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## Gender Equality Narratives in the Digital Space: An Analysis of Banten Women's Political Representation through Podcasts

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### Abstract

*The development of digital space has opened up new opportunities for female politicians to negotiate their identities and expand their representation beyond the boundaries of conventional media. This study aims to analyze how female members of the Banten Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) construct gender equality narratives through podcasts on the Banten Podcast channel. Using qualitative content analysis with a social construction approach, this study examines narrative patterns, self-representation strategies, and the framing of gender issues that emerge in podcast conversations. The results reveal three main findings: first, female politicians articulate gender equality issues by combining personal experiences with structural issues, resulting in more authentic and contextual narratives; second, podcasts are used to assert political competence through discussions of the legislative process, policy evaluation, and women's substantive roles in parliament; and third, personal narratives are used as a moral legitimacy strategy that strengthens emotional closeness with the public and challenges gender stereotypes. These findings emphasize the function of podcasts as a digital democratic arena capable of expanding the space for women's political articulation and offering a more equal model of gender representation at the local level.*

**Keywords:** Gender Equality; Women's Politics; Podcast; Digital Representation; Social Construction

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## INTRODUCTION

Gender equality in politics remains a strategic issue in many countries, despite the widespread implementation of affirmative action policies to increase women's representation in legislative bodies (Shalaby & Norris, 2020; Kittilson, 2020). A 2023 UN Women report indicates that women hold only 26.7% of global parliamentary seats, and this increase has been gradual. Numerous studies confirm that structural barriers, such as patriarchal culture, electoral system configurations, and limited party support, remain major barriers to women's political participation (Krook, 2020; Bhalotra et al., 2023).

The Indonesian context demonstrates a similar phenomenon. A 30% quota for women's representation has been implemented, but women's participation in provincial legislatures continues to fluctuate (Aspinall et al., 2021; Mujani, 2022). Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (2023) shows that Indonesia's Gender Inequality Index recorded significant gaps in political participation, indicating that women's involvement in the political process is not yet fully equitable. Various studies also emphasize that female politicians in Indonesia still face cultural barriers, internal party resistance, and gender-based stereotypes that hinder their political mobility (Wardani, 2021; Alam & Idris, 2022; Harsono, 2023).

Banten Province is one example of a region with prominent challenges to women's representation. Research on local politics in this region shows that women face multiple barriers, ranging from masculine party structures to social norms that position politics as a space more suitable for men (Sulastri, 2021; Fajri & Hidayat, 2022). The results of the 2019–2024 legislative elections confirmed that the number of female DPRD members in Banten has not reached the ideal quota (Banten General Elections Commission, 2024). This situation demonstrates the need for broader political expression for women, including in the realm of public communication.

Developments in digital technology have expanded the arena of political interaction through the presence of platforms such as social media, podcasts, and conversation-based video channels. Digital spaces provide opportunities for women politicians to build their image, convey their political agenda, and negotiate their identity without relying solely on mainstream media (Vaccari & Valeriani, 2021; Chadwick, 2022). The podcast format, in particular, has emerged as a discursive space that allows for deeper and more reflective narrative exploration (Llinares et al., 2021; Markman, 2022). Various studies have shown that political podcasts generate greater emotional intimacy, increase engagement with the audience, and strengthen the political credibility of the source (Perks & Turner, 2021; Lindgren, 2022).

Women politicians' use of digital media demonstrates a strategic approach to overcoming limited access to conventional media. Recent research has identified that women politicians utilize digital spaces to demonstrate competence, challenge stereotypes, and convey gender equality issues more authentically (Everbach, 2020; Bobba & Hubé, 2021; Hastjarjo, 2022; Putri & Siregar, 2023). Studies in Indonesia show an increase in podcast use by female politicians because the conversational format provides a space to combine personal experiences with policy analysis (Sari, 2021; Nurdin, 2022; Anggraini & Setiawan, 2023).

Specific studies on the representation of female regional politicians in podcasts are still limited, even though local political dynamics do not always align with the national context (Pratiwi, 2021; Aisyah, 2022). The Banten Podcast channel is one digital space that consistently features female DPRD members and provides a conversational atmosphere that allows political narratives to develop more openly. The narratives constructed in this format have the potential to influence public understanding of women's roles, capacities, and contributions in regional politics.

