

## The Role of Female Legislators in Communicating Mainstream Gender Policies

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**Abstract** – Since the stipulation of the 30% quota for women to the Indonesian House of Representatives, the number of female legislators in the Indonesian House of Representatives has increased significantly. However, this condition is not comparable to the birth of policies or legislative products that mainstream gender. This study aims to determine female legislators' perspectives, roles, and obstacles in communicating the Draft of the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill as a mainstream gender policy, using three key concepts of standpoint theory. This study uses a constructivist paradigm with a qualitative approach and case study method. The study's results found several things in the three key concepts of standpoint theory. Female legislators as political communicators have a broad perspective (standpoint) and situated knowledge in communicating mainstream gender policies. However, the gender perspectives of these female legislators have not been optimally communicated, so the provisions for extending maternity leave for working mothers for 6 months and 40 days of leave for fathers, which are underlined in this bill, ultimately failed to be agreed upon.

**Keywords:** *Standpoint theory*; Maternal and Child Welfare Bill; Political communicator; Female legislator; Gender mainstream.

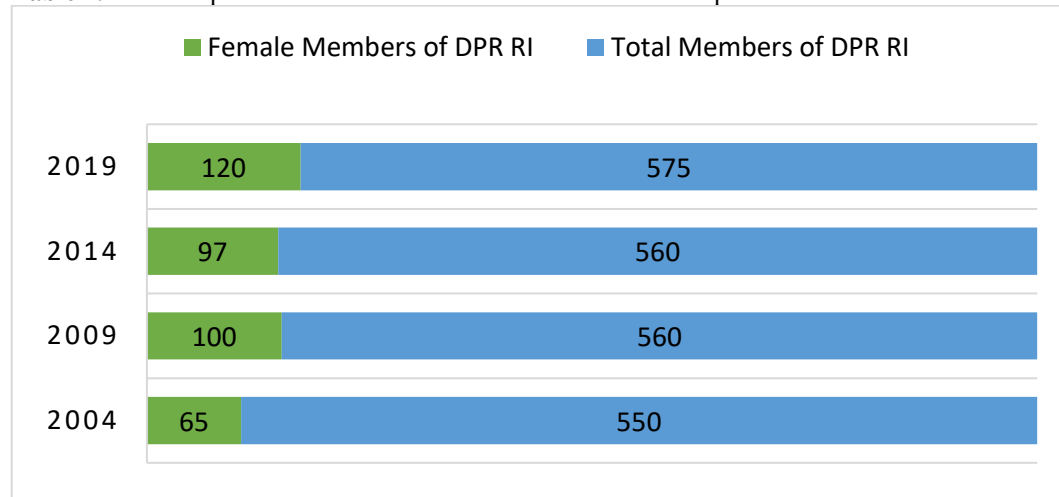
### Introduction

The involvement of women in national politics has been a protracted and challenging endeavor, with its roots tracing back to the Dutch colonial era. In addition, the enduring patriarchal culture in Indonesia has perpetuated the subordinate status of women relative to men, leading to the domestication of women's roles within society. Before Raden Ajeng Kartini's advocacy for women's rights in Indonesia, women were not allowed to engage in politics, express their opinions, or even receive an education in schools. Until the 1955 Election, 19 women from certain circles began to be elected to occupy legislative seats.

Since the provision of a 30% quota for women to occupy positions in the management of political parties and institutions of the DPR, provincial DPRD, and district/city DPRD in Law No. 12 of 2003 concerning the General Election of Members of the DPR, DPD, and DPRD (Legislative Election Law) (Sadikin, 2021), the representation of women in the DPR RI has been increasingly significant. Regrettably, the substantial presence of female legislators in the Indonesian House of Representatives has not resulted in an optimal contribution to developing policies or legislative products/laws that prioritize gender mainstreaming or ensure equal opportunities and representation for both women and men.

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in Katadata (Kusnandar, 2022), there were 65 female members of the Indonesian House of Representatives or 11.8% of the total 550 members in the 2004 Election, increasing to 100 or 17.86% of the total 560 members in the 2009 Election; 97 people or 17.32% of the total 560 seats in the 2014 Election; and finally, there were 120 people or 20.87% of the total 575 members of the Indonesian House of Representatives as a result of the 2019 Election.

