The Women's Movement and Indonesia's Transition to Democracy

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Women's rights activism is often a critical part of democracy movements (Moghadam 2013), but democratic transitions have a mixed record when it comes to gender equality and women's rights. Indeed, research on democratic transitions in Latin America and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s found that women's parliamentary representation dropped, there were few improvements (and some regression) in areas of gender related policy such as reproductive rights, maternity leave and childcare, and in many cases, traditional gender expectations were strongly reasserted throughout society and by states (Haney 1994; Shayne 2004; Viterna and Fallon 2008). Recent research also finds that with the advent of democratization, women's political representation often drops sharply, but over the long term, increasing democratic freedoms and additional elections tend to improve their political participation (Fallon, Swiss, and Viterna 2012).

The existence and quality of women's rights mobilization, as well as the movement's ability to frame issues successfully in order to garner public support matters greatly, but these are often not sufficient to ensure that a democratizing country moves in a more gender egalitarian direction (Viterna and Fallon 2008; Walsh 2012; Htun and Weldon 2010 and 2015). In fact, there are numerous factors that influence the outcomes of democratization for women. Pre-transition political and institutional legacies can shape political culture in favorable or detrimental ways (Moghadam 2016) as does the relationship between religious institutions and the state (Walsh 2012; Htun and Weldon 2015). Whether the regime transition is complete or retains some aspects of authoritarianism also makes a difference (Viterna and Fallon 2008). State capacity—and willingness—to implement reforms matters when there are opportunities for policies or legislation that might empower women (Htun and Weldon 2010). These factors combine and intersect in different ways in different national contexts, illustrating that while support for democracy and women's mobilization are important, they do not necessarily ensure that a country takes a more egalitarian direction after democratization.

The struggle for women's rights after democratization can also be significantly influenced by the formation of counter movements, a factor which has not been considered as much by scholars of democratization. Social movement scholars find that progressive social movements very often face counter-mobilizations that can stymie potential reforms (Banerczak and Ondercin 2016). Such counter movements are often successful where marginalized groups have made gains (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). As Hughes, Krook and Paxton (2015) point out, this may be especially the case for women's rights activism, which has potential to disrupt men's privileges. Scholars find that social movements interact with and shape each other, in what some have called "co-evolution" (Oliver and Myers 2002; Fetner 2008). This phenomenon has been seen in cases such as Poland, where following democratization in the 1990s, a lesbian and gay rights movement emerged in tandem with a religious based counter-movement which, with strong backing from the Catholic Church, succeeded in establishing a narrative that linked LGBTQ rights to external threats to national values (Ayoub 2014). Such counter-mobilizations may be a significant factor in the fate of social movements during and after democratization, as a more democratic political sphere allows for expanded political expression and facilitates competition and interaction between movements.

Indonesia is an especially interesting case study for democratization and women's empowerment because it is one of the few Muslim majority democracies and has a long history of women's

mobilization. Women's activism emerged along with the nationalist movement in the 1920s, and remained a force through the 1960s, but along with other social movements, was subject to government suppression when the Suharto regime gained control in 1967. Nevertheless, a vibrant and diverse Indonesian women's movement arose in the 1990s and played an important role in the democracy movement. Since then, women's rights activists have achieved some crucial reforms, but have also confronted unprecedented and complex challenges—notably, the rise of religious conservatism. This chapter examines how the Indonesian women's rights movement has fared with the advent of democratization. While democratization in Indonesia has produced important gains for women's rights, it has also empowered conservative activists who oppose much of the agenda of the women's rights movement. As a result, women's rights activists have increasingly found themselves on the defensive. This chapter investigates why this is the case.

This chapter examines how the Indonesian women's movement has been ideologically divided and since the 1990s, the more progressive side of the movement has been increasingly subsumed into NGOs, which has made it harder to connect with a grassroots base and has resulted in organizational fragmentation. Moreover, the political decentralization that came in the wake of 1998 has tended to empower conservative religious forces. Women's rights activists became more visible and had important legislative achievements in the early democratization period (1998–04). During this era, the broader culture was becoming influenced by more liberal views of gender and sexuality, prompting religious conservatives to mount a strong pushback. Since the early 2000s, conservatives have been most successful at the provincial level, where the women's movement tends to be weaker, but they are now increasingly driving the national agenda. Women's rights activists have had difficulty responding to this challenge because of ideological divisions and lack of a mass base, and because the state has been increasingly willing to defer to conservative forces. In short, the key factors for the fate of women's rights activism during Indonesia's democratization have been the pattern of women's mobilization, the strength of counter-movement mobilization, and political decentralization—all of which have been shaped by pre-transition political legacies. The experience of activists in Indonesia suggests that the recent literature on democratization and women's rights would benefit from greater consideration of how and when democratization processes can empower illiberal actors, counter-movements, and/or backlash against women's rights.