The social construction perspective views media as an agent that produces and mediates meaning through the processes of framing, narrative selection, and representation of political actors (Couldry & Hepp, 2020; Davis, 2021). Podcasts, as a digital medium, enable female politicians to construct political identities through the disclosure of experiences, assertion of competence, and establishment of moral authority (Bishop, 2021; Kresna & Astuti, 2023). The use of personal and reflective narratives plays a role in building public legitimacy and challenging gender stereotypes that undermine women's position in politics.

This study aims to analyze how female members of the Banten Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) construct narratives of gender equality in podcasts, including the representational strategies they employ, the framing of prioritized issues, and the forms of political identity negotiation that emerge. This analysis is expected to contribute to the study of digital politics and gender representation, particularly in local contexts that have received little attention in academic literature.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative content analysis approach to examine how female members of the Banten Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) construct a gender equality narrative through the Banten Podcast podcast. Qualitative content analysis was chosen because it allows researchers to identify latent and explicit meanings emerging from conversations and is relevant to examining representational practices and meaning construction in digital media (Schreier, 2020; Mayring, 2021). The research design is exploratory, given that the phenomenon of gender representation in regional political podcasts is relatively new and has not been widely discussed in academic literature (Creswell & Poth, 2021; Flick, 2022).

The research data comes from Banten Podcast podcast episodes featuring female members of the Banten DPRD between 2022 and 2024. Episode selection was purposive, based on relevance to the research objectives. Therefore, only episodes featuring active female legislators, containing substantive discussions, and lasting at least thirty minutes were analyzed. Purposive

selection aligns with methodological recommendations for qualitative research that emphasize depth over breadth of data (Etikan, 2020; Palinkas et al., 2021). Five episodes that met these criteria were then transcribed verbatim as the initial step in the analysis process. Each transcription was reviewed repeatedly to ensure accurate representation of the conversation, including noting nonverbal aspects such as intonation and voice stress that could potentially reinforce meaning (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2020).

The analysis process was conducted through several iterative stages. The first stage was open coding, which assigned a code to each conversation segment containing key ideas related to gender issues, self-representation strategies, personal experiences, and policy arguments. Coding was conducted inductively so that emerging meanings stemmed from the data, not from the researcher's assumptions (Saldaña, 2021). The next stage was categorization, which grouped the codes into broader thematic categories, such as representations of gender issues, political identity construction, and narratives of moral legitimacy. Categorization was carried out iteratively to ensure interconnectedness between themes and their relevance to the research objectives (Charmaz, 2021).

Data validity was maintained through several strategies. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing narrative consistency across analyzed podcast episodes. The validity of interpretation was strengthened through peer debriefing, a discussion with two other researchers who provided critical feedback to minimize subjective bias (Nowell et al., 2021). An audit trail was also created to transparently document all analysis steps. Furthermore, limited member checking was conducted by re-verifying the context of interviewee statements against the original recordings to ensure that interpretations did not deviate from the original meaning.

This research adheres to ethical principles of digital media research. All data is sourced from publicly accessible materials, and the analysis process was conducted without altering the content or meaning of the original conversations. The presentation of quotations is done proportionally and adheres to ethical guidelines for digital research regarding privacy, interpretation, and use of public audiovisual materials (Townsend & Wallace, 2020; BPSP, 2023).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Representation of Gender Equality in Political Narratives

The narrative of gender equality emerges consistently in every podcast episode featuring female members of the Banten Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). The emphasis on this issue is not normative, but rather conveyed through the diverse, concrete experiences they encounter in their interactions with the community. Depictions of women dropping out of school due to economic pressures, child marriage still considered a social solution by some families, and cases of domestic violence that remain inadequately addressed demonstrate that their narratives are based on direct observation of the situation on the ground. The podcast format allows the speakers to explain these issues in greater depth, allowing the audience to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying context.

Explanations of various women's issues are combined with interpretations of the factors that perpetuate them. Inequality in gender relations in family decision-making, women's limited access to information, and the dominance of patriarchal values in some communities emerge as social structures that influence women's vulnerability in Banten. The speakers do not simply identify issues but place them within a broader social framework, revealing the connection between individual experiences and the cultural structures that govern daily life. This approach enhances the analytical dimension rarely achieved through mainstream media, which tends to reduce issues to concise formats.

