

**BUKTI KORESPONDENSI ARTIKEL
PADA JURNAL INTERNASIONAL BEREPUTASI**

*Empowerment vs. meritocracy discourses in Indonesian public universities :
The case of female leaders*
pada jurnal *Q3 Asian Journal of Women's Studies*



PENGUSUL

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NIP 198404292012122002

UNIVERSITAS NEGERI SEMARANG

Yang terhormat

Tim Penilai Usulan PAK

Bersama dengan surat ini, saya bermaksud menyertakan bukti-bukti korespondensi proses review artikel pada Jurnal Internasional dengan judul "Empowerment vs. meritocracy discourses in Indonesian public universities : The case of female leaders" dimuat pada jurnal *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/12259276.2019.1610210 ISSN 1225-9276.

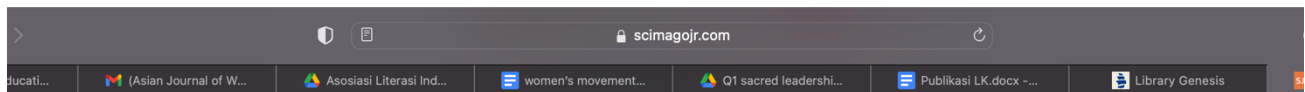
Adapun susunan kronologi bukti korespondensi terdiri dari beberapa poin pada table di bawah ini:

No	Tanggal	Aktivitas
1	18 Oktober 2018	Submit manuscript pertama kali ke jurnal
2	18 Oktober 2018	Pemberian nomor ID manuscript dari editor RAJW-2018-0229
3	22 Maret 2019	Pemberitahuan dari editor bahwa artikel ditolak
4	29 Maret 2019	Mengirim balasan dan revisi pertama artikel pada jurnal RAJW-2018-0229.R1
5	18 April 2019	Pemberitahuan artikel telah direview dan diterima untuk publikasi
6	27 April 2019	Permintaan untuk proof artikel
7	6 Juni 2019	Artikel telah published.


Detail Artikel pada Jurnal Internasional Bereputasi

Judul Artikel	: From 'priceless' to 'priced': the value of knowledge in higher education
Jurnal	: Globalisation, Societies, and Education
Volume	: 25
Nomor	: 2
Tanggal publikasi	: 6 Juni 2019
ISSN	: ISSN 1225-9276
Halaman	: 198 - 216
DOI	: 10.1080/12259276.2019.1610210
Penerbit	: Taylor and Francis, Routledge
SJR	: 0.429 (2020)
Quartile	: Q3 (Scopus)
Penulis	: Zulfa Sakhiyya & Kirsten Locke

Bukti Indexing Jurnal:



Asian Journal of Women's Studies

COUNTRY	SUBJECT AREA AND CATEGORY	PUBLISHER	H-INDEX
United Kingdom  Universities and research institutions in United Kingdom	Social Sciences ↳ Gender Studies	Taylor and Francis Ltd.	12
PUBLICATION TYPE	ISSN	COVERAGE	INFORMATION
Journals	12259276	1996-2020	Homepage How to publish in this journal

SCOPE

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- 0.572 (2020) 5 year IF
- 0.5 (2020) CiteScore
- 0.49 (2020) SNIP
- 0.168 (2020) SJR

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Asian Journal of Women's Studies, Volume 25, 2019 - Issue 2

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Asian Journal of Women's Studies

Submit manuscript pertama kali ke jurnal 18 Oktober 2018
Pemberian nomor manuscript ID dari editor RAJW-2018-0229



Zulfa Sakhiyya <zulfasakhiyya@gmail.com>

Submission Confirmation for Empowerment vs. Meritocracy Discourses in Indonesian Public University: The Case of Female Leaders

1 message

Asian Journal of Women's Studies <em@editorialmanager.com>

Fri, Oct 19, 2018 at 10:15 AM

Reply-To: Asian Journal of Women's Studies <ajws@ewha.ac.kr>

To: Zulfa Sakhiyya <zulfasakhiyya@gmail.com>

Oct 18, 2018

Dear Dr Sakhiyya,

Your submission entitled "Empowerment vs. Meritocracy Discourses in Indonesian Public University: The Case of Female Leaders" has been received by journal Asian Journal of Women's Studies

You will be able to check on the progress of your paper by logging on to Editorial Manager as an author. The URL is <https://rajw.editorialmanager.com/>.

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1. Zulfa Sakhiyya, Ph.D

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Number of figures	0

Pemberitahuan artikel telah direview dan mendapatkan revisi mayor (9 Februari 2019)

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Gmail Zulfa Sakhyya <zulfasakhyya@gmail.com>

(Asian Journal of Women's Studies) A revise decision has been made on your submission
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Asian Journal of Women's Studies <ajws@ewha.ac.kr>
Reply-To: Asian Journal of Women's Studies <ajws@ewha.ac.kr>
To: Zulfa Sakhyya <zulfasakhyya@gmail.com>

Sat, Feb 9, 2019 at 7:36 PM

CC: ajws@ewha.ac.kr

Ref.: Ms. No. RAJW-2018-0229
Empowerment vs. Meritocracy Discourses in Indonesian Public University: The Case of Female Leaders

Dear Dr Sakhyya,

Thank you for your generous patience. Your manuscript entitled "Empowerment vs. Meritocracy Discourses in Indonesian Public University: The Case of Female Leaders" which you submitted to Asian Journal of Women's Studies, has been reviewed. The reviewers' comments are included at the bottom of this letter.

We regret to inform you that the reviewers have raised serious concerns; therefore, the Editors recommend that your paper, in its current form, cannot be accepted for publication in the Asian Journal of Women's Studies. However, since the reviewers do find some merit in the paper, we would be willing to reconsider if you wish to undertake major revisions and re-submit, addressing the reviewers' comments.

Please note that resubmitting your manuscript does not guarantee eventual acceptance, and that your resubmission will be subject to re review before a decision is rendered. Upon resubmitting your manuscript, please ensure that you also provide a point by point response to the reviewers' comments in the relevant section available to you.

You will be unable to make your revisions on the originally submitted version of your manuscript. Instead, you should make your revisions on the version saved on your computer so that when you start the revision in Editorial Manager, all you need to do is remove the old version and upload the new one.