Women's Activism during the New Order

The transfer of power to the Suharto regime and the subsequent New Order period (1967–98) left a lasting imprint on the Indonesian women's movement. The mass killings of communists and other regime opponents in 1965 that marked the beginning of this period were extremely destructive for women's organizing (Wieringa 2002). The regime repressed independent mobilization, especially of the left. Millions of women were mobilized into state-controlled organizations that were depoliticized and promoted a domestic role for women (Suryakusuma 1996; Brenner 1998). Through the 1980s it was difficult for women to mobilize outside these state organizations. Initially, religious organizations were one of the only channels for women's activism. By the end of the decade, a few women from more privileged backgrounds took advantage of legal loopholes and a small political opening to establish NGOs, then a new institutional form. The regime's greater tolerance of religious organizations resulted in the emergence of a dynamic religious civil society that helped to fuel a unique blend of women's rights activism and reformist Muslim discourses, but that also generated an expanding network of more

conservative Muslim activists that would become influential after 1998, when Suharto was compelled to step down (Hefner 2000; Sidel 2008; also see Fealy, this volume).

Throughout this period, the government sought to balance its international image against its domestic interests, and this created some space for the advancement of women's rights. Understanding this trajectory of government policy helps contextualize the decisions and strategies of women activists during the New Order period. In the late 1970s, the government began responding to changing international norms regarding women. It created the Ministry for Women's Role in 1978 and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1984 (Robinson 2008; CEDAW-in-Action). Moreover, Indonesian women's workforce participation rate increased to nearly 50% by 1990 (Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance 2017). Thus, while the regime was still promoting women's roles as housewives, women were increasingly working outside the house, including in the factories manufacturing goods for global export that helped to fuel Indonesia's economic boom in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Ford 2002). By the 1990s, some Indonesian bureaucrats were sufficiently influenced by transnational women's rights discourses that they began to use phrases such as women's empowerment and gender equality (Blackburn 2004; Robinson 2008). Thus, some elements of the regime seemed open to women's education, jobs, and rights, yet the regime remained committed to the ideology of domesticity, particularly for middle class women (Brenner 1998) and suppressed social movement activism more generally.

Women did not only engage in activism through donor-funded programs and NGOs supported by Western countries. Indeed, some of the earliest channels for women's activism in Indonesia were through religious organizations. In the 1980s, leading Muslim intellectuals began to explore ideas about democracy, human rights, and pluralism, arguing that such ideas were fully compatible with Islam. This intellectual ferment appears to have had global origins—many of the leading figures were educated overseas and influenced by Muslim reformists whose ideas were circulating internationally. It was not long before some of these figures, particularly Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), the long-time president of the large Muslim organization Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), also began to make arguments in support of women's rights. The discourse of women's rights and gender equality soon spread to Muslim women's organizations (Hefner 2000; Robinson 2008; Brenner 2011).

Outside of religious organizations, repression drove many social movement activists underground and meant that NGOs became the primary institutional form for women's rights activism in the late 1980s and 1990s (Blackburn 2004; Aspinall 2005; Brenner 2011). Many of these women were inspired by attending the United Nations International Women's Conferences, visits to Australia and India, where they came into contact with feminists, as well as the expanding global women's movement. One of the first Indonesian women's rights NGOs was Kalyanamitra, which provided services and advocacy for victims of intimate partner violence. Another was the Indonesian Women's Legal Aid Foundation (LBH-APIK). The new organizations obtained funding from international sources such as UNICEF and Oxfam and the Ford Foundation, all of which were starting to prioritize women's rights and equality. These NGOs focused on providing services desperately needed by women, but many staff members also saw themselves as building a foundation for a broader women's movement (Blackburn 2004; Robinson 2008).

The 1990s saw a new generation of activists rise through the women's NGOs, some of whom established their own initiatives during this time (Ford 2002). These organizations argued for women's equality in both the public and private spheres. Their staff tended to be urban and highly educated. Many of the women's rights NGOs also took a more critical stance toward the government (Brenner 2005; Blackburn 2004). For example, Rifka Annisa, which provided counseling for women dealing with

intimate partner violence, quickly began working toward policy change to address the problem of gender based violence, in the process bringing a taboo subject into public view (Brenner 2011). Some NGOs espoused critiques of global capitalism—ideas that in the wake of the 1960s repression of the left were still quite taboo. As the Suharto regime adopted more neoliberal economic programs many NGOs began to diversify and ally with lower class women. Solidaritas Perempuan, for example, was established in 1990 to advocate for the rights of the increasing numbers of Indonesian women who were migrating overseas to as domestic workers. Solidaritas Perempuan also saw itself as part of a growing women's rights movement, and many of its early activists were especially critical of government economic policies that emphasized labor export, export-led production and natural resource extraction (Ford 2002; Rinaldo 2013). These kinds of alliances between middle class activists and poor women migrants have proved important for advocating change to migration regimes (Ford 2008). However, in the uncertain political environment of the 1990s women's rights NGOs had to maneuver carefully. While they were allowed to hold conferences and workshops, participating in demonstrations often resulted in assault or arrest at the hands of the military or the police (Rinaldo 2013).

