



Journal of Social and Political Sciences

Dewi, M. A., & Rachmawati, I. (2022). Joko Widodo Views on Women's Interests Before and During the Pandemic Based on Social-Media. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 5(4), 1-13.

ISSN 2615-3718

DOI: 10.31014/aior.1991.05.04.373

The online version of this article can be found at:

<https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/>

Published by:
The Asian Institute of Research

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Joko Widodo Views on Women's Interests Before and During the Pandemic Based on Social-Media

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Abstract

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had many impacts on Indonesian women. As one of the pilot countries for the HeForShe project campaigned by UN Women, it is interesting to analyze how the President of Indonesia responds to this phenomenon. Many studies focus on the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on women. But, there is a lack of research on how the government responds to women's interests during the Pandemic compared to the situation before the Pandemic. Using a qualitative approach, this study analyses how the President of Indonesia views women's interests before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Two official social-media of the President of Republic Indonesia Joko Widodo: The Official Twitter Account of the President of Indonesia @jokowi and The Official Facebook Account of The President of Indonesia @Jokowi · Minat are used as the primary data sources. The findings indicate that before the COVID-19 Pandemic, President Joko Widodo gave significant attention to strategic women's interests such as subordination and gender equality. But the situation changed during the Pandemic. The President views the fulfillment of daily needs such as food and health as more urgent for women in the COVID-19 Pandemic than strategic interests. This study highlights that in a crisis, the focus of the government policy is safe for the people first (women and men) to fulfill their basic needs. The gender equality agenda is becoming marginalized.

Keywords: Indonesian Government, Women's Interest, COVID-19 Pandemic, Social Media

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 Pandemic has brought many shifts in the national agenda of countries in the world. The main priority is on health issues, namely handling COVID-19 cases to decrease the number, providing health services for COVID-19 sufferers, and providing economic and social assistance to communities affected by the Pandemic. In Indonesia, the pandemic risks are reversing the country's progress towards poverty reduction and human development. Many families are experiencing economic hardship, marginal groups are experiencing barriers to

accessing health services, parents and children face challenges related to distance learning, and women face greater responsibility because children learn from home. A survey conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Economic Development (PROSPERA), and Smeru Research Institute reported the impact of pandemics on jobs, small businesses, food security, health access, education, and social safety nets. The report also evaluates the impact of pandemics on households with children, women, and vulnerable groups, namely people with disabilities. More than 85 percent of Indonesians have received government social assistance from Indonesia's National Economic Recovery Program. Half of the families (50.8 percent) receive cash transfer assistance. The poorest households receive the most help. A total of 90 percent received at least one form of assistance (cash and in goods), and 62 percent received cash assistance. Nearly three-quarters of households (74.3 percent) said they have lower income compared to January 2020. Families with children (75.3 percent) and those living in urban areas (78.3 percent) lost income. In addition, 12.6 percent of families surveyed said they should struggle to feed their families (UNICEF, 2021).

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had many impacts on Indonesian women. COVID-19 has increased the burden of housework, and women should bear more. Water and food needs are increasing due to COVID-19. School closures have also shifted children's educational responsibilities to parents, especially women. According to the survey, 39% of women and 29% of men spend more time teaching their children at home. COVID-19 also resulted in the vulnerability of women in the labor market, especially informal workers: 36% of women in informal jobs experienced a decrease in income, compared to 30% of men in informal jobs. The impact of the lockdown also further makes women vulnerable, especially those who are married, low income, and aged 31-40 (UN Women, 2020).

It is interesting to analyze how the states respond to this phenomenon. Moreover, Indonesia is one of the pilot countries for the HeForShe project campaigned by UN Women. In 2016 President Joko Widodo was elected as one of the HeForShe ambassadors from the UN Agency for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (UN Women) through the program "Impact 10x10x10". The program engages world leaders, companies, and universities to mainstream gender justice. The world leaders, including U.S. President Barack Obama, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and President Joko Widodo, have committed to fighting for gender equality and ensuring equal opportunities. They conducted a national campaign on women's rights. Joko Widodo has committed to three measures to improve women's lives, including achieving at least 30 percent of women's representation in parliament, reducing maternal mortality and improving access to reproductive health services, as well as ending violence against women and girls (Yulius, 2016).

