Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Support for Women Officeholders in a Non-Arab Islamic Democracy: The Case of Indonesia

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Recent work argues that the relationship between Islamic faith, the lack of support for gender equality and democratization is spurious. This paper analyzes the correlates of individual support for increasing the number of women serving in Indonesian legislatures. Indonesia is a relevant case because it is an emerging democracy, outside of the oil-rich Middle East, where over 85% of the citizenry registers a Muslim faith. We find that the willingness of Indonesians to support or oppose gender equity in politics is only minimally rooted in their faith or culture. This result buttresses the conclusions of cross-national studies that question the appropriateness of treating predominantly Muslim nations in the same way when studying questions of gender equity and democratization.

Introduction

Building sustainable democracies in predominantly Islamic countries is a high priority among many policy practitioners and foreign policy elites in North America, Europe and Asia. Although the presence of stable democratic nations across the Muslim world may reduce the threat of terrorism, improve trade and foster better relations among nations, many believe such efforts are futile (e.g. Huntington 1992, 1996). A popular argument is that democracy in Islamic nations will be difficult to sustain because Muslims are hostile to the idea of gender equity (Fish 2002; Inglehart and Norris 2003a, 2003b).[1]

Recent empirical studies discount the role of Islam in fostering hostility towards both women and democratic values. Rizzo et al. (2007) utilize cross-national data to argue against painting all Muslim countries with a broad brush when it comes to views about women in public life. They contend that the relationship between high levels of support for women and favorability towards democratic norms are high in *non-Arab* nations with high numbers of Muslim inhabitants. Ross (2008) asserts it is an oil-based economy, not Islam, that is the causal force behind opposition to women's rights in the Middle East. Mujani (2003) finds that it is select sub-groups of Islamists with politically extreme views and not the political culture of a Muslim state that perpetuates negative attitudes towards women in Indonesian society.

If the more recent arguments discounting the role of Islam in stalling the advancement of women are correct, levels of support for women legislators in a non-Arab, Muslim country should not be low. Further, the backing for women in government among Muslims and non-Muslims within the nation should not differ. In this paper, we assess whether the negative linkage between Islam and support for women in office holds in Indonesia, a nation of over 200 million inhabitants where over 85% of the population reports an Islamic faith.[2] Utilizing a unique survey of a representative sample of the nation's population, we look at overall levels of support for women in elected office and the factors that differentiate those who want to see more women in government from those who do not. *Pace* Inglehart and Norris (2003a, 2003b), we find that a majority of the Indonesian population is supportive of having increased gender equity in the nation's legislature and attitudes towards and engagement with the political system in Indonesia are at least as important as the socio-cultural factors in explaining this support. Findings from this focused case study reinforce the need to avoid making blanket statements about the role of Islam when studying the relationship between of gender equity and democratization.

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[1]For an argument that the relationship between support for women's rights and democracy is spurious, see Donno and Russett (2004).
[2]Indonesia is an ideal case study to test this proposition. In contrast to some of the countries with similar religious profiles (e.g. Bangladesh and Pakistan), Indonesia's democracy appears stable and is increasingly held out as a model of democratic transition (e.g. Pongsudhirak 2009). Further, the fortunate availability of data from Indonesia affords the opportunity to lay the theoretical foundation for testing causal hypotheses for future multi-national studies.

Citizen Demand for Female Legislative Candidates

Research analyzing the components of support for gender equity across legislatures is often cross national and emphasizes the roles elites and political and institutional contexts have on fostering or curtailing the ability of women to attain elected office (cf. Paxton and Hughes 2007). Indonesian formal and informal institutions do play a role in determining the supply of women for public office and scholars have carefully analyzed their function (cf. Hadiwinata 2003; Parawansa 2006). However, focused work attempting to determine what makes individual voters want to see more women elected to legislatures has not been undertaken in Indonesia or in other new democracies.