**Table 1.** The Comparison Amount of the Indonesian House of Representatives' Female Members



The absence of gender mainstreaming policies is evident in the low number of Draft Laws (RUU) enacted by the Indonesian House of Representatives. This is in line with the definition provided in the glossary on the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Kemen PPPA) website, [www.kemenpppa.go.id](http://www.kemenpppa.go.id) (Kementerian PPPA, 2022); gender mainstreaming is the systematic integration of gender perspectives into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, programs, and projects to promote gender equality. It is essential to ensure equal opportunities for women and men to access resources, participate in decision-making processes, and benefit from development initiatives.

According to data and documentation obtained from the Indonesian House of Representatives website [www.dpr.go.id](http://www.dpr.go.id), 457 bills have been passed into law by the Indonesian House of Representatives from 2004 to 2023. This includes 185 bills passed during the 2004-2009 period, 126 bills during the 2009-2014 period, 82 bills during the 2014-2019 period, and 64 bills during the 2019-2023 period. Despite the significant number of bills passed into law, only around 12 gender mainstream laws have been successfully enacted.

Researchers have analyzed the data exposure to study how female legislators communicate the Draft Law that aims to integrate gender considerations using Standpoint Theory. This theory posits that men and women have distinct perspectives and do not perceive things as equals. It also suggests that individuals' positions in the social hierarchy influence their perceptions. Standpoint Theory assumes that women and other marginalized groups have different views of the world compared to the dominant group (Siregar, 2020).

The role of women in a patriarchal system is weakened. The position between men and women is different, where women's voices have no meaning and power, even to express opinions (Nurchahyo, 2022). The narratives of Dalit women experiencing violence due to gender inequality reflect multiple authors' perspectives, highlighting the role of caste discrimination in empowering the dominant group. Positioned at the lowest rung of the Indian social hierarchy, Dalit women contend with the intersecting forces of sexism, caste-based discrimination, and class oppression (Sharma, 2021).

Meanwhile, Nugroho & Prabaningrum (2021) in Ayu Utami's novel "Si Parasit Lajang" (Single Parasite), the author critiques the hierarchical structure of the social world. The novel depicts the exploitation of women through the concept of the "dual role of women," where women are expected to juggle career responsibilities and traditional domestic roles, which ultimately do not benefit women.

Furthermore, the novel highlights gender-biased journalistic practices in the coverage of the Wisma Atlet corruption case by Tempo magazine, portraying how female corruptors are exploited in the news reports Habsari & Haryono (2014). Even in the Instagram comic by @hastagbebih, patriarchal cultural norms are depicted as perpetuating the objectification of women as sexual commodities (Prabowo & Sunarto, 2018), and there is an issue of toxic gender-discriminatory language in online gaming chat channels that needs to be addressed (Ekiciler et al., 2022).

On the contrary, women are portrayed as astute individuals who bravely advocate for the rights of women and children, actively combatting discrimination (Latief et al., 2021). Empowered women are shaped by their understanding of gender perspective values, religious perspectives, and socio-cultural perspectives through the literacy process. Empowered women can fulfill various expectations, including accessing productive resources, achieving economic and educational independence, participating in activities that enhance their potential, having control over their survival, and enjoying equal opportunities in resource utilization outcomes.

In the realm of Indonesian politics, gender bias persists due to the prevalence of a deeply entrenched patriarchal culture, which affords male politicians significantly more influence. As a result, the 30% quota policy for female legislative candidates is deemed inadequate and fails to address the issue satisfactorily (Latief et al., 2021).

Indonesia's deeply entrenched patriarchal culture hinders the presence of women in leadership roles within representative institutions. However, women should not be confined to serving merely as election tools; they can act as equal partners with men in developing gender-responsive policies. Moreover, women play an empowering role, actively working to challenge patriarchal norms and narrow interpretations of religious doctrines within political and community spheres (Nurussa'adah, 2020). Regrettably, the persistent stereotype that women are subjected to male dominance continues to be a topic of discussion in online media (Prihantoro, 2018).

The limited number of gender-related bills passed in the Indonesian House of Representatives presents an intriguing area for further investigation into the challenges faced by female legislators in advocating for these bills. Overcoming the deeply entrenched patriarchal culture in Indonesian society and adhering to political party policies make it a challenging endeavor for female legislators to advance their agendas. Notably, the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill was successfully enacted into law during the Plenary Meeting of the Indonesian House of Representatives on June 4, 2024. Initially proposed by three female legislators from the PKB Faction, this bill was approved as a DPR RI initiative bill on June 30, 2022. Significant changes have been made to several provisions of the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill since its inception, particularly regarding the duration of maternity leave and the provision of paternity leave for fathers accompanying their wives during childbirth (Hutomo, 2024).