Many policies have been taken to handle the COVID-19 Pandemic. But a survey conducted by CARE (2020) found that not all of the countries surveyed comprehensively dealt with COVID-19 concerning gender aspects. Of the seven countries — nearly 25% of the sample — CARE found no evidence of gender-dimensional policies. The majority of countries surveyed — 76% — have given at least one gender-specific policy commitment but still don't have specific measures to mitigate the impact of a pandemic that weighs more on women. Meanwhile, funding commitments and state policies vary in scope and scale, and countries' policy commitments also vary.

Women are a group that feels the impact of COVID-19 in the community (UN Women, 2020a). The lockdown policy affects many formal sector industries: travel, tourism, restaurants, and food production. These industries employ the majority of women. Women also dominate the informal sector in markets and agriculture fields worldwide. In developed and developing countries, many informal sector jobs — domestic workers, babysitters — are done mainly by women. The majority of them have no health insurance and do not have a social safety net. At the same time, women usually shoulder a more significant burden of care. On average, women do three times more homework caring for children than men, even in the days before the Pandemic. Female-headed households are more vulnerable. Women are also vulnerable to health safety. It is difficult for women to access maternal health services, and contraception can become impaired. In addition, most frontline health workers — primarily nurses — are women, so the risk of infection is very high.

UN Women recommends actions governments can take to address these issues: First, ensure that the needs of

female nurses and doctors during the task of addressing pandemics are more attentive, talk to caregivers, listen and meet their needs. Second, ensure that hotlines and services for all victims of domestic violence are prioritized as "essential services" and remain open. Law enforcement officials need to be more sensitive and responsive to victims. Third, the bailout and stimulus package should include social protection measures that reflect an understanding of women's particular circumstances and economic recognition of care. And fourth, leaders must involve women in decision-making (UN Women 2020a, 2020b).

All these efforts are related to women's interests. The women's interests encompass issues linked to women's bodies, sexuality, the nature of giving birth, and the position of women in the public sphere, especially concerning the labor market and welfare state policy. This article focuses on analyzing how President Joko Widodo viewed women's interests before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic based on President Joko Widodo statements on the official account of Twitter and Facebook on issues concerning women's interests. Many papers describe the impact of COVID-19 on women and gender relations. Likewise, there are many studies on government policies to deal with the COVID-19. But it rarely analyzes how the government framed the women's interest in the Pandemic compared to the situation before the Pandemic. This paper aims to fill the gap in government policy and gender studies by looking at how the state responds to the global agenda of gender equality in a normal situation and how the COVID-19 Pandemic affects the focus of policies carried out by the government.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative method to discover the issues that developed during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia and what was highlighted from the case. The primary data sources were The Official Twitter Account of the President of Indonesia @jokowi (<https://twitter.com/Jokowi>) and The Official Facebook Account of The President of Indonesia @Jokowi · Interests (<https://www.facebook.com/Jokowi>). The Official Twitter Account @jokowi joined in September 2011, with 58 following and 15.7 M followers. In comparison, The Official Facebook Account @Jokowi · Minat has 10,561,242 followers with 10,229,564 likes. The data collected are the tweets and statements of the President related to the handling of COVID-19, views on the role of women, and gender relations amid the COVID-19 Pandemic. These two sources of social-media data are used because they are complementary, and not all posts on Twitter are equally uploaded on Facebook and vice versa. The account chosen is the official account of Indonesian President Joko Widodo because his statement reflects the government's voice. Joko Widodo is also one of the country's leaders who have the mandate to succeed in international programs, namely a campaign to support men for gender equality programs known as HeForShe.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has prompted governments of various countries to take policies to overcome the impact of the Pandemic. Lockdown policies, providing economic subsidies to free vaccines, have been implemented. However, research in several countries shows that the government's lockdown policies or financial subsidies are not always effective in overcoming the effects of the Pandemic, especially the socioeconomic impacts (Awoveso & Irabor, 2020; Elkhachen et al., 2020; Sharma & Paul, 2020). The success in fighting the COVID-19 Pandemic is rooted in several factors. First is the government's ability to carry out a narrative campaign that a pandemic is a war (Hapal, 2021). Second is the existence of domestic and transnational administrative cooperation, involving authorities at various levels to complement domestic, regional, and global governance policies (Alarcon et al., 2020). Third, the policy to wear masks as a disease prevention measure and expand the production capacity of masks. Fourth the use of big data and technology to improve the effectiveness of disease prevention and detection measures. And fifth, strong state-of-the-community relations that support transparency, communication, and collaboration (Yen, 2020; Letouze, 2020).