After reading this email, we would appreciate it if you could send us a quick confirmation of your interest in submitting the revised manuscript on or before March 1, 2019.

Yours sincerely,
AJWS Editors
Asian Journal of Women's Studies

Reviewers' comments:

Reviewer #1:

The paper explores women's leadership in higher education and develops its arguments based on the contradictions of empowerment and meritocracy. Although it appears to have potential for publication, it needs strong reconsideration in the areas cited below:

1. An important question when reading the paper: so, in the universities in Indonesia, are there any systematic efforts of gender/women's empowerment or the emergence of those female rector is really just an emergence by chance? It is important that the author addresses this in the discussion.
2. Please review again these:
"However, the current emphasis on performativity in the contemporary universities has permeated a new set of different and often contradictory discourses around universities, such as equity, efficiency and effectiveness (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001; Blackmore & Sawers, 2015; Shore & Wright, 2017). These discourses are jostled against each other in an uncomfortable union. [AS A RESULT], women are positioned in another ambiguous space – while women are encouraged to move into leadership positions, they are stuck in middle management roles given their stereotyped predominance in caring (Devine, Grummell, & Lynch, 2011). Bagilhole and Goode (2001) argue that despite the equity rhetoric, empowerment for women in universities..."
---- I do not think there is a relationship of causality -- or if the author concludes so, please explain and elaborate so that the readers can understand the logic.
3. For the phrases below, I do not find the argumentation to be sound – and the citations of interview do not reflect the contradiction situation between empowerment vs. meritocratic discourse – or at least, the reader finds it difficult to follow the logic or argumentation. (e.g., I do not understand yet, the discussion about detail and meticulousness – what is the relation with the issue of contradiction between empowerment vs meritocracy?)
"Articulating the contradictions between empowerment and meritocratic discourses:
Introducing the participants
The image of leadership: heroic vs the details
As an example of the contradictions in action, one of our participants articulated the tensions between the discourses of meritocracy and empowerment in stark reality."
4. About the sentences below, do they reflect the discourse of contradiction between empowerment and meritocracy in the higher education in Indonesia, or reflect the way of thinking of the female rector only – she who also does not understand about gender issues, and does not understand the relevance? How do you differentiate the discourse of the female rector and the discourse in the organization of the higher education of Indonesia? Does the author think that when the answer explains about "gender" – it does not need that the female gender leader has the competence? If so, then the audience (who are male biased) will really find it difficult to support. I guess the article needs to clearly explain the assumption that competence has already been possessed by women and men who are potential leaders. It is important not to give the impression that we need women leaders irrespective of their competence.

"All about 'competence', not gender
Another contradiction between empowerment and meritocracy is manifested in our interview in view that neutralize the issue of gender by emphasizing individual competence. This contradiction is found in the ambivalent view the interviewees held on the empowerment they have

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*All about 'competence', not gender

Another contradiction between empowerment and meritocracy is manifested in our interviews in ways that neutralise the issue of gender by emphasising individual competence. This contradiction is found in the ambivalent view the interviewees held on the empowerment they have benefited from when positioned in the context of one individual's career trajectory. The first female Rector in the top-tier university acknowledges a form of empowerment she received prior to becoming the rector through the sponsorship of her high powered colleague who supported her candidacy for the rector position. However while simultaneously acknowledging this discourse of empowerment that could have potentially benefitted her and contributed to her being granted the position of rector, she seems to gloss over its importance in her own case. She recounts that:

The previous Rector had a concern that one of the vice rectors should be female. This concern was then taken up by the senate and the University Board of Trustees... there were only two women in the Board of Trustees... Then to run for the rector election, gender did not matter. It was all about competence. (Interview with R1) ..."

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This article reports a selected sample of findings from a larger three-year qualitative research study in two public universities in Indonesia that are categorised as 'top-tier' and 'middle-tier' universities. We focus on the top two tiers because they are the traditionally masculine spaces as compared to the other tiers in the Indonesian context. We use the institutional categories developed by the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education in 2016. The clustering presents five distinct categories in the Indonesian higher education system. The four criteria used to categorise a total of 3320 higher education institutions are, i.e. research, human resource quality, managerial quality, and student activities. Out of these four criteria, the defining norm that really distinguishes the institutions is its research orientation.

The top-tier university was established in 1949 after Indonesia gained its independence in 1945. This university's top-tier status is garnered from its research reputation as one of the oldest and largest public higher education institutions in the country catering for around 50,000 students.

The middle-tier university was previously a teacher training college established in 1965, and was then given a wider mandate by improving its status to be a state university in 2000. As compared to the top-tier university, the middle-tier university is relatively smaller having a student cohort of around 35,000. It is defined as middle-tier because of its mixed orientation of research and teaching.

Reviewer #2:

Overall, the manuscript describes empowerment as a collective and meritocracy as an individual capital that take women to leadership positions in higher education. It strongly argues that the two are contradictory discourses as revealed in the interview data gathered and sampled by the authors from a three-year qualitative research. While these arguments sound interesting, the manuscript, in its current form, has failed to:

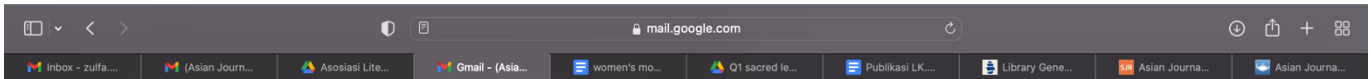
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3. justify how the data were culled or sampled from a "larger three-year qualitative research." As mentioned above, data/findings on pp. 9-14 are not thick enough to support the main argument of this paper.

More specific comments are in the attached file.

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Pemberitahuan dari editor bahwa artikel ditolak (22 Maret 2019)



Asian Journal of Women's Studies <em@editorialmanager.com>
Reply-To: Asian Journal of Women's Studies <ajws@ewha.ac.kr>
To: Zulfa Sakhiyya <zulfasakhiyya@gmail.com>

Fri, Mar 22, 2019 at 8:49 AM

CC: ajws@ewha.ac.kr

Ref.: Ms. No. RAJW-2018-0229
Empowerment vs. Meritocracy Discourses in Indonesian Public University: The Case of Female Leaders

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3. justify how the data were culled or sampled from a "larger three-year qualitative research." As mentioned above, data/findings on pp. 9-14 are not thick enough to support the main argument of this paper.