In addition to the development of women's NGOs, the 1990s also saw a continued growth in women's religious activism. Many of the activists who participated in trainings run by the Ford Foundation during this period were part of a global trend for women to seek a more active role in the interpretation of Muslim teachings (Badran 2013). In the early 1990s, writings about Islam and gender equality by Middle Eastern feminists like Fatima Mernissi, Nawal el Saadawi, and Riffat Hassan were translated and published in Indonesian by NGO activists, and became influential for many young people (Robinson 2008; Brenner 2011; Rinaldo 2013). Over the next decade, Indonesian activists also became aware of efforts by Muslim women scholars in the West, especially Asma Barlas and Amina Wadud, to produce egalitarian interpretations of the Quran. Many women activists' exposure to feminist ideas began with reading Middle Eastern Muslim women activists/scholars Fatima Mernissi and Nawal el Sadaawi, whose works were circulating in the student underground. The Ford Foundation's gender trainings for Muslim women's organizations, some of which were conducted by the liberal Muslim activist Mansour Faqih, seem to have been especially influential. By the mid-1990s, organizations such as English (Perhimpunan Pengembangan Pesantren dan Masyarakat, P3M) had begun organizing workshops that combined critical re-examinations of Islamic texts with advocacy for women's rights. More established Indonesian Muslim women's organizations such as Fatayat, the women's division of the large Muslim organization Nahdlatul Ulama, were influenced by this trend. In their accounts, some Indonesian women's rights activists said that they began to think that the case for women's rights had to be made with religious grounding, and others commented that they were especially influenced by arguments that included religious frameworks (Interviews, September 2002 to July 2003).

Lies Marcoes, who worked for P3M as well as the Asia Foundation, and now runs her own NGO, believes that the ability for Indonesian secular and Muslim feminists to work together added a unique element to the Indonesian women's movement:

> I saw that there was a weakness to the secular feminist approach which is that they didn't know what to do with religion, they weren't brave enough to talk about *fiqh* [Islamic jurisprudence]. I felt that I had something that other activists didn't, which was an understanding of theology, reinterpreting religious texts. How to read the Quran critically…We could help secular feminist friends, and vice versa. I think this convergence

> between feminists and Muslim friends made us distinctive, different from women's movements in other countries, even Malaysia (Interview, June 2016).

Some women's rights activists in Indonesia, such as those involved in the NGO, Rahima, have continued to pursue a strategy of creating and disseminating egalitarian interpretations of Islamic texts, as well as training younger activists in such methods of interpretation. This strategy has helped to legitimize ideas about women's rights and gender equality among Muslims (Robinson 2008; Brenner 2011; Rinaldo 2013, 2014). For Marcoes, it was precisely the convergence between Muslim reformists and women's rights activists that made the Indonesian movement strong and less divided along religious–secular lines than the women's movements in many other Muslim majority countries.

The broader terrain of social movement activism also contributed to the dynamism of the women's movement in 1990s Indonesia. The women's movement grew alongside other social movements. Many women's rights activists spoke of the thrilling atmosphere of the emerging movement for democratic change, where they met activists from environmental, labor, and other social justice movements (Interviews, various years). Many of the human rights and women's NGOs founded in the late 1980s and early 1990s became important actors in the pro-democracy mobilizations. Moreover, the frequent mingling of the student movement and women's groups during this period brought about a new interest in gender and feminism among young people, and many student activists went on to work for women's rights NGOs and/or Muslim women's rights organizations.

Alongside these social movements, another more conservative movement was developing momentum. The renaissance of progressive and liberal Muslim thinking mentioned earlier was part of the Islamic revival in Indonesia that began in the 1980s, but this Islamic revival also included a far more conservative strain of Islamic thought that became particularly popular with underground student groups on university campuses. The Tarbiyah movement, as it became known, was influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist thinkers from the Middle East, and its followers tended to espouse conservative views on gender and sexuality. While they did not necessarily oppose women having education or working outside the house, they emphasized "natural" differences between men and women, argued against the liberalization of sexual mores, advocated much more conservative dress for women, and in some cases entered into arranged marriages. Tarbiyah activists formed a huge underground network that funneled members to new conservative organizations and political parties after 1998 (Van Bruinessen 2002; Sidel 2008; Machmudi 2012). While women's rights activists were aware of this movement, and many were to some degree influenced by it, they were not fully cognizant of its growing strength or its conservative politics (Interviews 2002 – 2010).

The New Order era had a mixed impact and an enduring legacy for women's activism in Indonesia. Its repression made activism difficult and potentially dangerous, and resulted in more progressive activism being contained within NGOs, which were tolerated due to a combination of legal loopholes, their connections to the international community, and their strategy of employing the relatively neutral language of development. While the women's rights NGO community grew increasingly outspoken, NGOs by their very nature are relatively small, tend to be led by middle class elites, and do not constitute a mass movement (Alvarez 1999). Meanwhile, and especially as time went on, the Suharto regime became more tolerant of religious organizations. This fostered the growth of religious activism, including a unique and important blend of women's rights and Muslim reformism, but also helped build networks of much more conservative religious activists who were not supportive of women's rights. Nevertheless, the activism of the 1990s brought together a wide spectrum of forces that culminated in the

Reformasi movement and fostered crucial cross-fertilizations between student, labor, environmental, and women's rights activists that still reverberate decades later.