Podcasts provide a space that allows narratives about gender equality to be discussed reflectively. The presentation, freer from the constraints of conventional media formats, allows

the interviewees to expand their explanations, provide additional examples, and convey the emotional nuances that accompany their experiences. This emotional involvement is evident when they describe the experiences of residents who experience violence but lack the courage to report it, or when they speak about women informal workers who face a double burden without social protection. Such empathetic expressions strengthen their moral legitimacy as public representatives who understand the problems of their constituents firsthand.

The issue of gender equality is positioned as a political agenda that needs to be championed continuously. The interviewees emphasize that women's issues cannot be resolved through sporadic approaches but require consistency in policy, budgeting, and advocacy. This perspective demonstrates that their efforts to discuss women's issues through podcasts are not only aimed at providing information to the public but also at building social support for gender-based policies. This perspective reinforces the understanding that gender equality is not solely a women's issue but is a crucial component in realizing inclusive regional development.

The integration of personal and field experiences is a prominent narrative pattern. Interviewees often connect stories they encounter during recess with personal experiences of facing doubts, stereotypes, or pressures experienced as women in politics. This connection creates a more convincing narrative because it demonstrates that their concern for women's issues is not abstract but grounded in authentic experience. This narrative strategy strengthens the persuasiveness of their messages and increases public trust in their commitment.

Podcasts serve as an arena for the production of social meaning about gender equality. The narratives produced by interviewees frame women's issues as public issues deserving policy attention, rather than as the private domain of the family. This shift in framing contributes to the formation of new understandings of the relationship between women, the state, and the public sphere. From a social construction perspective, this practice demonstrates how interviewees' experiences and interpretations can influence the public's understanding of gender inequality and the urgency of addressing it through regional regulations and policies.

Overall, the representation of gender equality in podcasts not only presents women's issues as objects of discussion but also places them within a more strategic political discourse. This narrative pattern shows that Banten's female politicians are utilizing podcasts as a medium to expand the space for articulation regarding gender issues, while simultaneously changing the way the public views the relevance of women's issues in the regional development agenda.

### **Affirming Political Competence and Legislative Authority**

Explanations regarding technical capacity as legislators emerged as a key part of the narratives of female politicians appearing on podcasts. The speakers used the conversation to outline their responsibilities in the legislative process, oversight, and budget preparation. These explanations were not presented as a form of self-defense, but rather as an effort to emphasize the substantive roles they play in the legislative body. Using podcasts as a medium provided the speakers with the opportunity to explain these processes more comprehensively, allowing the public to see the political dimension of work often hidden behind formal decisions.

The speakers' descriptions of legislative mechanisms illustrated that the policymaking process in the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) is not solely about formulating regulations but also involves data evaluation, dialogue with stakeholders, and coordination across commissions. The speakers stated that the preparation of academic drafts, discussions in special committees, and field verification are stages that require precision and consistency. These structured explanations confirmed their strong understanding of the technical and legal aspects underlying regional policies. The public rarely receives such explanations through mainstream media, which tends to highlight political conflicts or superficial issues.

The interviewees' accounts of the internal dynamics of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) also demonstrate that women are not always in an easy position when negotiating policy proposals. Limited attention to gender perspectives, resistance to certain

issues, and the tendency for some parties to ignore women's opinions are all described as obstacles they must overcome. These accounts demonstrate that technical competence alone is not enough to strengthen women's positions in the political arena. The ability to develop communication and negotiation strategies is an integral part of legislative work.

Explanations of these various processes demonstrate that the interviewees are attempting to reposition their identities as female politicians. Their identities are framed not solely through women's issues, but also through their ability to analyze regional issues, understand budget mechanisms, and manage inter-institutional relationships. This approach demonstrates that women possess technocratic capacities equal to men in managing government affairs. Affirming these capabilities is crucial because women's representation in the media is often associated solely with social issues or ceremonial activities.

Podcasts provide a space for interviewees to explain these processes without fragmentation. Technical narratives can be delivered step by step so that the audience understands the relationship between one stage of the policy process and the next. For example, an explanation of how a particular issue was included in the budget plan can be fully explained, from the submission process and negotiations to the political considerations involved. The long-form format allows the interviewees to convey these details without the pressure of time and the simplistic framing of conventional reporting.

Their efforts to demonstrate competence through technical narratives serve to strengthen the interviewees' political legitimacy. Their clarity in explaining the policy process demonstrates that women's involvement in the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) is not merely about fulfilling quotas or symbolic representation. The public can see that the interviewees understand the structures, mechanisms, and procedures underlying legislative work. This kind of representation broadens public understanding of women's capacity in a political space often considered masculine.