More specific comments are in the attached file.

Mengirim balasan dan revisi pertama artikel pada jurnal (27 Maret 2019)

The screenshot shows a Gmail interface on a desktop browser. The browser's address bar displays 'mail.google.com'. The Gmail search bar contains 'ajws@ewha.ac.kr'. The left sidebar shows the 'Compose' button and a list of folders: Inbox, Starred, Snoozed, Important, Sent, Drafts (with a count of 7), Categories, Notes, and Personal. Under 'Meet', there are options for 'New meeting' and 'Join a meeting'. Under 'Hangouts', there are contacts for 'Zulfa', 'Yulida Pangastuti', and 'Caesar Nia'. The main content area displays an email titled 'Submission Confirmation for RAJW-2018-0229R1' from 'Asian Journal of Women's Studies <em@editorialmanager.com>' received on 'Thu, Mar 28, 2019, 10:52 AM'. The email body contains the following text:

Ref.: Ms. No. RAJW-2018-0229R1
Empowerment vs. Meritocracy Discourses in Indonesian Public University: The Case of Female Leaders

Dear Dr Sakhiyya,

Asian Journal of Women's Studies has received your revised submission.

You may check the status of your manuscript by logging onto Editorial Manager at (<https://www.editorialmanager.com/rajw/>).

Kind regards,

Asian Journal of Women's Studies Editorial Office

In compliance with data protection regulations, you may request that we remove your personal registration details at any time. (Use the following URL: <https://www.editorialmanager.com/rajw/login.asp?a=r>) Please contact the publication office if you have any questions.

At the bottom of the email, there are 'Reply' and 'Forward' buttons.

Revised paper

**Empowerment vs. Meritocracy Discourses in Indonesian Public University:
The Case of Female Leaders**

Zulfa Sakhiyya, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia
(<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4183-977X>)

Kirsten Locke, School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education and Social Work,
The University of Auckland, New Zealand (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2089-2793>)

Empowerment vs. Meritocracy Discourses in Indonesian Public University: The Case of Female Leaders

This paper examines the tension between meritocracy and empowerment discourses in Indonesian public universities and its relationship with gender-related leadership representation. The recent emergence of five female rectors signals a change that allows women to progress to leadership roles. We argue that there are two contradictory discourses, i.e. empowerment and meritocracy, which are concurrently visible in progressing through university leadership. The discourse of empowerment promotes gender equity and women's participation in the decision making process in universities in ways that highlight the historically progressive political agenda of empowerment in Indonesian society; whereas the discourse of meritocracy refers to the attribution of achievement to one's individual merit, such as ability and talent. This contradiction is explored through an engagement with interview data to illuminate the changing conditions of leadership representation in the Indonesian university context. This article makes three contributions to the literature. Firstly, it contributes to the underresearched area of literature in higher education in Indonesia. Secondly, it provides a different perspective and analysis on the relationship between gender and higher education by considering both local and international culture. Thirdly, the article offers an argument about the corrosive effect of meritocracy in any university, irrespective of geographical location and local culture.

Keywords: gender, higher education, leadership, empowerment, meritocracy, Indonesia

Introduction

This paper examines the tension between meritocracy and empowerment discourses in Indonesian public universities and its relationship with gender-related leadership representation. The case of women's empowerment in Indonesian higher education and the recent emergence of five female rectors in Indonesian public universities signals a structural change in women's representation at the highest level of university leadership. We use the notion of 'emergence' to describe the ways new subjects emerge in the masculine playing field of Indonesian public universities, despite the absence of systematic efforts of women empowerment in the sector. However, although this emergence might be perceived to have shattered the 'glass ceiling'¹ of gendered leadership in Indonesian public universities, we aim for a more critical stance on the representation of women leaders.

There are two contradictory discourses that are used around the emergence of the female Rectors, i.e. meritocracy and empowerment. We use both discourses to reveal the contradiction within the

emergence of women leaders in Indonesian higher education. This contradiction is situated within broader discourses of the knowledge economy where different and often contradictory discourses are used together against each other (Blackmore & Sawers, 2015; Shore, 2010). We argue that although both discourses are contradictory, they are jostled together in an uncomfortable union. Empowerment in our argument is to refer to the effort and commitment to enable women to participate and represent themselves in the decision making processes in university leadership (Blackburn, 2004; Johnson, 2015; Omwami, 2015; Parawansa, 2005; Wrigley-asante, 2012). The discourse of empowerment has been around in Indonesia, but not yet in the higher education sector. Accompanying this empowerment discourse is the meritocratic discourse that is articulated by those in senior leadership positions, including the female leaders who are the focus of this study. The discourse of empowerment promotes gender equity and women's participation in the decision making process in universities; whereas the meritocracy discourse refers to the attribution of achievement to one's merit, such as ability and talent. Meritocracy is actually a 'myth' where "male support systems are the reality, in the process disadvantaging women who do not take to the former and are excluded by definition from the latter" (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001, p. 162), but it is increasingly valued within the context of the contemporary entrepreneurial university (Blackmore, 2017). These two discourses are inherently contradictory because empowerment discourses work communally, while meritocracy works individually.

The paper begins with the description of the adopted method in this study. The second section traces the trajectory of women's empowerment in Indonesia at a broader societal level. The fifteen-year attempt of gender mainstreaming in Indonesia has enabled both men and women to contribute in decision making in many areas which encourages both genders to work together to address gender inequalities. Despite these efforts, however, the higher education sector, and especially public universities remain a masculine domain. Indonesia is not alone. Thus, the next section presents an overview of the gendered nature of leadership in higher education in a global context in order to understand the global movement and patterns of higher education management and leadership representation which might influence local context. The gap between the political agenda of empowerment and the reality of women's career trajectories leads us to the next section where we argue the importance of researching gender in Indonesian public universities to redress the lack of scholarly engagement with this issue in the literature. The one Indonesian publication

on this issue essentialises and blames the local culture as hampering the progress of equity, while neglecting the progressive agenda carried out in Indonesia. We then explain the emergence of female rectors in Indonesian public universities as a site to analyse the structural and cultural forces that enable career escalation to senior leadership positions. Then, we discuss the contradiction between empowerment and meritocratic discourses women encounter throughout their career progression to university leadership. The final section discusses further the ideas presented in this article and articulating its contributions to the literature.