Women's Activism in the Transition to Democracy

While the New Order era set the stage for women's activism with its repression of secular and left social movements, it did not wholly determine how women's activism would develop in the transition to democracy. The trajectory of women's activism was also shaped by more contingent events. The key factors that were most influential from 1998 onward were the developing pattern of women's mobilization, the emergence of counter-movement mobilization as a reaction, and political decentralization that has empowered conservative and illiberal actors.

As the Reformasi movement built through 1997 and early 1998, women played a prominent role, including in street demonstrations. Suara Ibu Peduli (Voice of Caring Women) was one of the most visible groups organizing specifically as women – mobilizing to provide assistance to those affected by the ongoing financial crisis, as well as to assist demonstrators with food and water (Budianta 2003, 2006). Many younger women became involved in the movement through student organizations. Years later, many women described the electric atmosphere of the time, as they went between risking arrest on the streets and holing up in their rooms reading Xeroxed copies of forbidden foreign literature (Interviews, September 2002 to July 2003). It was during this period that many activists from Muslim student organizations encountered ideas about feminism and gender equality. Others, like Lies Marcoes, described the early *Reformasi* period as being intellectually dynamic, a period of "progressive and extraordinary thought" that provided an ideal context in which to think about gender and Islam (Interview with Lies Marcoes, June 2016).

A key moment for the nascent women's rights movement was the mass rapes of May 1998 (Budianta 2003; Purdey 2006; Robinson 2008). As political tension peaked and security forces fired on student protestors in Jakarta and other cities, mass violence broke out. Mobs attacked Chinese Indonesian areas, attacking both businesses and people. At least 168 women, mostly of Indonesian Chinese descent, were sexually assaulted. Women from a huge variety of organizations and religious backgrounds volunteered to assist the victims and push the police to investigate. In response, President Habibie created a committee in July 1998 to investigate the attacks, and then in October 1998 establishing the National Commission on Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) which has become the primary national voice for women's rights. Though officially a state supported organization, Komnas Perempuan remains close to the activist and NGO communities and acts as an umbrella group for women's rights activism (Van Doorn-Harder 2017). More than this however, the mass rapes served as another galvanizing moment for many women activists, and raised awareness about sexual assault. Despite the efforts of human rights and women's organizations, the government has never acted to prosecute anyone for these acts (Anggreini 2014; Wargadiredja 2017).

The period from 1998 to the early 2000s was also a fertile period for the establishment of new progressive NGOs devoted to women's rights. Among the more notable ones that emerged were Rahima, which promotes women's rights within an Islamic framework; Koalisi Perempuan Indonesian (Indonesian Women's Coalition, a coalition of local women's groups that works on issues of gender equality and democracy; and Kapal Perempuan, which is particularly interested in women's rights and religious/ethnic pluralism. The proliferation of NGOs contributed to the professionalization of activism and the recruitment of activists from a wider variety of backgrounds, compared to the more elite activists of the 1990s (Rinaldo 2013). But it did not lead to the development of a broader grassroots movement. Although

there are Indonesian women's rights NGOs that do attempt grassroots mobilization and community organizing, their efforts tend to be small-scale. Moreover, the consolidation of women's rights activism within NGOs may have undermined the building of a mass movement because NGOs compete for donor funding and therefore usually specialize in particular issues or locations.

However, not all the Indonesian women activists emerging during Reformasi were interested in women's rights. Young women who had been involved in the Tarbiyah movement and the conservative Indonesian Muslim Students Action Union (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia, KAMMI) helped to establish the Justice Party (Partai Keadilan, PK)—which was soon to become the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS)—as well as the Indonesian branch of Hizbut Tahrir, both of which sought a greater role for Islam in the state, in Hizbut Tahrir's case, seeking the return of the Islamic caliphate. Unlike the women's rights NGOs and the women's groups of the major Muslim organizations, these women were involved in organizations that were not specifically oriented toward women's concerns, though they did aim to mobilize women in support of their broader cause. Many of these new activists were unsettled by the increasing successes of more progressive women's rights activism, as well as by what they felt to be too much liberalization of cultural norms related to gender and sexuality.

By 2001, it was clear that the women's movement included several distinct strands. While this is not unusual or necessarily a problem, in Indonesia these strands encompassed vast ideological differences. On the one hand, there were the generally secular women's rights NGOs such as Kalyanamitra, Solidaritas Perempuan and LBH APIK (Women's Legal Aid Foundation). On the other hand, there were the increasingly energized women's divisions of the major Muslim organizations—Fatayat (Nahdlatul Ulama), Muslimat (Nahdlatul Ulama), and Aisyiyah (Muhammadiyah)—which generally had a good relationship with the women's rights NGOs. Then there was a new cohort of conservative Muslim women activists involved in emerging political parties such as PKS, and Islamist organizations such as Hizbut Tahrir and KAMMI (Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia – Indonesian Muslim Students Action). Many women activists do not consider these last groups of women activists to be part of the women's movement, but certainly they were women activists in the sense that they were women actors in the field of politics and often voiced critiques of women's rights agendas. Thus, the major distinction that emerged in the women's movement by the end of the Reformasi period was not a religious–secular divide, but rather, a conservative-progressive divide (Rinaldo 2013).