Voters' attitudes and willingness to support female officeholders may vary among societies due to differences with respect to their cultural ideals, economic development, social institutional structures or political attitudes (Norris and Inglehart 2000). Religion and ethnicity are considered leading cultural indicators (Inglehart 1981; Rule 1987; Kenworthy and Malami 1999; Reynolds 1999) and groups formed on their basis can act as reference points for the development of individual belief systems concerning gender roles. This is particularly true in societies undergoing rapid economic and political transformations (Hayes et al. 2000; Tremblay 2000; Inglehart and Norris 2003a). Aggregate statistics appear to show a relationship between group identity and attitudes towards women in government. Nations with predominantly Muslim populations have few women representatives in their national legislatures (Glaser and Possony 1979; Norris and Inglehart 2000; Paxton and Hughes 2007) and within nations there can be differences across ethnic groups concerning the role of women in public life (cf. Charles and Hintjens 1998).

Social structural indicators such as marital status, age, occupation and residence in an urban or rural environment also can play critical roles in determining the viability of female candidates (Darcy and Schramm 1977; Norris 1985, 1987; Rule 1987; Darcy et al. 1994; Kenworthy and Malami 1999). Further, scholars suggest that economic development can change attitudes towards women serving in national legislatures (Abramson and Inglehart 1995; Inglehart 1977, 1990) but recent work notes that the *form* of economic development can be just as important as growth itself in generating support for women candidates. Ross (2008) suggests that growth in sectors that employ women is empowering because women in employment gain the personal and organizing skills necessary to run for office and convince others that they have a role outside of the home. Economic growth based on oil profits hurts women because petro dollars foster their dependence on men and prevent them from seeking self-sufficiency.

Political development and shifts towards democratic rule can co-vary with increased support for women candidates. Voters seeking permanent relief from authoritarian rule may seek female officeholders because women are perceived as more ethical and responsive to the public's concerns and people hope their presence in legislatures can mitigate corruption (Tishkov 1993; Ones and Viswesvaran 1998; Staudt 1998; Dollar et al. 2001). If there is a sufficient willingness on the part of the electorate to support women candidates, a competitive party system may have more women running for office as parties use them to court female voters (Matland 1998). Gains for women often take

hold not in the first but in the second set of elections conducted in a newly democratic state. This suggests the possibility that attitudes towards female candidates are not fixed and democratic maturation and increased political awareness on behalf of the citizenry can increase the opportunities of women to run for public office (Yoon 2001; Lindberg 2004; Paxton and Hughes 2007; but see Franceschet 2001).

The rationales outlined above offer different but possibly complementary reasons why citizens in a developing democracy – Indonesia – may want to see more or less women in elected positions. Citizen preferences are dependent on religious or ethnic backgrounds, social forces that occur during the lifecycle and political development of both the individual and the nation. The survey we utilize allows us to operationalize cultural, social structural and political development indicators for the purposes of determining which, if any, of these concepts can explain a respondent's willingness to see more Indonesian women hold elected office. There is considerable variation across all of the above indicators among the Indonesian population, enhancing its suitability as a relevant case study that potentially can shed light on what constitutes the key determinants of support for women in office in Muslim nations. To better understand the Indonesian case, the next section presents an overview of recent developments in the political life of the nation.

The Case of Indonesia

Indonesia is home to numerous ethnic groups that have different attitudes towards the role women should have in public life. The lineage of most groups is patriarchal, but the Javanese, who comprise a plurality of the citizenry, are bilineal and the Minangkabau of Sumatra is matrilineal. Islam is the dominant religion, but most Balinese practice Hinduism and Christian minorities are scattered throughout the nation. The authoritarian 'New Order' regime of Soeharto (1966–1998) and its military control reinforced a paternalistic culture and the ranks of the political elite were male dominated (Suryakusuma 1996; Robinson 2002). Cultural and institutional barriers from the colonial and authoritarian periods remain in place and only 10% of those elected to the first post Soeharto legislature in 1999 were women.[3] When it comes to gender equity in its government, Indonesia is not competitive with the nations of Northern Europe where 20% of Parliamentary seats are occupied by women. However, compared to other Arab and non-Arab Muslim countries, Indonesia fares quite well (Paxton and Hughes 2007).[4]

Institutional barriers have limited the rise of Indonesian women to high office. In the first two open elections, male party elites worked behind closed doors to select candidates and the positions they were to occupy on the ballot (Parawansa 2006). The List Proportional system in place between 1999 and

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[3]This is roughly equivalent to the number of women elected to the first legislature seated after the nation's independence in 1945.