For women, the Covid-19 pandemic affects many aspects of life. From the health aspect, the Covid-19 pandemic causes stress for pregnant women and nursing mothers (Mortazavi & Ghardashi, 2021; Kotlar et.al, 2021; Martins-Filho, Santos & Santos, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic has also affected socio-economic aspects. The impacts felt by working women and their families due to job losses include growing debt, heightened emotions and the increasing workload on women (Azeez & Negi 2021, Gakhar & Jagga, 2021). The negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on health and economic conditions is more severely felt by women than men (Peck, 2021; Churchill,

2021). These findings prove that the Covid-19 pandemic has implications for women's interests.

Some studies differentiate between women's practical interests and strategic interests (Molyneux, 1985; UNESCO, 2003). Practical interests refer to fulfilling daily living needs such as water, shelter, and food. At the same time, strategic interests refer to fundamental issues related to the subordination of women (or although rarely, it can also be men) and gender injustice. Strategic gender interests are long-term, immaterial, and require structural changes in society about women's status and equality. These changes include the availability of laws guaranteeing equal rights, reproductive choices, and increased participation of women in decision-making. According to Molyneux practical interests arise from the concrete conditions of women in the gender division of labor (1985, p. 233). In contrast, strategic interests derive from analyzing women's subordination (1985, p. 232).

But what is meant by women's interests depends on the context and the people who interpret it (Beckwith, 2011). Women's interests include life chances for women and their choices for action, preferences, and freedom of movement, among other alternatives. Interest is not part of the essentialist understanding of "women" as a group but also the recognition of the state of women's lives and the appreciation of women's opportunities to improve their abilities and choices as human beings to act and improve their life chances.

The fulfillment of women's interests depends on how the country's leaders communicate socioeconomic issues to the public. There is a fundamental difference between male and female leaders in looking at economic and social welfare issues during pandemic times and how they communicate them to the public (Dada et al., 2021). All leaders recognize the economic impact of pandemics, but female leaders are more likely to pay attention to the effect on a micro-scale, on individuals and families.

This research studies how President Joko Widodo viewed women's interests before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Some steps have been conducted. First, examine the statements of President Joko Widodo on Twitter and Facebook from 2016-2019 (before the Pandemic) using the keyword "women." Second, analyze the general statement during the Pandemic. And third, study the selected material for statements that reflect or relate to women's interests from April 2020 to July 2021. The reasoning is that April 2020 became the first month after President Joko Widodo declared that COVID-19 infected Indonesia in March 2020. Despite this, April is a meaningful month when the Indonesian women celebrate Kartini Day (a women heroine of Indonesia that struggled for women's rights in the Dutch colonial period). The tweets or statements of President Joko Widodo on Twitter and Facebook using the keyword "women" from March 2016-December 2019 are used to compare the content regarding "women" before and during the COVID-19.