Method

This article reports a selected sample of findings from a larger three-year qualitative research study in two public universities in Indonesia that are categorised as ‘top-tier’ and ‘middle-tier’ universities. We focus on the top two tiers because they are the traditionally masculine spaces as compared to the other tiers in the Indonesian context. We use the institutional categories developed by the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education in 2016 ([Ministry of Research Technology and Higher Education, 2016](#)). The clustering presents five distinct categories in the Indonesian higher education system. The four criteria used to categorise a total of 3320 higher education institutions are, i.e. research, human resource quality, managerial quality, and student activities ([Ministry of Research Technology and Higher Education, 2015](#)). Out of these four criteria, the defining norm that really distinguishes the institutions is its research orientation.

The top-tier university was established in 1949 after Indonesia gained its independence in 1945. This university’s top-tier status is garnered from its research reputation as one of the oldest and largest public higher education institutions in the country catering for around 50,000 students. The middle-tier university was previously a teacher training college established in 1965, and was then given a wider mandate by improving its status to be a state university in 2000. As compared to the top-tier university, the middle-tier university is relatively smaller having a student cohort of around 35,000. It is defined as middle-tier because of its mixed orientation of research and teaching.

Four semi-structured interviews were undertaken. One interview was of the first female Rector at the top-tier university. The rest of the interviews were undertaken at the same middle-tier university: one interview with the first female Dean, one interview with a senior male

administrator, and one interview with the male Rector. They are considered to be key figures in the production and reproduction of the university's culture and structure (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001). Interviews were undertaken in each of the participant's offices and working contexts. We refer to them according to their position and institutional type in order to maintain at least a degree of confidentiality. This is to de-identify the persons and institutions. However, we cannot guarantee that this attempt would de-identify them because they occupy important positions in public institutions. The interview questions were framed in a semi-structured way so that the interviewer could rely on the uniqueness of the participants' responses to guide and inform the study regarding the efforts taken and challenges faced in climbing up the structural career ladder.

The history of women's empowerment in Indonesian society

Indonesia is a diverse country (Blackburn, 2004) with its population reaches almost 260 million people, and women make up half of the population. The discourse of empowerment in Indonesia has a strong political lineage that came into prominence after the collapse of the authoritarian New Orderⁱⁱ administration in the late 1990s. Empowerment in the Indonesian context is always associated with formal governance through policies that deal explicitly with the position of women in Indonesian society and their equal access and participation in all aspects of society.

During the New Order administration (1966-1998), economic growth and political stability were emphasised. According to the Indonesian feminist writer Suryakusuma, women's roles in society were constructed as wives and mothers whose jobs were to look after the husband and children (1988). Suryakusuma refers to this ideology as *State-Ibuism* – a term coined by Suryakusuma that mixes the English language (State) and Indonesian language (*Ibu-ism*) to mean, literally, State-motherism. According to Suryakusuma, this ideology engineered the definition and social construction of what counted as 'good wives' and 'good mothers' during this political regime. *State-Ibuism* describes the women's role through several political technologies such as women's organisations (called *Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* (PKK) in Indonesian language or Family Welfare Guidance in English), at village level and in public office. Women were obliged to join the monthly meetings to ensure that this conservative construction of womanhood was sustained. These PKK forums and meetings continue today (Newberry, 2006), although they are

no longer compulsory. The Ministry of Women's Roles at this particular level, therefore, was the regulatory body to execute the job of constructing womanhood in Indonesian society. Suryakusuma further argues that women were depoliticised through mobilisation of these motherhood ideologies to support the New Order's Development-economic goals.

Such political engineering strengthens the existing traditional social attitudes and customs that have a legacy in the contemporary Indonesian context of women's subjectivity. Like other Asian cultures, research demonstrates that women are expected to handle all family responsibilities such as keeping the house, raising children and looking after parents (Aiston, 2014; Luke, 2000). Within Indonesian Javanese society, the largest ethnic group in Indonesia, women are even called '*konco wingking*' which means a companion who walks behind someone (Hasibuan-Sedyono, 1998).

The collapse of the New Order in 1998 restored the democratic atmosphere in Indonesia (Budiman, 2011) and challenged the idea of State-*Ibuism*. There were no longer restrictions on freedom of expression and a grass roots movement emerged that brought women's engagement and participation in society into the centre of public policy debates (Rosser, Roesad, & Edwin, 2005). This included the rise of a feminist movement in Indonesia along with the wider feminist movement in Asia (Blackburn, 2004). The administration of President Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001) took the issue of gender equity seriously. He appointed "the first truly feminist Minister for women's affairs" (Blackburn, 2004, p. 107). The Minister carried out an agenda of gender mainstreaming as a form of empowerment. To reflect this agenda, she insisted that her department be renamed 'Ministry for Women's Empowerment' in 1999. The name change of the Ministry aimed to ensure that all government policy became much more gender aware.ⁱⁱⁱ

Simultaneously, women's groups, civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations developed a proposal to introduce a 30 percent quota for female candidates out of the total political party candidates who run for office. *Law number 31 year 2002* that dealt with the establishment and legislation of political parties and *Law number 12 year 2003* for the 2004 General Election were passed to ensure the agenda was maintained through policy structures. The 30 percent quota did not come only from women activists' awareness of the importance of legislation to improve women's representation in politics, but also from an understanding that democracy without the

participation of women is not real democracy (Parawansa, 2005). As a result, women's representation in parliament increased by 11 percent in 2006. The empowerment agenda also partly contributed to the election of the first female Indonesian President, Megawati Soekarnoputri in 2001 – 2004. Despite this victory many argued that the leadership of Megawati Soekarnoputri was more a result of familial factors rather than a real improvement of women's participation in political life (Dzuhayatin & Edwards, 2010), like those of Indira Gandhi Nehru in India, Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, Begum Khalidah Rahman in Bangladesh, Corazon Aquino and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines. The empowerment discourse reflected in representation at policy-making and presidency level has proven successful in opening a space for women to participate and take part in decision making in the political sphere.