[4]However, a 1997 survey shows that a majority of Indonesian men (62%) and women (57%) believe that men make better political leaders than women (Hassan 2002). Therefore, while Indonesia may have higher rates of women officeholders than other parts of the Muslim world the tendency for gender bias and stereotyping is far from absent.

2004 allowed parties to place women low on the lists without penalty (Seda 2002) and the number of domestic interest groups that focused on gender issues in the political sphere was low, due, in part, to their suppression under Soeharto (Hadiwinata 2003; Blackburn 2004). Although the Electoral Commission later recommended that women comprise at least 30% of each party's list, the recruitment of female candidates was less than successful. In the 2004 elections few parties placed those who did run in prominent positions on their ballots.[5]

Indonesia's patriarchic culture and the fact that most citizens identify themselves as Muslim can work against women's aspirations for higher office.[6] Although often viewed as one of the most secular of the predominantly Muslim nations, a significant minority of politically active, traditionally oriented Muslim groups exist and their followers have been seated in Parliament.[7] In short, there are both fixed and dynamic properties suggesting that support for greater numbers of women in Indonesian politics might be low.

The selection of Megawati Soekarnoputri as Vice President following the nation's first elections in the post authoritarian era and her eventual ascendance to the Presidency in 2001 could have been a watershed event for the future of female politicians in the nation. However, reaction to her tenure was mixed. On the one hand, Megawati was seen as a pugnacious democratic activist who hailed from a respected political family. It was her father, Sukarno, who served as Indonesia's first president and governed the country from 1945 to the mid-1960s. Some saw Megawati as a 'surrogate' (cf. Paxton and Hughes 2007, 87) or carrier of her father's legacy, one of a true national leader who helped put an end to Dutch colonial rule. It was also her Indonesian Democratic Party in Struggle (PDIP) that won a plurality of the legislative seats in the 1999 elections (Lamb 1999; Malley 2002).

Megawati's rise to the Presidency might have improved the prospects for other female politicians in Indonesia. In middle-class circles, she was seen as a strong leader who showed mettle as a democratic activist during the Soeharto era and someone who was able win over her former opponents to the point where some even joined her Cabinet. Although she lost a run-off election for the Presidency in 2004, she showed the public and the media that a woman candidate was able to remain a viable contender for office even in light of a fatwa (religious edict) issured by Islamist groups calling on Muslims not to vote for a woman (na Thalang 2005).[8]

Despite her strengths, there were also aspects of Megawati's leadership style that came under criticism and may create problems for Indonesian women who

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[5]The recommendation derived from Law No. 12/2003 article no. 65(1). The 2003 study utilized in our analyses was conduced *after* the passage of the law.

[6]Robinson (2008, 158) suggests that while some middle-class women view the inclusion of more women in parliament as a step towards more societal gender equity, this is not the opinion shared by most Indonesians. Instead, many feel that female parliamentarians obtained their offices through political connections.

[7]For a discussion on Indonesian women's involvement in political Islam, see Blackburn (2008). This paper utilizes data collected in 2003. Although the 2002 bombings in Bali associated with the Jemah Islamiya show that Islamist groups have the capacity to perpetuate political violence, commentators have expressed doubts about the long term political viability of these radical groups and their ability to attract support (see, e.g. Platzdasch 2001).