And finally, the statements posted on the two social-media: Twitter and Facebook, were manually coded based on the content and divided into two categories: general issues and woman-specific issues. The next stage is to compare posts related to women's interests before and during the Pandemic to determine if there are differences in the focus of the President's attention. Data analysis was carried out descriptively by interpreting data and synthesizing it with relevant theories.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The View of Women's Interest before the COVID-19 Pandemic

Throughout 2016-2019 gender equality statements reflecting the strategic women's interest were posted by President Joko Widodo on his official Facebook. President Joko Widodo made posts about women's interests on social-media at a certain momentum, especially in commemorating World Women's Day March 1, Kartini Day April 21, and Mother's Day December 22. But there are also posts related to the interests of women beyond that momentum (see table 1).

Table 1: Posts about Women in President Joko Widodo's Official Facebook Account 2016-2019

No	Date	Context	Content
1	March 8, 2016	Commemorating International Women's Day	Happy International Women's Day. The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women cannot be delayed any longer. Women are the pillars of the country. The future of Indonesia is also supported by Indonesian women.
2	March 8, 2018	Commemorating International	Women's Day Happy International Women's Day. It's time for women to be more active in their work and get the right to live a peaceful, prosperous, and more just life
4	December 22, 2018	Commemorating Mother's Day	for mothers and amazing women who have fought to raise the spirit of nationalism, fight for justice for women and the nation, who constantly remind the unity and diversity of Indonesia, I wish you a happy Mother's Day on December 22.
5	March 5, 2019	Receiving a Visit from Taruna Nusantara High School students	in Indonesia, women have the same role and are seen in the same position as men. There is no difference... In this country, the role of women is highly valued and recognized.
6	March 8, 2019	Commemorating International Women's Day	For women in Indonesia and around the world, it's time to fight together to better humanity. <u>#balanceforbetter</u>
7	April 21, 2019	Commemorating Kartini Day	For Indonesian women, mothers of the nation: let's continue to inflame the fighting spirit of Ibu Kartini. The fighting spirit of building family, community, nation, and advance the next generation.
8	December 22, 2019	Commemorating Mother's Day The	The face of Indonesia today and in the future is a face that is also shaped by mothers women who have broad access and opportunities... They are empowered in the economic, political, social, and social fields... Women empowered is a form of advanced Indonesia.

Source: Official Facebook Account of President of The Republic of Indonesia
<https://www.facebook.com/page/390581294464059/search/?q=perempuan>

The contents of President Joko Widodo's uploads on social-media focus on the struggle for gender equality and women's rights. When commemorating International Women's Day, the President stated in his upload: 1) The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women cannot be delayed any longer, 2) It is time for women to be more active in their work and, 3) to get the rights to a peaceful, prosperous and more just life. This statement confirms President Joko Widodo's commitment to supporting 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) programs which include 1) no poverty, 2) zero hunger, 3) good health and well-being, 4) quality education, 5) gender equality, 6) clean water and sanitation, 7) affordable and clean energy, 8) decent work and economic growth, 9) industry, innovation, and infrastructure, 10) reduced inequalities, 11) sustainable cities and communities, 12) responsible consumption and production, 13) climate action, 14) life below water, 15) life on land, 16) peace, justice, and strong institutions, and 17) partnerships for the goals (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>).

Gender equality is one of the main concerns of President Joko Widodo. Moreover, in 2016 President Joko Widodo was elected as one of the country's leaders who became ambassadors for the United Nations HeforShe program. This program encourages countries in the world to improve gender equality. In this program, Indonesia is committed to improving gender equality through the involvement of women in parliament and government, reducing maternal mortality, increasing access to health, and ending violence against women (<https://www.heforshe.org/en/node/75>). In uploads on Facebook commemorating International Women's Day on March 8, 2019, the President displays the hashtag #balanceforbetter. President Joko Widodo also expressed his pride in the role of mothers and women in an upload commemorating Mother's Day, December 22, 2018. Indonesian women are described as mothers and remarkable girls who raise the spirit of nationalism, fight for justice for women and the nation, and remind Indonesia's unity and diversity. President Joko Widodo praised Indonesian women who have contributed roles in various fields for the development of Indonesia. They are not weak creatures but are empowered women who have a strategic role in determining the face of Indonesia in the future.