The effort of women's empowerment in Indonesian society, however, has not been fully realised in the higher education sector. Public universities are highly bureaucratized institutions that have inherited, intentionally or otherwise, many of the western university's characteristics (Gaus, Sultan, & Basri, 2016; Guggenheim, 2012; Nugroho, 2005; Rakhmani & Siregar, 2016; Rosser, 2016) and its leadership has been dominated by men (Dzuhayatin & Edwards, 2010; Mulia, 2014). Rosdiani Rachim, Coordinator of the Women's Leadership Forum for higher education, is concerned that "while the proportion of women faculty members in Indonesian higher education institution varies between 21% - 72%, only 6% - 20% serve in leadership positions within their institutions" (HELM, 2015, p. 3). So, how does this Indonesian story relate to the global landscape of higher education sector?

Women and senior leadership in the contemporary university

Higher education has historically been the space of male elites (Blackmore, 2002; Read & Kehm, 2016). Contemporary changes of gender representation in both the student and academic staff cohorts have meant that universities have become a more ambiguous site for women. Gender inequity, on the surface, is often considered to be an issue that has been resolved. On the one hand, the university provides possibilities for women through the production and development of postmodernist, postcolonial and feminist critiques; on the other hand, it is also a place of structuring the modernist patriarchal and colonial relations as well as offering potential remedies to this structure (Blackmore, 2002). In other words, universities might be the place for the

intellectual discussion and ferment of current issues and theories of social justice and equity, but the underlying historical structures of patriarchal and colonial relations remain largely unaltered.

Leadership in public universities is identified as a masculine domain dominated by men (Blackmore, 2002; Blackmore & Sawers, 2015). While more women are now entering leadership roles in higher education, the gender imbalance in leadership remains a global issue (Aiston, 2014; Bagilhole, 2012; Collings *et al*, 2011; Davidson & Burke, 2004; Fitzgerald, 2012; Odhiambo, 2011). The increasing awareness of women's underrepresentation at the policy making level does not necessarily impact progress towards equity, especially in the field of higher education leadership.

The statistical overview about the absence of women in senior leadership and management roles in higher education across the world is alarming. In New Zealand, despite being just as qualified as their male counterparts, in 2014 women made up just 28 percent of professors and associate professors (Locke, 2016). In Australia, women represented less than 25 percent of associate as well as full professors, and occupied less than 10 percent of the senior leadership positions (Deputy Vice Chancellors and Vice Chancellors) (Fitzgerald, 2012). Denmark has a similar trend, where the percentage of women professors at a national level recorded in 2006 was 18.4 percent (Ståhle, 2007). In other developed countries, such as the UK, Germany, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Netherlands, these patterns of low representation in both formal and named positions of leadership are repeated (Enders & De Weert, 2009; Read & Kehm, 2016). The gender imbalance occurs in other parts of the world, and it is even worse in developing countries (Dollar & Gatti, 1999), including Indonesia.

The statistics reporting gender representation in Indonesian higher education is as equally concerning as other parts of the world. Although the university student cohort shows a balance in gender representation: 52.7 percent of women and 47.3 percent of men, as well as the ratio of university lecturers: 57.5 percent of men, and 42.5 percent of women; there are only five women rectors in public universities in Indonesia, as compared to 115 men who occupy the rector positions (Directorate of Higher Education database, 2016).

The issue of gender and higher education leadership increasingly becomes an important discussion because higher education is a major site of power struggle, symbolic control, cultural practice and identity formation (Blackmore, 2002; Odhiambo, 2011). More specifically, “senior leadership is the sphere where academic and management identities are negotiated and values around the role of the university are decided” (Blackmore & Sawers, 2015, p. 320). The absence or lack of women in senior leadership and management means that women are under-represented across various mediums of critical decision making, including senate committees, university boards, recruitment panels and at executive levels (Morley, 2013).

However, the current emphasis on performativity in the contemporary universities has permeated a new set of different and often contradictory discourses around universities, such as equity, efficiency and effectiveness (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001; Blackmore & Sawers, 2015; Shore & Wright, 2017). These discourses are jostled against each other in an uncomfortable union. Women are positioned in another ambiguous space – while women are encouraged to move into leadership positions, they are stuck in middle management roles given their stereotyped predominance in caring (Devine, Grummell, & Lynch, 2011). Bagilhole and Goode (2001) argue that despite the equity rhetoric, empowerment for women in universities does not sit easily alongside a meritocratic discourse that refers to “the idea of an individualistic academic career used as a measure of achievement” (2001, p. 161). This article expands this idea of meritocracy and its contradictory relationship with empowerment discourses by taking the case of Indonesian universities.

Against this global landscape of the relationship between gender and higher education, the emergence of female Rectors in Indonesian universities serves as a focal point of entry to analyse the intersection between global forces and local culture. This issue deserves a special attention in this paper and will be explored in the next section.

The emergence of women leaders in Indonesian higher education

The changing nature of gendered leadership in Indonesian higher education is characterised by the emergence of five female rectors in the public universities (see appendix – Table 1). The profiles

of these five rectors are available on Wikipedia as well as publication in national newspapers. The biographies often depict them as ‘inspiring and successful’ women who are able to climb the career ladder in the traditionally masculine space of the public universities.

There are at least three factors which contributed to the emergence of women entering senior positions in Indonesian public universities: the internationalisation trend, the increasing number of women professors in the academia, and the momentum of women’s empowerment in higher education provided by the empowerment discourse that has been a policy focus across all aspects of society since the New Order administration’s collapse. As advancing international partnership becomes a focal point for the institution, the emerging pattern of those female rectors and deans are of women with a global engagement trajectory and international networks. This global engagement role used to be dominated by males (Blackmore & Sawers, 2015) assuming that flexibility and mobility traditionally characterise men over women (Devine et al., 2011).