[8]We are indebted to an anonymous reviewer for help with the formulation of this section.

wish to seek elective office in the coming years. Robinson (2008, 158) suggests that Megawati was seen by some as an aloof member of a privileged class who gained office only via political connections. Oftentimes she appeared distant from the very real economic problems the nation faced during her tenure and although some of the economic reforms undertaken during Megawati's Presidency were successful, they were widely viewed as an accomplishment of technocrats she appointed early in her term (Rieffel 2004).

Many of the above factors may lead us to expect low levels of support for women candidates in Indonesia, but there are reasons to believe Indonesia may be a leader among Islamic nations in the movement towards gender equity. Throughout the colonial period before World War II many women worked in agriculture and outside of the home, and religious groups did not interfere with or oppose this development. When Megawati was in office, the gendered opposition to her candidacy and leadership from Islamic opposition parties was rooted more in electoral strategy rather than religious doctrine.[9] Blackburn (2004) concludes that 'there is no legitimacy within Indonesian Islam for opposing women's equal political rights as citizens' (107). The empirical work below speaks to whether Indonesians who identify as Muslims agree with that proposition and it uncovers additional determinants of support and opposition to women holding legislative office.

Data and Methods

Our analyses utilized the 2003 Republic of Indonesia National Opinion Survey.[10] Our dependent variable was constructed from the following question:

- In Indonesia, around 50% of the population are women. Currently, the proportion of members of the DPR, Provincial DPRD and regency/city DPRD who are women is less than 8%. In your opinion, do you think that this current proportion of women in parliaments is too low, about right, or too high?

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[9]See footnote 16 for a list of the most competitive Islamic based parties.
[10]The survey was conducted under the auspices of the 'F. Clifton White Applied Research Centre for Democracy and Elections', part of the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES). It was the sixth survey of Indonesians conducted by the Foundation. Respondents for the face-to-face interviews were selected through a multi-stage stratified cluster sample, where subsampling units included the province, municipality and village. Quotas to ensure appropriate representation by gender and urban or rural residency were employed. See National Opinion Survey (International Foundation for Election Systems 2003) for more information on the study. Multivariate estimations presented in this paper are weighted to make up for sampling deficiencies. Approximately 70% of the 3000 respondents responded to the question. Auxiliary estimations (not shown) revealed that non-response was unrelated to the gender or the religious background of the respondent. A follow-up survey was conducted in 2005 and an IFES report (International Foundation for Election Systems 2005) noted that only 43% of those sampled in this year thought that the proportion of women serving in the DPR was too low (3% said the number was too high and 43% said it was about right). A possible reason for this decline might have been the fact that the number of women serving in the DPR had crossed the 10% threshold, moving from 8 to 12% in the period between the two surveys.

A tabulation of the data found that 61% of the respondents ($n = 1266$) believed not enough women were serving in office, 33% ($n = 677$) believed that the percentage of women in government was about right and 7% ($n = 138$) held the percentage of Indonesian women who were elected officials was too high. We dichotomized our dependent variable by coding those who believed there were not enough women in Indonesian politics '1' and assigning a value of '0' to those who believed the number of women in office was 'about right' or 'too high.'[11] Responses to this question suggested that a notion of widespread hostility to Indonesian women serving in office was unfounded. Approval of this indicator of gender equity was above the levels observed in Muslim countries by Inglehart and Norris (2003b) who used a group of indicators found on the World Values Studies. This finding is potentially a function of the question wording in the Indonesian survey that primed readers to think about the gender inequalities that exist in government, but the distribution of responses to the question indicated low levels of overt opposition to women holding office.

As noted above, Indonesia is home to many different ethnic groups, all of whom may have distinct opinions about the appropriateness of women holding elected office. Our first concern was whether a general statement about the national population's support for women in government could be made or whether there were inter-ethnic divides that necessitated sub-group analyses. The results reported in Table 1 suggested few aggregate differences in support for women candidates across ethnicities. The level of support members of each ethnic group had for electing a greater number of women to office was tested against levels of support for women in the remainder of the sample via simple χ^2 tests. Those of Bali descent were, on the whole, less likely to endorse more female candidates.[12] East Indonesians, who often practice Christianity as opposed to Islam, had higher levels of support for women in office. The Javanese, the group used as the comparison category in the multivariate analyses, were slightly less supportive of having more women serving in national and local legislatures.