President Joko Widodo statements emphasized women's rights, equal roles between men and women, respect for women, and recognition of women's abilities in various fields. These statements were conveyed infirm and repeated sentences at every moment of commemoration of World Women's Day, Kartini Day, and Mother's Day. The President defines the situation that there is a strategic interest that must be fought for or women, namely gender equality. The statements align with Indonesia's commitment as an agent of HeforShe's campaign to achieve gender equality.

3.2 General Issues Regarding Pandemic on Social-media

Since the COVID-19 Pandemic, President Joko Widodo's post on the official account of the President of Indonesia has been dominated by calls to follow health protocols, efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and campaigns for vaccines. Other posts related to government policies to overcome community economic difficulties due to pandemics.

The first case of COVID-19 appeared in Indonesia on March 2, 2020. Since then, the number of infected people has continued to grow. In just a month, the number of infected people has reached 1,677 people, 103 people recovered, and 157 patients died (kemkes.go.id). Until early August 2021, the number of people infected with COVID-19 in Indonesia reached 3.69 million people, 109 thousand of whom died. This number puts Indonesia at number 14 in the world (worldometers).

To suppress the spread of COVID-19, the Indonesian government has taken several policies. In April 2020 President Joko Widodo established a policy of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (*Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar*/PSBB). This policy is regulated in Government Regulation Number 21 of 2020, signed by the President. Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) are rules regarding prohibited activities during the corona outbreak. When the PSBB is enforced, the community must limit their work, study, worship activities outside the home and replace them with activities at home (CNN Indonesia, 2020). Through the Minister of Law and Human Rights, the Government of Indonesia, Yasonna Laoly, has issued a temporary ban on entry or transit in Indonesia for foreigners. This policy reduces the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19) in Indonesia.

Large-Scale Social Restriction Policy due to The Covid-19 Pandemic has limited various activities, including worship. Religious organizations such as Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, Indonesian Ulema Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia/MUI) issued Fatwa Number 14 of 2020 regarding the organization of worship in the COVID-19 outbreak situation. In a condition where the spread of COVID-19 is uncontrolled in a life-threatening area, Muslims are not allowed to hold Friday prayers until the condition returns to normal and replace Friday prayers with Zuhr prayers in their residences (Muala, 2021). Some religious leaders support the government's policy to pray at home, but others reject the closure of mosques. President Joko Widodo posted tweets about worship during the Pandemic: "The global Covid-19 Pandemic is still ongoing during the month of Ramadan. So while fasting, let's keep trying to break the chain of the spread of this global virus by living a healthy life, worshipping at home, keeping a distance from others, and praying that this Pandemic will soon pass" (Widodo,

2020a).

The tricky thing to handle was prohibiting people from mudik (a tradition for going home to the homeland) to celebrate Eid al-Fitr. Through the Minister of Transportation, the Indonesian government issued a ban on going home for Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr 2020 for regions that do Large-Scale Social Restrictions, red zones, and their agglomerations (Qodar, 2020). All Indonesian people are prohibited from returning home (*mudik*) with any vehicle. At the entrances to the inter-city border, the police conduct inspections of passing vehicles (Azanella, 2021). President Joko Widodo has repeatedly urged the public not to go home on his official account: "Not going home is the wisest way to protect families in the village. By patiently holding back longing overseas, we have played a role in breaking the chain of the spread of Covid-19. We don't go home because we love our family" (Widodo, 2020b).