Researchers have observed that the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill stands out as a regulation that promotes gender mainstreaming. This bill offers various provisions and support for both mothers and fathers in childcare, particularly addressing the needs of working mothers who have historically received insufficient attention in accessing childcare facilities.

This study seeks to explore the perspectives and contributions of female legislators and the challenges they encounter in advocating for the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill as a gender mainstreaming regulation through the application of standpoint theory.

## **Theoretical Framework**

*Standpoint Theory.* The standpoint theory in communication science offers a perspective on argumentation as a learning process that results from interaction with others and the surrounding environment. This theory is also recognized for its potential to empower marginalized groups and challenge the existing societal norms. In 1982, Julia T. Wood (in West, 2010) and fellow researchers conducted a significant study on the legitimacy of women's voices from alternative and theoretical standpoints within the field of communication. Furthermore, West and Turner (2010) outlined the primary framework of the standpoint theory, which encompasses:

*Standpoint.* The following passage outlines the formation and societal acceptance of outsider groups and their role in sharing experiences and insights regarding the conditions they encounter. Hartsock, as cited (in West, 2010), asserts that this theory not only seeks to comprehend the desired societal position but also underscores the concept of engagement. This concept elucidates the distinction between standpoint and perspective. Perspective reflects an individual's position within the social

hierarchy, whereas standpoint is contingent upon thought, relationships, and struggle (Hallstein et al. in West, 2010).

*Situated Knowledges.* In 1998, Donna Haraway (West, 2010) introduced the concept of situated knowledge, which represents knowledge shaped by specific situations and contexts. This theory posits that knowledge is inherently dual in nature and is shaped by experience. For example, a nurse caring for her sick family will possess knowledge different from that of a journalist with limited medical expertise. Situated knowledge is thus a product of individual experiences and learning, emphasizing the importance of context in shaping knowledge acquisition.

*Sexual Division of Labour.* In everyday life (Nurussa'adah, 2020), gender roles manifest in both domestic and public spheres. Men receive substantial societal support to participate in public activities, with their contributions predominantly evaluated regarding financial or material outcomes. On the other hand, women predominantly take on domestic roles and often do not receive commensurate material recognition, perpetuating the perception that household responsibilities are inherently their domain. Nurhakim, et al. (2023) views this gender-based division of labor as resulting in systemic injustice for women, who are burdened with dual responsibilities in both the maintenance and reproductive domains yet do not receive equitable compensation.

*Political Communicator.* In Nimmo's (2011) analysis, politicians are characterized as influential figures in shaping public opinion through political communication. They act as group representatives and use their messages to advance and safeguard political objectives and interests. As such, they effectively represent the group's interests and seek to exert influence through communication.

According to Nimmo (2011), political communicators can be classified into three typologies: politicians (referred to as "Pols"), professional communicators ("pross"), and activists ("vois"). Daniel Katz's (in Nimmo, 2011) categorization divides politicians into two groups: "partisans" and "ideologists." Partisans prioritize group interests and identify themselves as group representatives, while ideologists are oriented toward decision-making and advocate for the interests of their party, ideology, or values of struggle.

## **Material and Methodology**

This research employs a case study approach within the constructivist paradigm, utilizing in-depth interviews with multiple eligible informants and conducting documentation studies on relevant issues. The researcher conducted in-person interviews with 4 female legislators representing 4 different factions. The interviewees included Anggia Ermarini, who proposed the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill from the PKB Faction; Diah Piataloka, the chair of the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill Working Committee from the PDIP Faction; Endang Maria Astuti, a member of the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill Working Committee from the Golkar Party Faction; and Nur Azizah Tamhid, a member of the Bill Working Committee from the PKS Faction. Additionally, two women and child activists involved in the discussion of the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill were interviewed: Retno Listyarti, the Commissioner of the Indonesian Child Protection Commission from 2017 to 2022, and Maria Ulfah Anshor, the Commissioner of the National Commission on Violence Against Women from 2020 to 2024.

The researcher also carried out a documentation study of statements from secondary sources, other legislators, such as Member of the Legislature of the House of Representatives from the PPP Faction Illiza Sa'aduddin Djamal, and the Proposer of the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill from the National Awakening Party (PKB) Faction Luluk Nur Hamidah. This included statements from legislators and the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection regarding the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill in official meetings, formal discussions, and statements in the mass media.