The conservative–progressive distinction was initially not that apparent, as the women's movement united around the Anti Domestic Violence Law, which still stands as one of the most important victories for women's rights in Indonesia's history. Beginning in 1999, women's rights activists began proposing a national plan to eradicate violence against women. At the time, the Indonesian Criminal Code contained penalties only for physical abuse of wives, and these were rarely applied due to widespread belief that domestic violence was a private issue (Eddyono, Fanani, Sabaniah, Maurice, Ghazali, Warlif, Velayati, and Ciciek 2016, p. 36). Women's rights activists produced a draft anti-domestic violence bill, which recognized diverse forms of intimate partner violence, including marital rape (Eddyono et al 2016). Activists reached out to diverse organizations and communities in formulating and discussing the proposed bill, especially to women members of parliament. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment supported the bill, but initially, the powerful Ministry of Religious Affairs opposed it and President Megawati seemed to be ambivalent (Eddyono et al, 40). Activists intensified their efforts, and with the 2004 elections approaching, declared that they would not support Megawati if she opposed the bill. Megawati finally changed her position, and Law No.23/2004 on the Elimination of Domestic

Violence was passed in September with the support of most of the political parties in parliament, including women representatives from PKS. It was a huge victory for women's activism in Indonesia, but it marked the last time that the movement coalesced around a common goal.

The Conservative Backlash

Democratization has had many benefits for the women's rights movement. The democratic public sphere provides much greater access to women activists, both to engage with the state apparatus and to bring their arguments to the public (Interviews, February–March 2008). The women's movement used these new opportunities to achieve several very significant gains. In addition to the Law on the Elimination of Domestic Violence (2004), women's rights activists were the leading advocates for a number of new laws mandating child protection (2002), a gender quota for political parties (2008 and 2012), the criminalization of trafficking in persons (2007) and the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families (2012). The movement also made a significant contribution to the election of the reformist Joko Widodo for president in 2014, a campaign which involved many civil society activists, particularly women.

Women's rights activists are, however, not the only beneficiaries of a more democratic and open public sphere. As Adriana Venny of Komnas Perempuan explained, "Democracy is moving along well, but there are some people who take advantage of it for a different agenda" (Interview, June 2016). Since 2004, progressive women activists have faced an increasing challenge from those who do not support the women's rights agenda, including conservative women activists. One of the first and most conspicuous examples of this was the struggle over Law No.44/2008 on Anti-Pornography and Pornographic Acts. Although there had efforts to create legislation on pornography in the 1990s, there was renewed attention to this issue after 1998, as media became much freer and deregulated and with the rise of the internet there was a widespread perception that pornography was increasingly available and that pop culture was becoming overly sexualized. The moral panic reached a peak in 2003 with the national controversy over pop singer Inul Daratista, who was condemned for her sexy dancing style and revealing outfits, spurring anti-pornography campaigners into action, particularly within the PKS (Robinson 2008; Allen 2009; Rinaldo 2012). Although there were already statutes criminalizing sexually explicit images, the new campaigners were pushing for a broader definition of pornography, which included public performances that incite sexual desire (Tedjasukmana 2008)

The Pornography bill proved to be a divisive issue for the Indonesian women's movement, with some activists proudly supporting free speech and art, and others concerned about the impact of pornography on women (Van Wichelen 2010). The key concern of women's rights activists who oppose the bill was that it sanctioned conservative interpretations of Islam that render women's bodies as immoral. Moreover, the controversy over the bill took up a great deal of the attention of women's rights activists during 2004–08, taking time away from other causes, such as reproductive health and rights, reforms to benefit the many women who work as domestic workers, or simply doing more to mobilize women outside major cities. But despite strong mobilization against it by women's rights and anti-censorship activists, religious conservatives succeeded in passing the Bill in 2008, with the support of some Muslim women's groups such as Aisyiyah (Allen 2009; Rinaldo 2012). Although the law is unevenly enforced, it has led to a number of high-profile prosecutions of celebrities and politicians. More recently, with the prosecution and jailing of Jakarta's Christian governor on blasphemy charges, increasing crackdowns on the LGBTIQ community (see Wijaya and Davies, this volume), and an

initiative to criminalize sex outside marriage, it appears that conservative religious actors are driving the national agenda, leaving women's rights activists increasingly on the defensive.