In early 2021, the number of COVID-19 increased again after the Christmas and New Year holidays. The government stipulates the implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) in Java and Bali. In contrast to the province-based PSBB, PPKM leads to limited community activities based on city and district. Regions implementing PPKM must limit office activities by implementing Work from Home (WFH) by 75 percent and working in the office (Work from Office/WFO) by 25 percent. Learning activities are carried out online. For essential business sectors related to basic needs, they can operate 100 percent, but with more stringent regulation of working hours, capacity, and implementation of health protocols. Restaurant activities eating or drinking on site are only allowed by 25 percent—restrictions on operating hours for shopping centers or malls until 19.00 WIB. Places of worship are limited in their capacity by 50 percent with stricter implementation of health protocols (CNN, 2021).

Regarding the polemic of Large-Scale Social Restriction in 2020 and Emergency Community Activity Restriction in 2021 to prevent the widespread of COVID-19, Presiden Joko Widodo explained it as the best choice. President Joko Widodo said in a Facebook post: "After receiving a lot of input, I decided to impose an Emergency Community Activity Restriction (PPKM) in Java and Bali from July 3 to July 20, 2021. The government will immediately mobilize existing resources to overcome the spread of Covid-19."

Massive efforts made by the Indonesian government to overcome the COVID-19 Pandemic are vaccinations. At the beginning of the introduction of the vaccine program, various concerns arose among the public, especially regarding the effects that occur after a person is vaccinated (CNN, 2021). President Joko Widodo has repeatedly assured the public not to worry. On Twitter and Facebook, President Joko Widodo conveyed a persuasive message about the importance of vaccines, their impact, and halalness. President Jokowi, in a tweet, stated that the public should not doubt the vaccine and encouraged the people to do the vaccine: "And I -- again -- will be the first to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Why is the President the first? You don't want to put yourself first alone, but so that everyone can be sure that this vaccine is safe and halal. So, get ready" (Widodo, 2021a)

What is still a difficult task for the Indonesian government is to overcome the Pandemic's economic impact. The sector closely related to the effect of the spread of the COVID-19 virus is the economy and the decline in the level of social welfare of the community. One in 10 people in Indonesia lives below the national poverty line. The negative impact on the socioeconomic situation of the Pandemic could be much worse if there is no social assistance from the government (Smeru 2021). Facing a problematic socioeconomic situation due to the Pandemic, the Presiden said: "The COVID-19 Pandemic has brought not only public health problems but also broad economic implications. Therefore, every government policy in overcoming this Pandemic in the country, always taking life into account community economy" (Widodo, 2020c).

3.3 The View of Women's Interest during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, President Joko Widodo did not post many issues about women on his Twitter or Facebook accounts. Since the COVID-19 Pandemic hit Indonesia in early March 2020, the President of Indonesia has focused more on health, economy, and society. The government's attention to the women's interest has focused more on public interests to meet basic daily needs, such as health, fulfillment of basic needs, and access to

education for children. The government issued a Social Assistance program to overcome economic difficulties for the community. President Joko Widodo said on Facebook:

Ten months have passed until the world changes to 2021, the world has not come out of the Pandemic.

Many small to large business actors are burdened by declining turnover and income in our country. That's why while trying to deal with this Pandemic, the government assists affected communities through a social assistance program that was started in July 2020. Yesterday, in the first week of 2021, I handed over working capital assistance for micro and small businesses from Jakarta. Hopefully, the capital assistance can ease their burden (Widodo, 2021b).

This morning, many residents were seen queuing in an orderly manner, keeping their distance from each other and wearing masks. They are beneficiary families who receive cash social assistance from the government, and I, who came to review, had a chance to talk with some of them. I hope that with this cash assistance, people's purchasing power will be maintained until later when domestic consumption returns to normal (Widodo, 2020d).