## **Result and Discussion**

*Standpoint.* The Maternal and Child Welfare Bill incorporates a gender mainstreaming policy proposed by women serving as Members of the Indonesian House of Representatives for the 2019-2024 term. The bill was introduced by three female legislators from the PKB Faction, namely Deputy Chair of Commission IV of the House of Representatives (DPR) Anggia Ermarini, Member of Commission IX of the DPR Nur Nadlifah, and Member of Commission IX of the House of Representatives (DPR) Luluk Nur Hamidah. They presented the proposal at the House of Representatives (DPR) Legislature (Baleg) Meeting on January 17, 2022.

The initiative to introduce the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill as a primary gender policy stemmed from female lawmakers' recognition of the lack of specific legislation addressing the well-being of mothers and children to nurture a high-quality generation and encourage engagement from civil society. Anggia, a member of the Indonesian House of Representatives, expressed this view, drawing on her previous involvement in family health from a young age.

Female legislators have recognized women's social and economic burdens within their families. In some areas, cases of incest have been reported, with many victims afraid to come forward and seek justice. Diah and Endang advocate for the continued public communication of social justice. Nur Azizah and Illiza emphasize the significance of early childhood development, particularly during the first 1000 days from conception to age 2, as crucial for Indonesia's future civilization and the emergence of a golden generation. They underscore the importance of providing optimal nutrition for children, including breastfeeding, as prescribed in Islamic teachings outlined in the Qur'an. Consequently, Nur Azizah and Illiza have actively supported the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill in deliberations at the Indonesian House of Representatives.

*Situated Knowledge.* Based on the interview findings, the female legislators in question possess significant expertise in women's and children's issues, predating their service on the council. Anggia, the advocate for the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill, has been actively engaged in public health, particularly family health, since her adolescent years. Alongside her involvement in organizations dedicated to women's and children's issues, such as Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Anggia holds a Master's degree in public health and a Doctorate in health policy. Her extensive knowledge and educational background have led to her proposal of the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill.

Prior to her role in Senayan, Diah Pitaloka had a strong background in women's activism, with experience as a field facilitator and involvement in the Women's Empowerment of Heads of Families (Pekka) organization. Her expertise lies in women's and children's issues, particularly the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill, and she provides valuable insights in this area.

Endang has extensive experience in women's empowerment and child protection. She started her career as an Islamic religious education teacher and later became involved in women's and children's activism. She then transitioned into politics as a member of the Regional People's Representative Assembly (DPRD) of Central Java Province. Similarly, Nur Azizah is actively involved in health and family welfare in Depok City. As the wife of former Depok Mayor Nur Mahmudi Ismail, she is engaged in Integrated Service Post (Posyandu), Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK), and various family development programs. Her expertise aligns closely with the discussions surrounding the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill in the House of Representatives.

*Sexual Division of Labour.* In the context of the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill, female legislators pointed out the historical gender imbalance in childcare responsibilities, which have traditionally been shouldered by mothers or women alone. Consequently, they underscored the significance of shared parental responsibility in childcare, advocating for provisions for 6 months of leave for mothers after childbirth and 40 days for fathers who accompany them. Additionally, the proposal includes 7 days of leave for fathers in the event of their wives experiencing miscarriages.

Endang highlighted the prevailing societal stigma that assigns the role of taking care of children solely to women or mothers. In light of this, the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill includes provisions that outline the responsibilities of fathers in childcare. It is necessary to raise awareness and educate families about these provisions to shift the stigma surrounding traditional gender roles.

Luluk conveyed a similar message, emphasizing that societal stereotypes have traditionally positioned childcare as the sole responsibility of mothers. She advocates for the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill to promote shared responsibility between men and women in raising children, recognizing that childcare is not exclusively the mother's duty but a joint responsibility of both parents.

Illiza advocates for men to actively support women in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in raising children. To accomplish this, comprehensive pre-marital education is essential to ensure that men are well-prepared to comprehend and fulfill their rights and duties towards their spouses and children. Promoting the well-being of mothers and children is a prolonged and ongoing process aiming to facilitate the birth of high-quality generations.

In the household division of labor, the traditional association of child-rearing responsibilities with women persists despite their participation in the workforce. This has resulted in widespread societal stigma. As a response, female legislators and government entities advocate including paternal

obligations in the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill to eliminate this bias. Additionally, the bill incorporates provisions emphasizing the role of the family and environment in child-rearing. Counseling services, psychological support, and religious guidance are being extended to prospective couples and their families to support the bill's enforcement.