This assertion of competence also serves as a strategy to dismantle the bias commonly attached to female politicians. Several interviewees revealed that they still frequently face doubts about their abilities, particularly from male decision-makers. Their accounts of these doubts were not delivered in a complaining tone, but rather as reflections on the power structures they face daily. Such accounts demonstrate how women use professional competence to confront patriarchal structures that limit their space.

Podcasts serve as a medium that expands the articulation of these political competencies. The conversational format allows the speakers to elaborate on their experiences, present arguments, and demonstrate analytical skills directly. The public can see that female politicians not only discuss their vision but also understand implementation strategies. Such skills affirm their position as actors capable of substantially influencing the direction of regional policy.

The integration of technical experience and critical reflection demonstrates that the speakers use podcasts to construct a more complex self-representation. Their identities as female politicians are not solely centered on gender issues but also on the professional competencies that shape their political legitimacy. Podcasts, in this context, become an important arena for re-articulating women's position in local politics as competent, strategic, and influential actors.

### **Personal Narratives as a Source of Authenticity and Moral Legitimacy**

Personal narratives emerge as a prominent component in each podcast episode featuring female members of the Banten Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). The disclosure of personal experiences is used as an approach to reveal the emotional background, moral values, and motivations that shape their political commitment. This kind of narrative presents a dimension rarely seen in formal political communication, as personal experiences are often marginalized by protocol demands and media framing. The presence of podcasts creates a more intimate space, allowing interviewees to share these experiences openly and reflectively.

The recounting of personal experiences reveals how female politicians face cultural pressures, public skepticism, and various forms of resistance when entering politics. Many of them describe that their involvement in politics is often questioned, even by their immediate families. This doubt arises from the strong cultural construct that views politics as a masculine domain. Interviewees describe how their journeys did not begin in a welcoming space, but rather through a series of situations that demanded proof of their capacity. These narratives reveal the inner dynamics underlying their political positions and decisions.

Experiences with gender stereotypes also play a significant role in their personal narratives. Interviewees described how they were perceived as insufficiently assertive in leading meetings, perceived as too emotional in expressing their opinions, or doubted about their abilities when discussing technical issues such as budgets and financial reporting. These experiences not only demonstrate the identity burdens they carry but also illustrate the adaptive strategies they must develop to survive. These accounts demonstrate that women's political journeys are not simply a matter of competence, but also a continuous negotiation with discriminatory social expectations.

The podcast provided space for interviewees to frame these experiences within broader reflections. Experiences of doubt or resistance were not simply narrated as personal obstacles but also placed within the context of the social structures that shape gender relations in local politics. This approach demonstrated the interviewees' ability to connect lived experiences to larger political dynamics, allowing personal narratives to serve as a bridge between the private and public spheres. These accounts provided analytical depth while strengthening the interviewees' moral authority when speaking on gender equality issues.

The use of personal narratives plays a crucial role in establishing the authenticity of political identity. Experiences of failure, doubt, or emotional distress were conveyed in a way that demonstrated vulnerability while remaining professional. This kind of authenticity is often a plus in digital political communication, as the public tends to appreciate politicians who are able to show their human side without compromising their professional capacity. Personal narratives conveyed through podcasts give the impression that the interviewees' political motivations are not solely oriented toward power, but also driven by moral responsibility to society.

Another dimension emerging in the personal narratives relates to their experiences balancing domestic and public roles. Interviewees describe how political involvement requires sacrifices of time, energy, and attention, often clashing with family demands. These experiences demonstrate that female politicians live in conditions that require a complex division of roles. Limited support from their social environment forces them to create their own coping mechanisms, from building intensive communication with their families to reorganizing work priorities. These explanations enrich the public's understanding of the realities behind political activity, which often appears formal and sterile.

The presence of personal narratives also helps strengthen the construct of the interviewees' moral legitimacy. When they talk about their struggles to understand women's issues, these narratives do not emerge as abstract discourse. Their own experiences provide emotional content that strengthens the argument regarding the urgency of the issue. This demonstrates that the interviewees' political commitment is not solely borne of their positional structure, but is influenced by their lived experiences that shape their sensitivity to issues of inequality.

The podcast serves as a space for articulation that brings together personal experiences, political reflections, and moral values in a cohesive narrative. The format allows the interviewees to describe their life journeys, unravel political dynamics, and assert their identities without being subject to the constraints of formal communication. The public can see how personal and political experiences intertwine, forming a more complex, more human, and more credible female political identity.