President Joko Widodo's statement on Facebook emphasized the government's attention to people with lower socioeconomic status. During the Pandemic, this community group experienced financial difficulties meeting their daily needs. Based on data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 5,970 female workers lost their jobs. In addition, as many as 32,401 Indonesian Migrant Workers were repatriated from various countries, of which 70.4 percent were women. Many women later became the backbone of the family because their husbands were unemployed, isolated, or died due to COVID-19. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection has conducted a survey of 2,073 home industry players from 45 districts/cities. In general, information is obtained that there has been a significant decline in income. In addition, business actors have also experienced a decrease in sales. The price of raw materials has increased or is challenging to obtain, has difficulty sending products to sales centers, and has difficulty paying installments (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection June 19, 2020). The data also shows that most Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises are women. Data on the Development of Micro, Small, Medium and Large Enterprises in Indonesia in the 2014-2018 period, as many as 99.99 percent of Indonesia's 64 million business units are Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Women manage about 60% of the number of MSMEs. Based on the experience of Indonesia's economic crisis in the past, MSMEs have an essential and strategic role in national economic development. Women entrepreneurs of MSMEs in Indonesia are instrumental in supporting the nation's economy (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection February 12, 2021). The government views women as having a central role in managing the household economy and contributing to national development. As mothers and as entrepreneurs, women are seen as requiring financial and capital support to ensure the survival of their families and develop their businesses. This perspective encourages the government to provide social assistance and business capital.

The nuances of identifying women as mothers are also seen in President Joko Widodo's uploads on Facebook. When commemorating Kartini Day on April 21, 2020, and Mother's Day on December 22, 2020, the statement made by President Joko Widodo was about the challenging role of mothers due to the Pandemic. On Kartini Day, president Joko Widodo quoted Raden Adjeng Kartini's statement: "Sometimes, you have to feel difficulties before happiness perfect comes to you." (Widodo, 2020e).

Another statement of President Joko Widodo uploaded in his official Facebook celebrating Mother Day December 22, 2020:

This year will soon pass but will always be remembered as a year full of challenges. The year the world was hit by a pandemic. In this year, too, my beloved mother passed away. A mother who is always present, giving a blessing, reminding, strengthening, and praying for me every step of the way.

Greetings to all mothers and all Indonesian women who remain solid and enthusiastic. With the power of prayer, hope, and endeavor together, we will get through these difficult time (Widodo, 2020f).

President Joko Widodo's statement implies that the COVID-19 Pandemic has put a heavy burden on mothers. This statement is relevant to the results of a study by the SMERU Research Institute, which found that during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Indonesian women experienced additional responsibilities and duties in childcare roles. Mothers are three times more likely to raise children than fathers. As many as 71.5% of households answered that mothers are the prominent figures who play a more role in helping children learn at home, compared to 22% of households who answered that fathers played a more critical role. Half of the women are also involved in work to

support the family. They have difficulty balancing the demands of housework and other additional responsibilities that arise from school closures, so children have to study from home (SMERU, 2021). President Joko Widodo's message shows that women have a challenging task during the Pandemic. Women should be appreciated for their noble duties as mothers.

As Molyneux explained during the COVID-19 Pandemic President Joko Widodo paid less attention to the strategic women's interest. This situation can be seen from the tweets and statements on Twitter and Facebook during the 2020-2021 period. Only onetime President Joko Widodo delivered a statement regarding the strategic women's interest when he welcomed World Women's Day on March 8, 2021 (see figure 1): "In an increasingly open and modern world, everyone, male or female, has an equal opportunity to take on roles and achieve dreams. All equivalent give color to civilization (Widodo, 2021c).