Table 1. Support for Women's Representation by Ethnicity in Indonesia, 2003

Ethnic group	Too low (%)	About right or too high (%)	χ^2 versus other
Java ($n = 1182$)	58.8	41.2	4.77*
Sulawesi ($n = 287$)	63.0	36.9	0.69
Sumatra ($n = 182$)	65.4	34.6	1.73
East Indonesian ($n = 151$)	74.8	25.2	13.39**
Kalimantan ($n = 129$)	55.0	45.0	1.94
Bali ($n = 57$)	43.9	56.1	7.09**
Minang ($n = 54$)	61.1	38.9	0.002
Other ($n = 39$)	74.4	25.6	3.05
Sample ($n = 2081$)	60.8	39.2	

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; percentages unweighted.

[11]Ordered Probit estimations were conducted using the full range of the dependent variable and the substantive results did not differ from those presented in Tables 2–4 and Figure 1.
[12]Lower levels of support for women officeholders among Balinese may be rooted in the traditions of Hinduism, the predominant religious heritage of this ethnic group. We elaborate on this point in the discussion.

Cultural forces, conceptualized as the respondents' ethnic and religious backgrounds (Muslim/Non Muslim) as well as their gender showed only a limited ability to predict support for women.[13] The probit estimation presented in Table 2 shows women respondents who were not Muslim to be most supportive of increasing the number of female officeholders. Support for gender equity among Muslim women was on the whole lower, but they remained more open to having women in office than did males of all religions. Importantly, men of Islamic faith were no less likely than men of other religious traditions to approve of having more women in office.[14] After controlling for religion and gender, the Balinese remained outliers in that they were the only group of respondents who were significantly less likely than the Javanese to want increased female representation in the legislature.

Another set of variables that could have driven support for more women in office are social structural in their nature (Paxton and Hughes 2007). The covariates in this group consisted of the resources individuals had that may have factored into their judgements about electing women to public office and the home environment that surrounded the respondents, possibly shaping their views on this topic. We operationalized the former as the respondent's income, employment status, education, age and perceptions of their family's economic condition and the latter were operationalized as the

Table 2. Cultural Predictors of Support for Additional Women in Office, Indonesia, 2003

Predictor	Coefficient (standard error)
Women	0.47*** (0.14)
Muslim	−0.19 (0.12)
Muslim* Woman	−0.32* (0.16)
Sumatra	0.05 (0.12)
Minang	0.18 (0.19)
Sulawesi	−0.03 (0.10)
Kalimantan	−0.11 (0.14)
Bali	−0.70*** (0.21)
East Indonesian	0.25 (0.16)
Other ethnic group	0.47* (0.21)
Constant	0.43*** (0.10)
Likelihood ratio	$\chi^2(10) = 54.33$ ($p < 0.00$)
$N = 2088$	

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$; coefficients obtained after probit estimation.

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[13]Over 80% of the sample was Muslim, with 13% Christian, 2% Hindu and the remainder of other religious backgrounds.

[14]Caution should be taken when interpreting the interaction effect between Muslim and Women respondents. The non-linear nature of the probit estimation makes the calculation of marginal effects from interaction terms difficult because their magnitude and significance varies across the latent continuum of the dependent variable (cf. Norton et al. 2004). Analysis using Stata's inteff command revealed that the interaction was negative and statistically significant across almost all predicted probabilities on the dependent variable, but the magnitude of the effect varied widely. When the probability of endorsing greater numbers of women in office was low (probability between 20 and 40%), the strength of the interaction effect was approximately 13%, but when the probability of endorsement rose to over 60%, the strength of the interaction effect was less than 10%.

respondents' place of residence (urban/rural) and marital status.[15] As the results shown in Table 3 indicate, the only variable from this group that influenced attitudes towards more women in office was the respondents' levels of education.