This complexity demonstrates that personal narratives are not merely rhetorical strategies, but integral to the self-representation of female politicians. They utilize their lived experiences as

a source of moral authority and as a way to challenge gender constructs that limit women's political space. This narrative strengthens their position as political actors who not only bring representative values, but also transformative values in the development of local democracy.

### **Counter-Narratives to Gender Stereotypes in Local Politics**

The narratives emerging in the podcast show that female members of the Banten Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) not only raise issues of gender equality or demonstrate political competence, but also construct counter-narratives to gender stereotypes that have long been entrenched in local political culture. Stereotypes about women being perceived as less assertive, less rational, or lacking leadership capacity emerge implicitly in the various political interactions they recount. These experiences serve as the backdrop that drives them to develop narrative strategies to negotiate and challenge these gender constructs.

Descriptions of situations where their opinions were ignored at the beginning of meetings or when their arguments were questioned without substantiation demonstrate that gender bias remains present in everyday political dynamics. These accounts demonstrate that resistance to women does not always manifest itself in the form of outright rejection, but rather through more subtle mechanisms, such as unfounded doubt, dismissal of contributions, or assumptions that women only understand certain social issues. Interviewees provide examples of situations where they had to repeatedly prove their abilities to have their opinions considered equal to those of their male colleagues.

The narratives of these experiences are not presented in a confrontational tone, but rather as reflections on the cultural structures that shape their experiences. This approach demonstrates the interviewees' political maturity and analytical capacity to understand the broader social context. Their explanations demonstrate that gender stereotypes are not simply a matter of individual perception, but rather part of a value system that influences patterns of interaction within political institutions. Delineating these structures helps the audience see gender issues as institutional, not merely psychological, issues.

The exposure of these stereotypes is followed by counter-narratives that demonstrate the interviewees' abilities and assertiveness in carrying out legislative duties. They describe experiences leading meetings in difficult situations, resolving conflicts between factions, or navigating potentially deadlocked discussions. These accounts of their experiences demonstrate the contradiction between the stereotypes attached to them and the actual abilities they demonstrate in the workplace. These narratives form an indirect argument that asserts that women's abilities do not depend on societal perceptions, but rather on their own objective competencies.

The emphasis on political achievements also emerges through stories about successfully pushing for more gender-responsive regulations or ensuring certain programs are included in regional budget allocations. These depictions serve not only as evidence of performance but also as a strategy for building political legitimacy. Narratives of the negotiation process, the strategies employed, and the results achieved illustrate the strategic capacity of female politicians that is often overlooked when they are stereotyped by traditional gender stereotypes.

Podcasts provide a space that allows interviewees to elaborate counter-narratives more freely. The long-form conversational format allows them to elaborate on the context, highlight the nuances of each experience, and explain the social dynamics underlying each political interaction. This kind of space is difficult to achieve in conventional media reporting, which typically focuses on brief statements or presents female politicians from a limited perspective. The freedom to define one's own experiences is a crucial factor in enabling interviewees to reposition their political identities.

The counter-narratives emerging in podcasts operate not only on a personal level but also on a symbolic one. Portrayals of women's abilities to lead, manage conflict, or make strategic decisions challenge the concept of political masculinity that has traditionally been considered the

standard for leadership. Each time a speaker revealed that they successfully pushed a particular agenda despite facing resistance, they simultaneously constructed a new image of who qualifies as a decision-maker. This new identity construction opened up the possibility for other women to imagine themselves as part of the political space.

The emerging pattern suggests that counter-narratives represent a simultaneous effort to challenge and dismantle gender structures that limit women. The speakers not only described their successes but also acknowledged the obstacles they faced. This combination of acknowledging these obstacles and affirming their capacity builds a credible representation of women politicians. This credibility is a key element in transforming public perception and encouraging the formation of a more inclusive political culture.

The presence of counter-narratives in podcasts demonstrates the strategic potential of digital media in expanding women's representation. The ability to control the narrative, explain processes in depth, and maintain an argumentative position strengthens women's position in the face of gender-biased social structures. Podcasts, in this context, serve not only as a medium for communication but also as a space for resistance to patriarchal structures that govern local political dynamics.