As an important pathway to formal academic leadership positions, there has been an increasing number of women professors in Indonesian universities. In 2016, women make up 19 percent of professors, roughly double the number in 2000. This means more women are qualified to occupy the senior leadership positions and roles. The current regulation issued by the Ministry of Research and Technology and Higher Education on rector appointments lists the minimum qualification of a rector candidate as a doctoral degree (Minister of Research and Technology and Higher Education, 2016). However, many public universities require or prefer to have a rector who holds the title of Professor. In addition, the rector is elected through the senate forum where professors from each faculty gather to screen, vote and inaugurate. The senate holds 65 percent of the vote, and the Minister of Research and Technology and Higher Education holds 35 percent. With this structural procedure, academic leadership is strongly correlated with existing structural leadership in public universities. This procedure might seem like a democratic process because the majority stakeholder is the senate. However, the vote is often distributed which gives the minister a lot of concentrated power to choose who *he* likes (this minister has always been a ‘he’).

This ‘democratic’ process means that the playing field is rigged. This condition does not only occur in senior leadership positions, but also in academic positions. Current statistical data of

academic positions throughout the country confirms Fitzgerald's (2012) argument that women mostly occupy the 'basement' rather than the 'tower' within the university structure. The statistical data of academic position by gender is displayed in the appendix (Table 2).

Since 2010 there has been a shared awareness that despite the fifteen-year attempt of women's empowerment, women have been under-represented in higher education leadership. One by one, women have begun to enter senior leadership positions. Such phenomena contributed to the increasing awareness of the need to create women's networks for higher education leadership, initiated by woman activists in higher education and non-governmental organisations. This is the 'momentum' where women's empowerment in higher education was created. However, despite this momentum, the contradiction between empowerment and meritocratic discourses remain problematic for women's career trajectories.

Articulating the contradictions between empowerment and meritocratic discourses: Introducing the participants

This section highlights the contradictory discourses of empowerment and meritocracy that are concurrently visible in the practice of leadership in the Indonesian higher education sector. This contradiction is articulated in various ways by our interviewees. They concern with the image of university leadership (being attributed to male characteristics), the neutralisation of gender with more emphasis on competence and serendipity, as well as the assumption that only now are women ready for meritocracy. These comments made by our interviewees are situated under a broader contradiction of empowerment and meritocracy. The articulations demonstrate the tension between the discourse of empowerment and meritocracy at play in the language of those who occupy senior leadership positions in Indonesian universities.

The image of leadership: heroic vs the details

As an example of the contradictions in action, one of our participants articulated the tensions between the discourses of meritocracy and empowerment in stark reality. This participant is the first female rector for the top tier-university (R1 will be used throughout). She is an internationally and nationally renowned scholar in a discipline dominated by men. As the rector, this woman is at the pinnacle of academic leadership and has clearly benefitted from the historical discourse of

empowerment. The interview was undertaken over a period of six hours to accommodate the various meetings that were occurring at the same time. While waiting in the reception room for the interview, the first author was able to witness first-hand the hectic context of this women's role. The interview had to be undertaken in three separate 'chunks' so that all the other activities could take place.

When asked in the interview about the kinds of challenges women faced in leadership roles in the university, the Rector highlighted the patriarchal culture of Indonesia as perhaps a barrier to women's participation at this level. She replied, "Culture might have its effect... our culture is patriarchal... but I think the opportunities are there [for women]". This was followed by an articulation of the kinds of leadership traits she believed women in the university context in Indonesia needed:

It's just that women are more meticulous, detailed, and easily moved. Sometimes leadership traits are not like that. If I go into too much detail, I will be reminded [by my staff] that leaders do not 'do' details. (Interview with R1)

In this quote, the Rector is identifying a stereotype of women being particularly focused on the minutiae instead of the big visionary ideas expected of a leader in her position. She identifies a tendency to drill down into detail, and the way that this skill is not necessarily valued by her staff. She continues,

Well, many problems occur when we forget the details. So there are many contradictions in the concept of leadership, in that leaders do not handle the details and instead focus on the big picture. The important dimension to leadership is to know how to envision and give direction. (Interview with R1)

Here she demonstrates that she identifies the contradiction inherent to expected leadership traits. What is important in this statement, is her articulation of two kinds of leaders that she somehow has to straddle. She is aware that as the rector, she is responsible for a type of 'heroic' leadership (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001; Locke & Wright, 2017). It is about articulating a vision that is conceptual and broad, but has the power and capacity to galvanise people to follow a shared direction about the future of the university. This is about articulating a strong 'muscular' notion of

leadership that is bold and certain (Blackmore, 2017). “Women can do that”, she asserts, “but perhaps because we are perceived as ‘soft’ we are not expected to be bold”. She, however, sees the necessity of being *both* bold and detailed, and it is here that we can see the tension between the discourse of empowerment and meritocracy at play.

Throughout the six hours it took to conduct the interview, the meticulous attention to detail this woman paid demonstrated her approach to detailed leadership. The first author was privy to many episodes throughout the day where the participant needed to sign and approve various documents that were passed her way. Unlike the other male Rectors the first author interviewed and observed, this female Rector read and asked questions about every document before signing off approval. Her attention to detail was so renowned that even before the interview took place, the first author was warned by her staff that she would pay attention to every detail and to expect questions that dealt with the clarity of the research that was being undertaken. This Rector, unlike her male counterparts, never lost sight of the tiniest detail. Her reference to details not being important to senior leadership roles was not performed by her own leadership approach. While articulating the attention to detail as not needed, she however did highlight the way that details were indeed needed if problems were to be minimised. As has been pointed out above, she warned that “many problems do occur” when details were not taken into account.

For this female Rector, there was no room for error. She had to be ‘both’ visionary and strong, and exceptionally well prepared through attention to detail. While her male counterparts could clearly afford to ignore the detail, she was aware that she was judged by different and more demanding criteria, even despite her position as a university elite. The necessity to be all kinds of leader rolled into one, for this Rector, meant that the academic labour that she performed as witnessed by the interviewer and as clearly evident in everything she engaged in, was significant. It was as if she knew that she could never be perceived as not knowing everything, whilst simultaneously articulating and heralding the big visionary statements of the university. Here empowerment is clearly on show—she is empowered to be both detailed and visionary but she also articulated the ambivalence of the discourse of meritocracy in that for her, she is judged on a wider platform than her male colleagues. The academic labour involved in her leadership position is significantly more than for her male equivalents. Being judged on her merits, as meritocracy would have it, means

that her criteria for 'merit' is anything but egalitarian and is instead highly gendered. She has to be beyond reproach.