Next, we considered the ability of a set of political variables to covary with support or opposition to greater numbers of women in office. This group of variables measured support for politicans and parties, political awareness, efficacy, engagement and feelings of personal safety. The political awareness, efficacy and engagement variables consisted of a series of dichotomous measures tapping knowledge of the 1999 constitutional change, voting for political as opposed to personal reasons, listing a political issue as the most important problem facing the country and expressing the belief that political parties were listening to what people had to say. We also included measures of trust for the six largest parties in the legislature and a continuous variable that captured evaluations of Megawati.[16] Responses to a question asking for evaluations of the government's efforts at fighting 'corruption, collusion and nepotism' (colloquially referred to as KKN) were coded from '1' (very dissatisfied) to '5' (very satisfied). The variable 'Faith in the Electoral

Table 3. Social Structural Predictors of Support for Additional Women in Office, Indonesia, 2003

Predictor	Coefficient (standard error)
Family income	-0.01 (0.02)
Married	0.02 (0.08)
Age	0.00 (0.00)
Education	0.15*** (0.25)
Rural resident	-0.01 (0.06)
Family's economic condition	0.05 (0.03)
Working	-0.07 (0.06)
Constant	-0.34 (0.19)
Likelihood ratio χ^2	$\chi^2(7) = 53.41$ ($p < 0.00$)
$N = 2088$	

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$; coefficients obtained after probit estimation.

[15]Income was coded as the respondents' self-assessments of their household's monthly expenditures measured on a 1–10 scale (range from 1 = Less than 100,000Rupiah/month to 10 = More than 2,000,000Rupiah/month, with a median of 5); Age was a continuous variable with a median of 35; Education was treated as an interval level variable with a range from 0 = no schooling to 5 = some postsecondary education or more and it had a median of 3; the Family's Economic Condition variable had a range from 1 (Very Bad) to 5 (Very Good), a median of 4 and was the respondent's self-assessment of their family's quality of life.

[16]There were three parties whose broad ideology could be described as 'Nationalist' (Partai Golongan Karya [GOLKAR], Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan [PDIP] and Partai Kebangkitan Bangas [PKB]) and three 'Islamic' parties (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan [PPP], Partai Amanat Nasional [PAN] and Partai Bulan Bintang [PBB]). Trust for each of the six parties ranged from –2 (low) to 2 (high). For the remainder of this article, the party acronyms are used. Megawati Evaluations was a factor score (with a mean of approximately zero) derived from an exploratory factor analysis of evaluations of the female Prime Minister's performance on six issues (elimination of corruption, promoting democracy, law enforcement, decentralization, the economy and good governance). The factor had an Eigenvalue of 3.0 and all of the factor loadings were greater than 0.60.

Commission' was dichotomous and coded '1' if the respondent believed that the electoral commission was unbiased and neutral as opposed to in the service of certain political parties. The Future Safety variable measured how safe the respondent thought their family would be in the next year and had a range from '1' (Much less safe) to '5' (Much safer).

The results presented in Table 4 show that political awareness, engagement and political support covaried with support for more women in office and those willing to vote were more likely to want more women in office. Respondents who had exhibited support in Indonesia's fledgling democratic process by putting their faith in the ability of the electoral commission to run a fair election wanted more gender diversity in the legislature as did the minority of respondents who knew enough about the country's political instutitons to realize that a recent constitutional alteration had taken place.[17] Those who had the luxury of believing that their enviroment was safe and secure were also more open to the prospect of having more women in parliament.