Concern about rising religious conservatism has fostered increased collaboration between secular and religious women's rights activists. More secular women's rights activists in Indonesia now frequently ask a progressive Muslim scholar to attend a training or speak at a conference. Some of these scholars are themselves women, a development enabled by the increasing trend for Indonesian Muslim women to attend Islamic universities and receive formal training in theology (Van Doorn-Harder 2007).[1] However, religious–secular collaboration has not helped women's rights activists achieve the goal of reforming the No. 1/1974 on Marriage, which many believe instills gender inequality at the heart of family life by mandating that men are heads of household and women are responsible for the family (Mahmood 2016).

Collaboration between secular and religious women's rights activists has also not been successful in preventing the conservative backlash. In 2004, a team led by Muslim female scholar Musdah Mulia, who was then working for the Ministry of Religion, produced a substantial revision of Islamic family law that called for the banning of polygamy, equal inheritance rights for men and women, equal rights to initiate divorce, among other things (Robinson 2008). What became known as the Counter-Legal Draft was based on reinterpretations of Islamic law, a strategy that is very much within the tradition of Indonesian Islam. However, it provoked an immediate angry reaction among both conservative and mainstream Muslim organizations and was immediately buried (Cammack, Bedner, and Van Huis 2015; also Fealy, this volume). While the backlash had been building since the 1990s, the moral panic around pornography and the controversy around the Counter-Legal Draft provided issues around which conservative religious actors could mobilize. In the following years women's rights activists continued to try to amend the Marriage Law, but they have had difficulty building consensus even among women's organizations, with the issues of polygamy and same-sex marriage being major obstacles (Van Wichelen 2010; Eddyono et al 2016).

One of the reasons that women's rights activists' efforts to achieve their aims has stalled is that the movement is not well enough represented in parliament and the bureaucracy. Women's rights activists do have some political connections, which has helped them exert more influence than their small numbers might suggest. After 1998, a number of veterans of the women's movement and civil society including Eva Sundari, Nursyahbani Katjasungkana, Rieke Dia Pitaloka, and Maria Ulfah Ansshor entered the realm of formal politics (Mietzner 2013). Their work has been crucial in the major legislative efforts supported by women's rights activists. Among these achievements has been the adoption of a gender quota in 2003 and its subsequent strengthening in 2008 and 2012). Law No.10/2008 required political parties to include at least 30 per cent women candidates, and the electoral commission was required to verify that parties had carried out this commitment. This quota has contributed to a significant increase in the percentage of women legislators in the national parliament from 8.6 per cent in the 1999 elections to 17.32 per cent in the 2014 elections; however, this percentage is still lower than the global average of 19 per cent, and far lower than many of the other countries that have adopted quotas (Shair-Rosenfield 2012; Hillman 2017; Prihatini 2018). Yet, while the gender quota was a measure that women's rights activists had long pushed for, it has not resulted in the major political parties prioritizing measures to empower women.

[1] Such collaboration between religious and secular women activists is unusual. In Muslim majority countries like Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, and Pakistan, the feminist movement is largely secular. Only in a few other instances, mainly in Iran, Malaysia, and Morocco, has there been significant collaboration between Muslim and secular women activists (Mir-Hosseini 2006; Salime 2011; Basaruddin 2016).

The activists who are involved in formal politics do nevertheless serve as a bridge between the women's movement and the state (Mietzner 2013), and they have helped to pass progressive legislation such as ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers (2012), but their numbers may not be enough to provide a strong counter to morality legislation such as the Anti-pornography Bill that gives lawmakers a chance to prove their religious credentials, nor are they sufficient to push for significant new legislation or policy changes. Compared to countries with democratic transitions that have been more egalitarian, such as South Africa, the Indonesian women's rights movement is not especially well connected to formal politics. For example, in South Africa, the women's rights movement historically had influence within the main opposition party, the African National Congress, and at the time of the transition, activists, politicians, and academics created the Women's National Coalition, which collaborated with women inside the trade unions, the ANC, and other organizations (Walsh 2012). According to Walsh, despite the social conservatism of the previous authoritarian regime, during the transition political parties and elites in South Africa came to support measures supported by the WNC, including reforms to promote women's equality in the workplace and measures to eradicate violence against women. Currently, women hold 35% of seats in South Africa's national legislature, making it one of the top countries in the world for women's representation in politics (Women in National Parliaments).

Initially, with the victories of the legislation on child protection and domestic violence, it looked like Indonesia might follow in the steps of South Africa. But since 2004, it has become clear that the women's rights movement in Indonesia is relatively small and underfunded, and lacks influence in the corridors of power. It does not compare well to the institutions in which conservative individuals tend to be ensconced, such as PKS—which even with the downturn in its fortunes, still has the ability to mobilize large numbers of supporters—or an extremist movement like the Islamic Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam, FPI), which claims 200,000 members and branches in 28 provinces (Varagur 2017). The trend toward religious conservatism in Indonesia has strengthened these conservative parties and organizations, as well as institutions like the state-supported Council of Indonesian Ulamas (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI), which has become something of a vanguard for conservative Islam in recent years. Moreover, it has meant that the rank of file of the traditional Muslim organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah are growing more conservative. Importantly, however, the role of the state throughout these changes has not been neutral. Conservative actors are often willing to mobilize a powerful religious discourse that stigmatizes anyone who disagrees with them as an unbeliever or immoral, and in many cases, they have the backing of the military, police, or powerful elites. Indeed, as Aspinall (2010) argues, in its bid for stability, the democratic state has sought to incorporate Islamists. While such cooptation seems to have indeed brought Muslim conservatives into the democratic —for example, PKS has moderated many of its stances, and even many hardline Islamists have embraced electoral politics—the government has shown much less concern for appeasing moderates and progressives, because they are less of a threat. Muslims with more conservative politics are better represented in state ministries, including the powerful Ministry of Religion, than are progressive Muslims. These dynamics help to explain why a fairly well mobilized women's movement has had such difficulty confronting the challenge of rising religious conservatism.