Figure 1. Tweets of President Joko Widodo Welcoming World Women's Day 2021

In his upload, President Joko Widodo included a poster with International Women's Day on March 8, 2021. In the poster, there are pictures of women in various professions. This poster illustrates the opportunities for Indonesian women to have a career in any field. President Joko Widodo also quoted the hashtag #ChooseToChallenge, the theme of International Women's Day 2021. This message means that women can choose to support other women and challenge any injustice experienced. In the context of Indonesia, the message in commemoration of World Women's Day has a significant meaning. The National Commission for Women noted that violence against women is still high. Throughout 2020 the number of cases of violence against women was 299,911 cases. The majority of cases occur in the personal realm or are called domestic cases/personal domains. The increase in cases of trafficking in persons also increased compared to the previous year, from 212 to 255 cases (Nurita, 2021). President Joko Widodo's statement shows the government's concern for women's needs for protection, justice, and the right to determine their way of life.

In general, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, President Joko Widodo did not mention much about women's strategic interests. This condition is different from the years before the Pandemic. The additional emphasis on women's interests in the posts on the official Twitter and Facebook of the Indonesian President shows a shift in framing women's interests. Since the COVID-19 Pandemic, women's interests have been portrayed differently and more subtly conveyed. The government sees Indonesian women as having an essential role in dealing with various economic difficulties due to the Pandemic, both as mothers and as citizens. Therefore, efforts to fulfill women's interests are interpreted as efforts to build women's economic power by fulfilling the basic needs they need. Citing the concept of women's interests put forward by Maxine Molyneux (1985), there was a shift in government attention from strategic interests to practical interests. But are practical interests not strategic interests? Here, it is

necessary to redefine what is considered strategic women's interests and what is considered as practical interests. If there is an assumption that efforts to meet daily needs are in the practical interest of women, then what about the pandemic situation? Is that not of strategic importance? This is where Beckwith's (2011) argument is justified, that women's interests depend on the context and who defines it. In the case of Indonesia, the framing that women play an important role as mothers who maintain family survival and as citizens who contribute to the revival of the national economy has prompted the government to take various national policies. This proves that so-called practical interests can be strategic interests in different contexts.

4. Conclusion

The Covid-19 Pandemic has resulted in a shift in the priority of President Joko Widodo attention to women's interest, namely from strategic interests to practical interests. Through tweets and statements on the official Twitter account and official Facebook account of President Joko Widodo, it can be concluded that the President interprets the fulfillment of practical interests as more urgent for women in the COVID-19 pandemic situation than strategic interests. This situation can be detrimental to women because, during a pandemic, women are more prone to face various forms of violence and injustice that require government intervention to ensure that women's strategic interests are accommodated.

Learning from the case of Indonesia, it can be seen that the commitment to efforts to mainstream gender and gender equality is strongly influenced by the socioeconomic context that is being faced by a country. Various steps, strategies, and campaigns for gender equality that President Joko Widodo has massively carried out since 2016 through the HeForShe program have to deal with a pandemic situation that makes the President no longer intense with this program. The focus of the President's attention on efforts to overcome the COVID-19 Pandemic is inevitable that policies are more focused on health programs and socioeconomic impacts. This is a challenge in itself for efforts to realize gender equality.

The case of Indonesia is also an example that the definition of the concept of women's interests is very fluid. There are many kinds of women's interests, both interests related to the needs of daily life to the interests of self-actualization, freedom, equal rights, security, and recognition. In normal situations, the fulfillment of daily needs is seen as a practical interest. However, in a pandemic situation, the meaning of women's interests can shift. What is usually called a practical interest can be interpreted as a strategic interest when dealing with a pandemic situation because the definition of women's interests is very dependent on the context at hand and who defines it.

The results of this study open up opportunities for further research on women's responses to the socioeconomic assistance provided by the government during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Does the assistance provide benefits to women's lives, what are the women views on social assistance and working capital provided by the government, and is the stimulant correlated with increasing public recognition of the role of women? In terms of government policy, the results of this study provide a way for research on netizen responses on social-media to government policies in handling the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia and the Institute for Research and Community Service of the Universitas Pembangunan Nasional 'Veteran' Yogyakarta that has provided financial assistance and opportunities for the author to conduct research.

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