Politically, the impact of the Megawati presidency on support for women government was negligable. Her rise to power was able to convince the nation that women were capable of obtaining high office, but she never pushed the issue of women's rights during her time in office. Further, the appearance that Megawati was disinterested from the daily challenges of governance often

Table 4. Modernization/Political Predictors of Support for Additional Women in Office, Indonesia, 2003

Predictor	Coefficient (standard error)
High probability of voting	0.28*** (0.07)
Megawati evaluations	−0.05 (0.03)
Government performance in fighting corruption	−0.05 (0.03)
Safety in the future	0.08** (0.03)
Awareness of constitutional change	0.31*** (0.07)
Vote for political reasons	0.16** (−0.01)
External efficacy	−0.01 (0.06)
Trust the GOLKAR	0.01 (0.03)
Trust the PDIP	0.08* (0.04)
Trust the PPP	−0.15** (0.04)
Trust the PKB	0.01 (0.04)
Trust the PAN	0.04 (0.05)
Trust the PBB	−0.08 (0.05)
Constant	−0.16 (0.11)
Likelihood ratio	$\chi^2(15) = 109.79$ ($p < 0.00$)
N = 2088	

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$; GOLKAR = Partai Golongan Karya; PDIP = Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan; PKB = Partai Kebangkitan Bangas; PPP = Partai Persatuan Pembangunan; PAN = Partai Amanat Nasional; PBB = Partai Bulan Bintang.

[17]Some studies have found levels of political awareness among women to be lower than that of men (e.g. Sigelman and Yanarella 1986). We tested for an interaction between awareness of the constitutional change and gender, but the interaction term was not significant in the final composite estimation.

raised questions about her competence. Increased trust for the moderate Islamist party, the PPP, *reduced* support for women in office while those trusting of the nationalist PDIP, the party holding the plurality of seats in the DPR after the 1999 election, were *more* likely to support having more women hold elected office.[18]

To ascertain the factors that had the largest direct impact on a respondent supporting or opposing more women in office, we estimated a composite model (full results not shown) with all of the predictors used in the estimations presented in Tables 2–4. Figure 1 shows simulated changes in the predicted probabilities of the variables that retained their statistical significance in the full model.[19] Most of the variables that were significant in the first estimations remained significant in the composite model, a testament to their robustness. Non-Muslim women were far more supportive of having women in high office than their male, non-Muslim counterparts and, for the most part, so were Muslim women. However, a complete analysis of the interaction effect (not shown) indicated that when the probability of supporting gender equity was low to begin with, Muslim women were less supportive of the idea.[20] Regardless of their gender or religious status, a combination of political awareness, education
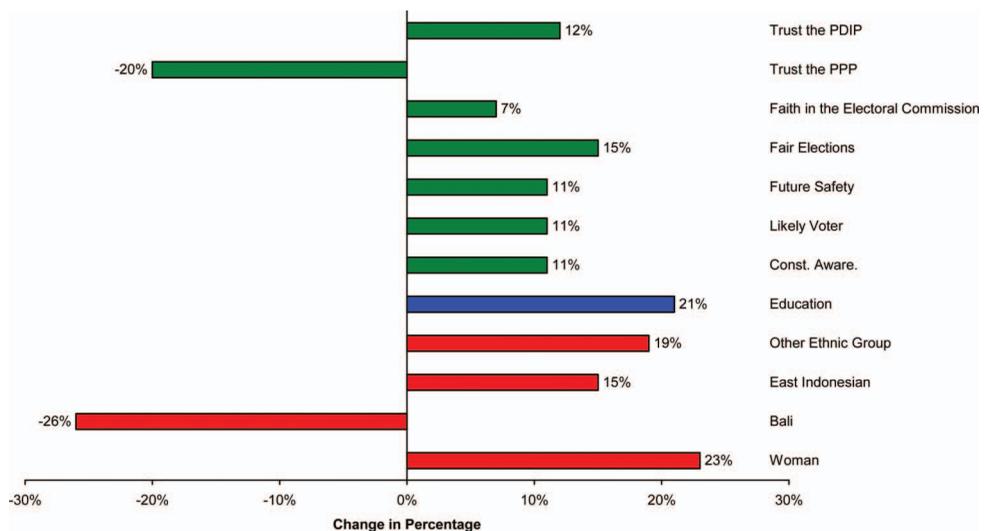

Figure 1. Significant Predictors and Their Influence on Support for Women Politicians in Indonesia.

