	3	30	10	Increase
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>Decrease</b>

**Data Source:** KPU Sumatera Barat 2019

The data above shows that the involvement of women in West Sumatra has decreased over the past decade. At the national level, although there was 30% affirmative action for the nomination of women legislative members, there were only 18.2% parliamentary seats occupied by women between 2009 and 2014, and this number dropped to 17.3% between 2014 and 2019. These numbers are inconsistent with the number of female candidates who are running for political parties, which have increased from 33.6% in 2009 to 37% in 2014. Ironically, the amount of female candidates who are running for political parties is increasing at the local level, especially in West Sumatra, where the choice of women in legislative seats is declining due to the political arena being dominated by men.

### Discussion

The decrease of involvement by Minangkabau women in the political sphere is a consequence of the attitude and viewpoint of control, and the decisiveness of the formal



political leaders in which they do not consider women in politics necessary (Arimbi, 2009; Blackburn, 2008; Blackwood, 2001; Siahaan, 2003). To be a leader, the political leaders felt that stepping out of “*ninik mamak*” [guarding the use of natural resources for the welfare of the local people] was a violation of morality, and that all of these factors were affecting their self-esteem, leading women to be less interested in politics, stuttering in the public world, and less of a struggle.

The involvement or activism of women is strongly related to competence, political interests, abilities and awareness in politics of women, which is therefore accompanied by entering more significant social networks or higher levels of education. Prior research has found that structural, cultural and religious factors influence the involvement (activism) of women, as well as the constitution. This culminates in political and religious cultural hindrances and affects the self of women. These factors shape the perception of women, whereby they are not so concerned with who are the political leaders, for that is not their world. The women are hence reluctant to take on politics and they hope that in the future, the Nagari government will indeed be returned to the Nagari government system in a real and responsible manner, according to the Minangkabau cultural system (Lussier & Fish, 2012; Rinaldo, 2008). If the government reverts to an antiquated cultural system, Minangkabau women will always experience challenges in representing themselves in the political world, and it will be difficult to change their position.

To be able to compete in the polling arena, Minangkabau women politicians must have capital forces to empower them in opposing the other candidates (Aspinall, 2003). There are at least three main capitals that determine the competitiveness of a legislative candidate in general elections: political capital, economic capital and social capital. The political capital of Minangkabau women politicians is different from male candidates because women are still marginalised in the party. Political capital is knowledge, experience and comprehension skills related to politics and the electoral system. A candidate must know from the beginning of the election procedures, strategies and the potential for winning the political plan starting from the internal party. Economic or financial capital (funding) has a significant contribution to success. Sources of funding for legislative candidates who will join the general election are used to meet constituents, to create favoured traits, and to be proactive in the political activities.

Based on the matrilineal system in Minangkabau, women are placed in the central position. Women are considered to be in charge of the inheritance of the family and the people. In classic literature, the terms matriarchate or female conjunctures and owners of all power are used. In this area, women are ordained first as rulers or owners of family heirlooms (Mahmoed, 2004). In the customary provisions, to be “*bundo kanduang*” [control of her own life], one must possess leadership qualities, including those that are true, honest, believed to



be physically and spiritually responsible, talented, knowledgeable, articulate and shy. If elaborated, the characteristics of female leadership determined in Minangkabau custom are no different from the characteristics of leadership in general. Cultural observer, AA Navis, said the matrilineal system became a fertile ground for the development of democratic culture, precisely in Minangkabau society where the matrilineal system of egalitarian cultures allows for gender equality to take place. According to him, matrilineal is a system to strengthen the position of women so that they are legally, socially and culturally equal to men.

Even though the inhabitants adhere to matrilineal culture, in reality, women politicians in West Sumatra Province are still unable to fight marginalities to fill legislative seats optimally in the 2019 General Election. In West Sumatra Province, the representation of women in parliament or DPRD has notably decreased from the 2014 to the 2019 Elections. In some regents/cities there was also a decrease in the number of women who succeeded in occupying the DPRD seats. There are even districts that do not have any women representatives in the DPRD, such as Mentawai, South Solok and Padang Pariaman districts. However, in some districts/cities there has also been an increase in the number of representations of women in the Legislature, such as the Agam district.

Research results show that Minangkabau women politicians struggle against marginality to become members of the legislative body in West Sumatra is not easy, since women have limitations, especially in terms of political and economic investment. Although Minangkabau women politicians have good social investment, to convince women to vote for women is difficult for women candidates. The mindset of the community is antiquated and there is still orthodox thinking that there is no point in women participating in politics. Male party leaders are not willing to provide optimal opportunities for women to occupy seats in Parliament successfully. Minangkabau women politicians, who have good social investment, have not been able to take advantage of extended family networks, and the networks of organisations such as Bundo Kanduang, party wing organisations, Majelis taklim and others as social capital. The findings of this study also indicate that in addition to political investment, economic investment and social investment, the thing that also affects the success of Minangkabau women politicians in competing for a constituency vote is an investment in power.

From the perspective of Minangkabau tradition and culture, the role of women until now seems contradictory (Selinaswati, 2019). Even though the Minangkabau adheres to the matrilineal system, women remain helpless in facing the dominance of a patriarchal culture that is dominant in the local society. The dominance of patriarchal culture cannot be separated from the issue of gender equality, which has become very important in the context of democratic politics. In reality, every person within a society (regardless of gender,



ethnicity, race, religion and class) must be prioritised in their access to public office, whether or not through an electoral system.

### **Conclusion**

Participating parties in the General Elections in West Sumatra manage the reinforcement of women in the party as mandated by Law No. 7 of 2017. The party leaders do not take into account the capacity and quality of women recruited as candidates; they only prioritise fulfilling the requirement of 30% female representatives.

Women and men have the same position and rights to participate in the development of their societies and enjoy the results of development when viewed in terms of ideology and human rights. However, gender gaps in public and political life are still a global challenge that must be continually faced by Minangkabau female politicians. They still have to deal with marginalisation from a cultural, social and political perspective. Equally is important. They must also have personality investment, adequate material investment, social investment, and investment in power. Although there have been many international conventions, commitments and regulations adopted by the Indonesian government to provide opportunities for women's participation in politics, the representation of women in politics is far from what is expected. The same condition is also found among Minangkabau women, who are known as one of the ethnic groups in Indonesia who give particular positions to women such as the Bundo Kandung. The average representation of women in politics in the cities/regencies and provinces of West Sumatra as the geographical area of the Minangkabau community was 18.2% in the 2014 election and decreased to 17.3% in 2019 as a result of marginalisation of women in politics. Notwithstanding, to this day, cities and districts do not have adequate representation of women in the legislative sector.

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