The study's results indicate that female legislators involved in the study demonstrated a mainstream gender perspective when proposing and discussing the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill in the Indonesian House of Representatives. This aligns with the three key concepts of standpoint theory: standpoint, situated knowledge, and division of labour.

*Challenges Encountered by Female Legislators.* During the discussions on the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill, female legislators encountered obstacles in passing the provision for 6 months of maternity leave for working mothers. Despite being a key focus, the final bill could not retain this provision. Diah Pitaloka, Chairperson of the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill Working Committee, has clarified that the proposed 6-month maternity leave for working mothers is optional due to objections raised by multiple stakeholders, including employers.

The business association's refusal to extend maternity leave for mothers and provide leave for accompanying fathers was confirmed by Dian Ekawati, Assistant Deputy for Policy Formulation in the Field of Gender Equality at the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection. This was discussed in a media talk titled "Maternal and Child Welfare Bill in the First Thousand Days of Life Encourages the Role of Fathers in Child Care," published in [Republika.co.id](http://Republika.co.id) in 2024.

Members of the Working Committee (Panja) for the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill expressed confusion about the provisions of this leave. Endang mentioned that the 6-month leave provision for working mothers who give birth presents a dilemma as it may not suit everyone. She argued that not all working mothers are comfortable being at home for an extended period due to potential stress or depression. Endang's support for the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill proposal stems from her desire to offer mothers flexibility in balancing work and child care during the first 1000 days of their child's life.

Regarding the division of labor, many female legislators in Indonesian political parties are not confined to traditional gender roles. They can express their ideas and thoughts in the Indonesian House of Representatives. For example, Anggia, a member of the PKB faction, was able to advocate for mainstream gender policies, such as the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill, with the support of her faction. This indicates that the domestication of women's roles within the faction was not prevalent. However, it is essential to note that communication with the faction leader is still necessary before expressing ideas about the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill to the public.

Diah and others have noted a lack of significant barriers to promoting mainstream gender policies within the Indonesian House of Representatives. This is attributed in part to the influence of PDIP General Chair Megawati Soekarnoputri and Indonesian House of Representatives Chair Puan Maharani, both committed to gender equality and women's issues. However, engaging in constructive dialogue and communication with their party leaders is essential to effectively relay these policies to the public.

Endang found that the Golkar Party Faction she belonged to allowed her to express innovative ideas and concepts on a range of issues, including policies that prioritize gender equality, as long as her ideas were aligned with the party's vision and mission.

According to statements from various speakers, it was observed that many female legislators did not encounter significant barriers when advocating for mainstream gender policies within their respective political factions. They received support from their factions, provided they first communicated with their faction leaders and ensured that their ideas aligned with the faction's vision and mission. However, the freedom and flexibility of female legislators in advocating for mainstream gender policies must adhere to their faction's or political party's policies, as there are guidelines they are required to follow. This presents a challenge for female legislators when advocating for the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill as a mainstream gender policy from their perspective.

*Assessment of the Perspectives of Female Legislators.* In assessing the perspective of female legislators, two non-female legislators initially praised the role of female legislators in proposing the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill and supported further discussion of the bill. However, their assessment changed after the bill was ratified, as it included leave provisions similar to those in the previous Manpower Law.

In an interview, Retno Listyarti argued that the perspective and spirit of female legislators in the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill were appropriate because the intention was to realize the quality of life of mothers and children. She saw that in Indonesia, there were still various problems related to the welfare of mothers and children, such as the problem of stunting and also the high rate of underage marriage. The problem of underage marriage at a young age raises another problem, namely the high mortality rate of children under one year of age based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS). This happens because the condition of mothers who give birth to children while still teenagers makes them incapable of caring for and raising their children.

Maria Ulfah Anshor also emphasized the importance of gender mainstreaming in every policy and law as a crucial step towards achieving gender equality and fairness in all aspects of life. She observed that, in many instances, policymakers failed to incorporate the concept of gender mainstreaming outlined in the Presidential Instruction of the Republic of Indonesia Number 9 of 2000 into their perspective, attitude, and behavior during the legislative process.

Maria Ulfah advocates for including an article outlining the responsibilities of fathers in raising children alongside mothers to promote the well-being of both mothers and children within the family unit. She emphasizes the strategic significance of ensuring that women do not solely shoulder child-rearing responsibilities through effective implementation.

The initial support for the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill proposed by female legislators shifted when the government and House of Representatives passed the bill with significant changes—the altered provisions raised concerns about the legislators' commitment to gender mainstreaming in the bill.