All about 'competence', not gender

Another contradiction between empowerment and meritocracy is manifested in our interviews in ways that neutralise the issue of gender by emphasising individual competence. This contradiction is found in the ambivalent view the interviewees held on the empowerment they have benefited from when positioned in the context of one individual's career trajectory. The first female Rector in the top-tier university acknowledges a form of empowerment she received prior to becoming the rector through the sponsorship of her high powered colleague who supported her candidacy for the rector position. However while simultaneously acknowledging this discourse of empowerment that could have potentially benefitted her and contributed to her being granted the position of rector, she seems to gloss over its importance in her own case. She recounts that:

The previous Rector had a concern that one of the vice rectors should be female. This concern was then taken up by the senate and the University Board of Trustees... there were only two women in the Board of Trustees... Then to run for the rector election, gender did not matter. It was all about competence. (Interview with R1)

This comment is revealing because it demonstrates the extent to which this woman has 'brought into' the discourse of meritocracy over a more shared vision of empowerment through the support of colleagues. In the end, she seems to be saying, gender was irrelevant because she was simply the most outstanding candidate for rector. We are not necessarily making a judgement on this, but we are interested in the way that she shifts perspective from the earlier recognition of the different criteria to which she is judged by.

The acknowledgement of empowerment by simultaneously highlighting one's own merit demonstrates the tension between meritocracy and empowerment. A more extreme version of this is completely ignoring the empowerment process and gendered perspective. This view is shared by our second interviewee who is the first female Dean in the middle-tier university (D2 will be used throughout). This interview was conducted without the same interruptions as the previous participant and as such, this interviewee had the space and time to include many personal anecdotes

and stories of her background and engagement with academia. Like the previous participant, this woman's field of research and expertise is in a traditionally male-dominated field. This interviewee is important for her refusal to acknowledge gender as important in her career trajectory alongside a strong belief in the notion of meritocracy and a very individualised articulation of her career trajectory. When asked about gender and its relation to any career obstacles or challenges, she responds with the following:

For me, the main challenge is achievement, not gender. I challenge myself to achieve better, not to defeat men... I do not think in simple gender binaries. (Interview with D2).

Serendipity

While there might be some truth that gender binaries are too simplistic regarding challenges to achieve senior leadership position in universities, her statement is a gesture of overlooking this issue. Instead, this participant aligns to Bagilhole and Goode's (2001) analysis of career 'serendipity' and the way that competence outshines any gendered challenges.

It's serendipity. I myself have never experienced those challenges. I'm not sure if this is because of me or others. Since my undergraduate until today I have never encountered any situations that are gendered. (Interview with D2).

Again, this interview reveals the participant's position that gender is irrelevant. The fact that she may have received support from senior colleagues in advancing her position has also been ignored. Serendipity is, thus, the non-acknowledgement of the relationship between networks and empowerment processes as crucial elements of one's career progress. The non-acknowledgement of empowerment is an extreme version of the contradiction between meritocracy and empowerment occurring in universities: while the empowerment discourse has been articulated in the university, meritocracy still dominates the process of career advancement to senior leadership in the narrative articulations of the participants.

Women are now ready for 'meritocracy'?

Another contradiction is articulated in the readiness towards women's engagement with the discourse of meritocracy as can be demonstrated in an interview of a male senior administrator in the same middle-tier university (A2 will be used throughout). In terms of structural position, this

male participant holds several strategic positions, i.e. as the Head of the International Office as well as the key advisor for the rector and vice rector for international affairs. On behalf of the rector of the middle-tier university (who is a man), our interviewee explains that this Rector actually encourages women to lead, but it is only recently that there have been enough ‘qualified’ women available in the university. **There has been an assumption that competence has already been possessed by women and men who are potential leaders.**

Our (male) Rector deliberately paved the way to enable women to lead in his era. However, it also coincides with the era where now qualified female leaders are available at our university. So, it is a combination between intention and availability (Interview with A2)

This excerpt suggests the prominence of meritocracy despite a declaration of the ‘intention’ of empowerment. This means that although the discourse of empowerment has permeated through universities, the discourse of meritocracy towards women that requires women to be more individualistic and competitive still receives precedence. Our interview with the male Rector of this middle-tier university (R2 will be used throughout) confirms the dominating myth of meritocracy. The male Rector explains the reasons for the appointment of the first female Dean in the following:

First, because the new Dean speaks English very well. Secondly, the person has a bold commitment to knowledge and scholarship. Thirdly, habitat recognition. We can be a centre of excellence if we have an international community that recognise us. She is internationally recognised and affiliated to international professional associations. (Interview with R2)

The Rector’s comments on the first female Dean are concerned with her individual merit and competence. He describes the cosmopolitan nature of the Dean proven by her global orientation, the way she is acutely attuned to contemporary global realities and is skilful at engaging with other global citizens. The statement articulates the prominent myth of meritocracy over empowerment. Only when women are perceived to be ready for meritocracy, can they gain ‘power’, irrespective of the empowerment agenda. This contradiction not only results in confusion, but also ignores the rigged playing field.

Discussion and Contributions

Our research findings, therefore, stand in contrast with the only study in the context of women leadership in Indonesian higher education. The previous study on women's leadership in Islamic higher education in Indonesia (Dzuhayatin & Edwards, 2010) reveals that the problem of accessing senior leadership roles in public higher education is not about competence or merit, but more about specifically Indonesian cultural barriers. They highlight patriarchal culture as the major barrier in Indonesian gendered universities. Our argument avoids this essentialisation of local culture as the only force that hampers women aspiring to higher education leadership. Such a view runs the risk of essentialising local culture into fixed characteristics that ignore the more progressive developments that the local culture may have undertaken, and also negates the importance of other pertinent cultural factors (Blackburn, 2004), in this case the myth of meritocracy (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001).

