

ABSTRACT

Literature in political economics argues that leaders' characteristics determine policy choices. These characteristics include gender, religion, birthplace, education, occupation, organization experience, and government-related experience. This study empirically investigates the claim using novel data sets of incumbent mayors in Indonesia from 2015 to 2018. This study specifically focuses on how leaders' characteristics might determine budget allocation. Using a cross-sectional analysis, the study found that female mayors are associated with less infrastructure budget and are less likely to engage in corruption practices. Mayor with higher education in Indonesia spends more on public service and environment, instead on education. Mayors with prior civil-servant and executive experience spend less on social deprivation areas, while mayor with experience in legislation spends less on housing and public facilities budget.

Keywords: Leader characteristics, Budget allocation, Political economy

JEL classification: H41, H72, P43