This narrative confirms that women politicians in Banten are able to utilize podcasts as an instrument to build a more empowered political identity. This identity is shaped not only by technical skills but also by experiences confronting and challenging stereotypes. The use of counter-narratives through podcasts demonstrates that women's representation is no longer simply about political involvement, but also about changing how the public understands and evaluates women's political roles.

## DISCUSSION

The discussion of the research findings indicates that podcasts play a crucial role in the process of constructing women's political identities. The research findings align with the social constructionist perspective, which asserts that social reality is shaped through language and narrative. The narratives about gender inequality shared by the interviewees illustrate how their empirical experiences serve as tools for constructing new understandings of women's conditions in Banten. Their field experiences serve not only as information but also as a means of producing social meaning that positions gender issues as public issues, as Berger and Luckmann emphasize that the construction of reality relies on repeated communication processes.

The findings regarding the affirmation of political competence reinforce the concept of substantive representation, which states that women's presence is not only important in terms of numbers but also needs to demonstrate influence in the policymaking process. The interviewees' explanations of the legislative process, budget dynamics, and negotiation strategies demonstrate their role as competent policy actors. This aligns with Phillips' theory of representation, which emphasizes the importance of technocratic capacity in strengthening women's positions in political institutions. The use of podcasts provides them with a platform to more fully explain these processes, allowing the public to see their competence without the distortion of media framing.

The personal narratives shared by the interviewees demonstrate a connection to narrative communication theory. Polletta asserts that personal narratives serve as a tool for building credibility and rapport with the audience. Research findings indicate that interviewees used experiences of family pressure, gender stereotypes, and domestic demands to explain the moral motivations behind their political commitment. These narratives reinforce perceptions of political authenticity, an element considered crucial in the context of digital political communication.

Counternarratives to gender stereotypes demonstrate relevance to counter-framing theory. Krook and Shalaby explain that female politicians often construct counternarratives to challenge

gender constructions that limit their political space. The research findings show that interviewees used podcasts to challenge stereotypes through concrete examples of their ability to lead meetings, manage conflicts, and promote strategic policies. This approach demonstrates how women create a space for resistance to patriarchal structures through self-directed narratives.

The overall discussion demonstrates that podcasts serve not only as a communication medium but also as a space for negotiating women's political identities. The connection between research findings and theory suggests that women's representations are formed through a combination of narrative construction, demonstrating competence, revealing personal experiences, and resisting stereotypes. The podcast's position as a digital medium strengthens this representational function by providing a space for expression that is not constrained by mainstream media structures. This demonstrates that digital media has significant potential to expand women's political representation at the local level.

## CONCLUSION

This research shows that podcasts are a strategic medium for female members of the Banten Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in building a more autonomous, reflective, and substantial political representation. The narratives presented by the interviewees demonstrate that gender equality issues receive serious attention and are framed through the empirical experiences they encounter in their interactions with the public. This depiction demonstrates that the construction of meaning regarding gender inequality stems not only from structural data but also from direct experiences, strengthening their moral legitimacy as public representatives.

The affirmation of political competence, which emerges through explanations of the legislative process and budget dynamics, demonstrates that female politicians play a substantive role in policymaking. This presentation provides evidence that women's capacity cannot be viewed as symbolic, but rather is based on technocratic capabilities equal to those of their male colleagues. The use of podcasts allows the interviewees to convey these processes in detail, enabling the public to understand the complexities of political work often overlooked by conventional reporting.

The personal narratives presented by the interviewees demonstrate how life experiences shape their political motivations and commitment to gender issues. Experiences with stereotypes, domestic pressures, and social demands serve as elements that explain the emotional and moral dynamics behind their political decisions. The use of these personal narratives enhances the perception of authenticity while strengthening public trust in their integrity.

Counternarratives countering gender stereotypes demonstrate that female politicians are not only attempting to articulate their experiences but also challenging patriarchal constructs that limit the political space. Portrayals of their leadership skills, conflict management, and strategic policy advocacy serve to broaden the public imagination regarding who is considered worthy of holding power. Podcasts play a crucial role as a space that provides narrative freedom to convey this resistance more expressively and argumentatively.

Overall, this research demonstrates that podcasts serve as a digital democratic space that expands women's political representation and identity. Podcasts enable female politicians to integrate narratives of experience, professional competence, and resistance to stereotypes into a single communication space that is more autonomous from mainstream media structures. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening the use of digital media as a political communication strategy for women and open up opportunities for further research on digital representation practices in the context of local politics in Indonesia.

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