We instead argue there is an inherent contradiction that is played out between the encounter of a specifically Indonesian culture (the remnants of *State-Ibuism*) that encompasses traditional gender roles, the progressive agenda of mainstreaming and empowerment pursued after the collapse of the New Order regime, and the inherited Western patriarchal culture of the modern university that emphasises individualism. The individualised meritocratic discourse contradicts the collective and progressive elements of the empowerment discourse that has gained momentum in contemporary Indonesia, hampering the more progressive process in favour of meritocratic notions of individual talent and competence (Bagilhole & Goode, 2001; White, Bagilhole, & Riordan, 2012). Our data show insights into the effects of these contradictions. Although the discourse of empowerment has permeated through universities as illustrated by some of our interviewee comments, the discourse of meritocracy remains dominant in universities and seems to be gaining momentum. This is evident in the comments our participants make about the perceived 'masculine' image of university leadership, the neutralisation of gender with more emphasis on competence, as well as the assumption that only now are women ready for meritocracy. These articulations offer a clear illustration of meritocracy that gets in the way of women's career progression.

Our discussion therefore makes three contributions to the literature. Firstly, it contributes to the underresearched area of literature in higher education in Indonesia. The only existing research in the Indonesian context (Dzuhayatin & Edwards, 2010) even maintains the mainstream

deterministic explanation of gender disparity and locates the problem in local culture. This concern brings us to the second contribution. While there has been a substantive body of research that discusses the position of women in the academia both in Western (Blackmore & Sawers, 2015; Fitzgerald, 2012; Locke & Wright, 2017; Wrigley-asante, 2012) and developing countries (Aiston, 2014; Morley, 2013), we provide a different perspective and analysis on the relationship between gender and higher education leadership by equally considering both local and international culture. Our data demonstrate that while the local culture (traditional patriarchal culture and remnants of State-*Ibuism*) exists, the individualistic meritocracy inherited from the structure and culture of Western university dominates. Both cultures exist and are played out in the contemporary universities in Indonesia. Thirdly, even if the context is Indonesia, the article offers an argument about the corrosive effect of meritocracy in any university, irrespective of geographical location and local cultures.

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Appendix

Table 1. The Profiles of Five Women Rectors in Indonesian Public Universities

Name	Leadership Period	Home University	City, Province
Prof. Badia Perizade	2007-2011 & 2011-2015	Sriwijaya University	Palembang, South Sumatra
Prof. Tian Belawati	2009-2013 & 2013-2017	Open University	South Tangerang, Banten
Prof. Dwikorita Karnawati	2014-2017	Gajah Mada University	Jogjakarta, Central Java
Prof. Dwia Aries Tina	2014-2018	Hasanuddin University	Makassar, South Sulawesi
Prof. Ellen Joan Kumaat	2014-2018	Sam Ratulangi University	Manado, North Sulawesi

Table 2. Statistics of academic position in Indonesian higher education by gender per 2016 (source: Database of the Directorate of Higher Education, Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education)

Academic Position	Women	Men
Professor	905	3,864
Senior Lecturer	10,451	20,038
Lecturer	19,835	29,523
Teaching Assistant	20,930	25,908

Notes

Pemberitahuan manuscript diterima untuk publikasi 18 April 2019

The screenshot shows a Gmail interface on a desktop browser. The browser's address bar displays 'mail.google.com'. The Gmail search bar contains the text 'asian journal'. On the left sidebar, the 'Compose' button is highlighted, and the 'Inbox' is selected. The main content area displays an email from '(Asian Journal of Women's Studies) Your submission has been accepted' received on Thursday, April 18, 2019, at 12:47 PM. The email body contains the following text:

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Asian Journal of Women's Studies <em@editorialmanager.com>
to me

CC: ajws@ewha.ac.kr

Apr 18, 2019

Ref.: Ms. No. RAJW-2018-0229R1
Empowerment vs. Meritocracy Discourses in Indonesian Public University: The Case of Female Leaders
Asian Journal of Women's Studies

Dear Dr Sakhyya,

We are pleased to tell you that the attached final version of your work has now been accepted for publication in Asian Journal of Women's Studies.

It was accepted on Apr 18, 2019.

Thank you for submitting your work to this journal.

With kind regards,

AJWS Editors
Asian Journal of Women's Studies

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The screenshot shows a Gmail interface on a desktop browser. The browser's address bar displays 'mail.google.com'. The Gmail search bar contains the email address 'ajws@ewha.ac.kr'. The left sidebar shows the 'Compose' button and a list of folders: 'Inbox', 'Starred', 'Snoozed', 'Important', 'Sent', 'Drafts' (with a count of 7), 'Categories', 'Notes', and 'Personal'. Below these are 'Meet' options for 'New meeting' and 'Join a meeting', and 'Hangouts' with a list of contacts including 'Zulfa', 'Yulida Pangastuti', and 'Caesar Nia'. The main content area displays an email titled 'Submitted Corrections for article RAJW 1610210' from 'RAJW-production@journals.tandf.co.uk' dated 'Sat, Apr 27, 2019, 3:29 PM'. The email body contains the following text:

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The image shows a Gmail interface on a desktop browser. The search bar at the top contains the text "routledge author update empowerment". The left sidebar shows the Gmail navigation menu with categories like "Compose", "Inbox", "Starred", "Snoozed", "Important", "Sent", "Drafts", "Categories", "Meet", and "Hangouts". The main content area displays an email from Taylor & Francis Online. The email header includes the Taylor & Francis Online logo and the text "The online platform for Taylor & Francis Group content". The body of the email is addressed to "Dear Zulfa Sakhiyya," and informs her that her article, "Empowerment vs. meritocracy discourses in Indonesian public universities: The case of female leaders," published in the Asian Journal of Women's Studies, Volume 25 Issue 2, is now available on the Taylor & Francis Online platform. It highlights that she has permanent, free access to the final published version through her "Authorized Works" and provides a link to her eprint. The email also mentions that authors receive 50 free online copies of their articles to share with their networks. A small image of the journal cover for the Asian Journal of Women's Studies (AJWS) is shown on the right side of the email. The email concludes by encouraging the author to share their work and provides social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and Email.

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