Decentralization and Patterns of Women's Rights Mobilization

Imbalances between progressive and conservative forces are particularly evident at the local level, where women's rights organizations have little presence, as women's rights activists themselves have long recognized. As Eridani of the Muslim women's rights NGO, Rahima, explains, one of the most

significant challenges for the women's movement is the "disconnect" between the national movement and women's needs at the village level. However, she noted, villages can be difficult for women's rights activists to access as they tend to be quite socially conservative (Interview, June 2016).

This divide between urban women's rights advocates and rural women has been exacerbated by decentralization, which proved to have unanticipated consequences for progressive activism. One of the major sources of disenchantment with the Suharto regime was its extreme centralization of administrative authority. After his election as president in 1999, Abdurrahman Wahid quickly moved to decentralize authority by giving greater administrative autonomy to provincial governments. The new system came into effect in 2001, and provincial governments rapidly took on greater authority and responsibilities. This initiative had widespread support, though some women activists were concerned that the potential resurgence of customary law (*adat*) in certain regions could compromise women's empowerment. But what they did not foresee was that local authority might be used to impose new local ordinances inspired by conservative interpretations of Islamic law.

Decentralization has given conservatives (often allied with secular parties) much more opportunity to control local provinces and regions, because they are better organized at the local level and often have inroads with the police and military (Budianta 2006; Buehler 2013; Buehler and Muhtada 2016). For example, in 2009, the city of Tasikmalaya passed a by-law for "Community Values Based on Muslim Teachings," and began planning to enact it in early 2012 with an ordinance requiring Muslim women to wear headscarves (Suwarni 2012). As foreign news media noted, the timing of the implementation was close to an election, in which the mayor, who represented a secular political party was facing challengers (Hussain 2012). Indeed, since 2009, Tasikmalaya has become a stronghold of the conservative Muslim political party PPP, which has supported many of the controversial by-laws (Widhiarto 2014). Despite strong criticism from national women's rights activists and progressive Muslims, soon after the election, according to a Christian news service, the new mayor, Budi Budiman of the PPP party, announced plans to continue implementing Sharia based laws due to the strong backing he received from local Muslim leaders (Hariyadi 2012).

Perhaps the most significant concern for women's rights advocates in the last 15 years, then, is the unprecedented power to local governments to discriminate against women and minorities through policies on decentralization and regional autonomy (Budianta 2006). The Tasikmalaya by-law is just one of no less than 422 local by-laws legislating moral and religious behavior adopted between 1998 and 2013 (Buehler and Muhtada 2016). According to a report published by Komnas Perempuan in 2016, at least 389 of these by-laws discriminate against women and/or minorities (Putra 2017). Such laws may impose criminal sanctions on women through regulations on prostitution and pornography, institute gendered dress codes and religious standards, and place restrictions on women's mobility such as barring them from being outside at night without a male guardian. Although most of these policies are loosely inspired by conservative interpretations of Sharia, they were in many cases sponsored by secular political parties aiming to boost their Islamic credentials. Yet while they exist in 28 provinces, the six provinces in which they are largely concentrated are East Java, South Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, West Java, West Nusa Tenggara, and West Sumatra—all provinces with a history of Islamist activists pushing for a state governed by Islamic law, suggesting that Islamist activists have benefited from decentralization (Buehler and Muhtada 2016).

The architecture of the women's rights movement has not made it easy for activists to grapple with these complex challenges. Prominent women's rights NGOs are relatively small, and their central offices tend to be located in Jakarta or Yogyakarta. Certainly, there are many women's NGOs outside the

major cities, but they tend to be small, lacking financial resources, and often very issue-specific (Eddyono et al 2016).[2] By contrast, the women's wings of the Muslim mass organizations have potentially much larger grassroots bases. With branches in cities, towns, and villages across the country, Fatayat NU claims a membership of at least 3 million (Rinaldo 2013). However, membership in Fatayat NU is largely informal and volunteer based, so these numbers are likely an estimate of potential adherents rather than actual members. Moreover, NU is ideologically divided and its influence in the country is greatly diminished due to competition from other religious organizations and political parties (Bruinessen 2013). Moreover, though Fatayat NU's leadership has generally been supportive of women's rights, its local branches tend to focus mostly on less controversial issues such as health care, helping poor women formally register their marriages, and providing information and services to prevent trafficking. Meanwhile, Aisyiyah, the younger women's group of Muhammadiyah, claims some 15 million members in branches across the archipelago, though similar to Fatayat these numbers may not be accurate (McKay 2016). Although Aisyiyah has done much to promote female leadership, the organization has tended toward a somewhat more conservative interpretation of women's rights (Van Doorn-Harder 2006). Nationally, Aisyiyah also departed from most women's rights activists by supporting the pornography bill.