While the bill was modified to include an additional three months of leave under special conditions with a doctor's certificate for mothers and three days of leave for fathers by employer agreement, the overall perspectives and commitments of the female legislators did not align with the resulting legislation. The original proposal aimed to ensure the welfare of mothers and children, mainly by providing 6 months of maternity leave and 40 days of paternity leave to facilitate exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of a child's life.

The lack of gender perspectives among legislators was highlighted by Maria Ulfah, a former member of the Indonesian House of Representatives. She emphasized the limited number of legislators in *Senayan* with a gender mainstreaming perspective and their willingness to implement such policies. This analysis suggests that despite the comprehensive perspectives of female legislators in proposing the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill, they were unable to uphold their beliefs and arguments regarding the bill's provisions for maternity and paternity leave.

## Discussion

The findings of this study align with Hartsock's standpoint theory. As advocates of the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill, these female legislators have carefully considered the importance of prioritizing the welfare of mothers and children by integrating gender mainstreaming into policies, aiming to ensure the birth of a thriving generation in Indonesia. Their deliberations led to a firm conviction, prompting them to champion the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill within their faction and in the Indonesian House of Representatives.

The following finding also aligns with the theory put forward by Donna Haraway (in West, 2010) about situated knowledge, these female legislators have various experiences as activists in organizations that focus on women's and children's issues, so they understand the issues of women's empowerment, child protection, and socio-cultural conditions in society regarding the patriarchal culture that still occur. Through situated knowledge, these female legislators fulfill their roles as proposers and discussants of the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill in the Indonesian House of Representatives.

This research aligns with the concept of the sexual division of labor, which highlights the persistence of patriarchal culture in many communities. It sheds light on the domestication of women's roles, where they are expected to carry out childcare and household duties without compensation or support from their spouses. Additionally, many women work outside the home while shouldering the responsibility of raising children and managing the household, effectively playing a dual role.

Furthermore, the study findings resonate with the three critical concepts in standpoint theory and validate previous research. Female legislators in the study discussed the marginalization of women,



their victimization by societal norms, and their experiences of sexual violence within the family. These legislators effectively advocated for the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill, demonstrating their proficiency as political communicators. This supports existing research conducted by Latief et al. (2021).

The female legislators who were the sources in this study have gone through a series of education and also experiences around women's empowerment and child protection so that, as empowered female legislators, they provide support and make various efforts as proposers and discussants of the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill. The support and efforts of these female legislators are influenced by the literacy process and interpretation of gender, religious, and socio-cultural perspective values. This is in line with research conducted by Cahyani Sari (2021). In the final analysis, the female lawmakers involved in this research could not uphold their viewpoints and convictions when it came to endorsing the Maternal and Child Welfare bill, particularly regarding the clauses related to maternity leave.

The findings in this study also support the results of the study Amaireh (2022), where the life experiences and education gained by female legislators long before they served in the legislature became a reference for them in building their political perspectives, primarily related to the importance of women's empowerment in the discussion of Maternal and Child Welfare. In addition, the results of this study indicate that the domestication of women's roles in the household has strengthened the results of research conducted by Nugroho & Dyah Prabaningrum (2021) and Nurcahyo (2022). The proposal for the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill was initiated because of the necessity of regulating paternal obligations in child care to ensure the well-being of mothers and children.

### Conclusions

Two significant conclusions can be derived from the study's emphasis and the standpoint theory employed. *Firstly*, female legislators possess a comprehensive standpoint and situated knowledge when advocating mainstream gender policies, such as the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill. Nonetheless, the gender perspectives of these female legislators were not effectively conveyed, leading to the failure to reach a consensus on the provisions for extending maternity leave to 6 months for working mothers and 40 days for fathers, which were the focal points of the bill.

The contribution of female legislators to the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill in the Indonesian House of Representatives was substantial. They proposed the bill in their respective factions and the House of Representatives and actively participated in its deliberation in the Working Committee and Commission VIII of the Indonesian House of Representatives. Their efforts culminated in the successful agreement on the bill during the Level I Decision-Making Meeting on March 25, 2024, and its subsequent ratification in the Plenary Meeting on June 4, 2024, where female legislators also assumed the role of Chair of the Working Committee for the Maternal and Child Welfare Bill.

Female legislators are free to advocate for mainstream gender policies but encounter various challenges. These include resistance from business interests instead of extending maternity leave and navigating a party hierarchy requiring public communications to align with the party's vision, mission, and policies.

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