[18]In a move that may bode well for the future of women in high office, support for the PPP has fallen steadily since 1999 as new parties have entered the scene and economic as opposed to religious issues have received the most attention (Schott 2009).

[19]Simulated probabilities were obtained through Stata's prvalue command (Long and Freese 2006). After setting all non-dichotomous predictor variables to their medians and dichotomous variables to 0, the variable of interest was shifted from its minimum to its maximum to establish the changes depicted in Figure 1.

[20]Analyses employed Stata's inteff command (see footnote 14). When the probability of endorsing the dependent variable was above 0.6, the effect of the interaction between women and Islam shrank and became statistically insignificant from 0.

and engagement makes a respondent highly likely to favour more women in office. Consequently, results from this analysis suggests that low levels of initial support for women in high office could be overcome by education and increased political engagement.

Discussion

In a reaffirmation of the conclusions drawn from recent studies (Mujani 2003; Rizzo et al. 2007; Ross 2008), our focused case study of a representative sample of Indonesians found that Islam and hostility to gender equity in their legislatures were not inexorably linked. The modal Indonesian in the Opinion Survey wanted to see more women in office and men who identified as Muslims were no less likely than other men to support women in their quest for elected positions in the legislature. Not surprisingly, women adhering to all religious traditions were more likely than men to want to see more women in government. Only when the odds of supporting increased numbers of women in office was already low (due to other factors) were Muslim women less likely than women of other faiths to want to see members of their gender in government.

We found that support for women attaining office in Indonesia was, for the most part, not divided across ethnic lines. The only glaring exception to this result came when a comparison of the Balinese was made with the Javanese – all other factors remaining equal, the former were 26% less likely than the latter to favor greater numbers of women in office. Traditional Balinese culture is patriarchic and contains a number of barriers to keep rates of political participation among women low. In Bali, the typical avenues where women gain the experience necessary to run for national office are limited due to restrictions on their participation in local government and low rates of participation in the workforce and higher education (Parker 2000, 2003; Creese 2004). The fact that members of a largely non-Muslim ethnic group are more likely than others to oppose increasing women's representation in the legislature is an affirmation that it is too simplistic to attribute decreased support for female candidates to individuals' Islamic faith.

When we looked at the effects of the significant covariates, it was clear that the combined impacts of education and political engagement were at least as strong as cultural forces in driving support for gender parity in government. Further, the analyses suggested that improved feelings of safety among Indonesians may come with the added bonus of fostering support for women's equality in the political arena. Democratization and the movement towards gender equity in Indonesia may be mutually reinforcing, but they do not seem dependent on religion.

This paper should not serve as the last word on support for women politicians in Indonesia. Many of the political covariates presented in Table 4 were statistically significant but the variances of the predicted effects presented in Figure 1 were high. This suggests that more refined measures of the concepts quantified by our survey questions are warranted and that the further analyses should be done to trace the process by which Indonesians come to support gender parity in government. Particularly important for our understanding of democratization in the nation would be analyses that tease out the causal

relationship between political engagement and the espousal of women's causes, something that we were not able to do with our cross-sectional data.

The above analyses uncovered, to some degree, the extent and determinants of support for gender equity in a predominantly Muslim country, Indonesia circa 2003. The topic is relevant and timely given the scholarly literature suggesting a linkage between Islam and low levels of support for women in government, an important covariate of support for democratic governance (cf. Huntington 1992, 1996, Inglehart and Norris 2003a, 2003b). Our paper is different from their cross-sectional analyses in that we focused on the attitudes of individuals residing in an emerging democracy, Indonesia. However, the analysis of a single case reaffirms the arguments of Rizzo et al. (2007) and Ross (2008) who argued that the lack of support for democratization and women in government were only tangentially related to the dominance of Islam within a group of nations. In short, blanket statements made about the supposed hostility of Muslims to women in office or democratization remains inappropriate in light of our study and recent scholarship.

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