Komnas Perempuan and other women's rights activists have kept close track of such by-laws and have staged regular campaigns to make the public aware of them and their discriminatory content. They have also published important research documenting the effects of such regulations. Nevertheless, the attempts of women's rights activists to legally challenge these by-laws, for example, campaigning for the Constitutional Court to rule them unconstitutional, have been unsuccessful.[3] In early 2017, in a major defeat for reformist activists, the Constitutional Court ruled that the central government does not have the authority to revoke such by-laws (Butt 2017).

Conclusions

The women's movement was a critical part of the Indonesian Reformasi movement, and women's rights activists have had major successes since the era of democratization began in 1998. Major legislation they have fought for has been passed, and women's political representation has increased. Women are becoming more active in public life and are more accepted as leaders in a variety of arenas. Collaboration between secular and religious activists has been a significant factor in these advances, as has a more open public sphere. Indeed, Indonesia continues to have one of the most dynamic civil societies of any Muslim majority country. Yet women's rights activists have had difficulty confronting the rise of religious conservatives.

As I have shown in this chapter, the key factors influencing the fate of women's rights activism during Indonesia's democratization have been the pattern of women's rights mobilization, counter-movement mobilization and political decentralization. Although the Indonesian women's movement has been vibrant since the 1990s, and has deep historical roots, women's mobilization has been ideologically divided and the more progressive side of the movement has been increasingly subsumed into NGOs. As

[2] One exception is Solidaritas Perempuan, which has an unusual structure that includes a secretariat with paid workers in Jakarta, as well as satellite "communities" around the country. Yet although it has larger numbers than most Indonesian NGOs, based on the attendance rate at their 2008 national congress, there may be fewer than 500 people actively engaged in the organization (Field notes, July 2008).

[3] Several activists reported that the judiciary has become increasingly influenced by conservative interpretations of Islam, so that the courts are not necessarily friendly ground for rights activists (Interviews, June 2016).

women's rights activists became more visible and had important legislative achievements in the early democratization period (1998–04) and the broader culture was increasingly influenced by more liberal views of gender and sexuality, religious conservatives mounted a strong pushback. This backlash, often seen in response to progressive social movements, has been most successful at the provincial level, where the women's movement tend to lack strength (Budianta 2006). Women's rights activists have had difficulty responding to this challenge because of their ideological divisions and lack of a mass base, and because the state has been increasingly willing to defer to conservative forces. Moreover, as religiously conservative actors and institutions become more tightly linked to the state, it may become more difficult for women's rights activists to demand reforms that might provoke religious opposition, even when those reforms are religiously framed (Htun and Weldon 2010).

By contrast, while the actual numbers of committed religious conservatives may not be that large, they certainly have greater numbers and more grassroots organization than women's rights activists, and they have often garnered support from secular politicians seeking to bolster their moral credentials. While women's rights activists may very well have quiet public support, the voices of Muslim conservatives as well as a small number of extremists are amplified in Indonesian public life.

In this newly democratized context, the proponents of the backlash against women's rights have the emotional energy of defending "tradition" and "religion" on their side. This has resulted, most notably, in the passing of a pornography bill that defines pornography so expansively that it is now being used crack down on the activism of sexual minorities as well as censorship of social media. It has made the climate hostile to proposed reforms to the Marriage Law, and women's rights activists have had little success challenging local by-laws that institute dress codes and/or mobility restrictions for women. A proposed Gender Equality bill, moreover, has remained stalled in parliament (Yamin 2012). Indeed, authoritarian and intolerant actors have seized the national agenda with the goal of criminalizing same-sex and extramarital sexual activities. While a petition for this was rejected by the Constitutional Court in December 2017, the provisions on sex outside marriage are part of a revision to the criminal code now under consideration by parliament (Bevins 2018). Although these provisions seem to be targeted mostly toward the LGBTIQ community, they could have significant consequences for women, as pregnancy in an unmarried woman would be a highly visible sign of engaging in extramarital sex.

In sum, as scholarship on democratization and women's rights since the 1980s has shown, democracy does not automatically empower women (Fraser 1990; Viterna and Fallon 2008; Walsh 2012; Moghadam 2016). The experience of women's rights activists in Indonesia illustrates how democratization can empower counter-movements and/or backlash against progressive reforms. Although this is a common theme in the literature on women's rights and democratization, the case of Indonesia shows that when women activists or other social justice oriented reformers lack grassroots strength, their opponents may be better poised to capitalize on decentralized democracy. This indeed may be a central tension for young democracies—in an era of rising conservative populism, the democratic apparatus can empower those who mobilize strongly to impose an illiberal agenda.

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