

# Women And Local Democracy: A Study on The Engagement of Women Candidates in the 2020 Elections in Central Java

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**Abstract.** The aim of this research is to comprehend the involvement of women as candidate on head regional election on the year of 2020 in middle java. As we have known that there was a significant amount of woman as candidate where is ten fights for Regent or Major and seven of them winning the competition. There also six women candidates run for vice regent or vice Major and four of them also being the winner. Based on thus fact the research interested in analysing what the main factor that determine of women became nomination and winning the competition. Do strengthening gender identity also being important part that supporting women candidate in getting support from the voter? The method research is use qualitative descriptive with the main goal is getting of comprehensive answer of the research question. Instrument for collecting data based on depth interview with key informant. The result of research points out that it is harder for women to be nominated because of patriarchy that still treat as special and given priority for male candidate. For the competition process also not easy for women candidate because of an expensive cost of the competition. There were several factors that determine of women for winning competition. Firstly, they should have of an economic capital not only to meet of the campaign need but also of money politics practice that cannot be avoided by whoever of candidate. Secondly, they also must prepare with good political networking. Almost of women who succeed for running the competition because they supported by political network of their families such as their parent or their husband which have known as politician, prominent figure and also businessman. Finally, they more succeed for getting support from the voters by strengthening of gender identity. Although regional head election in middle java shows of significant amount of women candidate, but political process still not friendly yet for women because of an expensive cost that without money it is incredible that could happen for women in running competition however they full of a leadership capacity and ideas.

**Keywords:** Women Candidate, Regional Head Election, Gender Identity, Electoral Threshold

## 1 Introduction

Until now, women's political representation in Indonesia has not shown encouraging conditions, even though after the 1998 reformation, the political tap has been wide open to create a more democratic political life. Politics is still a field that is considered not friendly enough to accept the presence of women in it. Women in general still show reluctance to enter

political activities. This can be shown that the 30% quota for women in Parliament is still not fulfilled, even though there are affirmative policies that encourage efforts to increase women's representation in parliament. Through Law No. 8 of 2008 the effort to realize a quota of 30% women's representation in parliament has been strengthened, because of the necessity in party formation or party management at the Central level to include at least 30% women's representation. The law even implements a zipper system which stipulates that there must be at least one woman in every nomination for legislative members or every 3 proposed candidates. In reality, the penetration of the 30% quota policy has not been able to increase the number of women in parliament because until the 2019 Legislative Election the average number of women in parliament was still at 19.8%.

If the 30% quota policy for women's representation in parliament does not necessarily increase the number of women in parliament, then how is the involvement of women in political positions in the executive that has not been strengthened by affirmative policies. The involvement of women as candidates for regional heads is an interesting study because of the fact that it is not easy for women to be involved in the pilkada process. Women's involvement in the nomination of regional heads is often faced with difficult challenges, especially attacks that must be accepted because of their status as women. Stereotypes and patriarchal culture that are still thick in our society are a challenge for female regional head candidates, not to mention the high cost of Pilkada politics where on average women do not have adequate economic capital. The 2020 simultaneous regional elections in Central Java which were held in 21 regencies and cities showed an interesting phenomenon because there were 16 female candidates who advanced in the nomination where 10 of them nominate as regional heads and 6 others nominate themselves as deputy regional heads. Of the 10 candidates for regional head, 7 of them won the election while out of 6 candidates for deputy regional head 4 of them won the election. Based on this fact, the research was conducted to examine how the involvement of female candidates in the Pilkada is? What factors determine their choice? Do they strengthen gender identity to break stereotypes and deconstruct patriarchal culture?

## **2 Method**

This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The aim is to obtain a comprehensive picture of how female candidates are involved in the pilkada competition with two main objectives: 1) identifying and analyzing the factors that support the victory of female candidates; 2) provide a comprehensive picture of whether female candidates strengthen gender identity to attract voter supporting? Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with purposively determined informants, especially the supporting parties and also the success team.

Women are constitutionally guaranteed the right to vote and be elected (equality of political rights). However, in practice women are often still seen as second-class citizens. The difference in treatment of women who are seen as inferior to men is still very strong in society, especially in political life. Studies that specifically examine the occurrence of differences in treatment of women based on gender differences are known as gender studies. The construction of gender roles based on gender differences has given rise to a different role dichotomy for men and women where women are identified with roles in the domestic sphere while men have role attributes in the public sphere. The concept of gender that is deliberately constructed by the community will form a pattern of relations between women and men with

their respective roles that cannot be exchanged, according to the hopes and desires of the community as stated by Andersen [1] as follows:

“Gender refers to the socially learned behaviors and expectations that are associated with two sexes. Those whereas “maleness” and “femaleness” are biologically facts, masculinity and femininity are culturally constructed attributes. Similar to the social categories established by race and social class, gender patterns what others expect to us and what we expect of ourselves. Gender also establishes, in large measure, our life chances and direct our social relations with other”

It is this role dichotomy that causes women to experience gender injustice such as restrictions on roles, thoughts, and differences in treatment which result in violations of the recognition and equality of rights between men and women. Gender inequality with its various manifestations such as subordination, stereotypes, double burden, marginalization, violence, the root cause is patriarchal culture. In simple terms, patriarchy can be interpreted as a condition that places a special position on men. However, there are a number of opinions about patriarchy itself, such as Millet [2] who defines patriarchy as a condition in which men dominate women and the old dominate the young. Meanwhile, according to Morrissey [3] explains that "patriarchy is the relation of governance presided over by father", namely the relationship system where the father is the regulator and determinant of everything that causes inequality in the relationship where the father is in a superior position and the other is inferior.

The concept of patriarchy itself is not limited to photographing inequality in the domestic sphere, but is also used to describe the causes of inequality in power relations in the public sphere. According to Goldberg [4] "Patriarchy is any system of organization (political, economics, religious or social) in which the overwhelming of upper position in hierarchies is occupied by male. The female politicians, are at the times, a lower proportion than men" (any organizational system, whether political, economic, religious, or social where most of the highest hierarchical positions are dominated by men, while at the same time the proportion of female politicians is lower than that of men). with men). Patriarchy should be changed to provide more justice for women because patriarchy is the result of community construction. This is in line with Butler's [5] opinion that "patriarchy is produced within the construction of gender". The result of gender construction causes women to be in a disadvantaged position because they are under the supremacy of men, as conveyed by Walby [6] who argues that "patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (patriarchy is a social structure and practice in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women). This condition causes women to be disadvantaged because they do not have equal access, including access to power. In current conditions, patriarchal culture is still the dominant cause of women getting unequal opportunities in the public sphere, resulting in unequal power relations. Even according to Cecilia Ng [7] even though women already have a good education, getting equal treatment without discrimination is not easy, because there are still refusals for women to occupy top positions, especially for public leadership.

Besides patriarchal culture, the challenge faced by women in gaining positions in the public sphere, including in political competition, is that often it cannot be separated from the lens of gender stereotype. The debate over the involvement of women who run for various political positions will always be questioned regarding the suitability of women's qualifications to carry out roles in the public sphere, all of which stem from the clichéd issue of stigma or labeling attached to women, which is better known as gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes in general are views about attributes or traits or roles that should be owned or performed by men and women. According to Riant Nugroho [8] stereotype is a negative labeling or marking of a certain group or gender. Meanwhile, according to Cook and Cusak

[9] "A stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are ought to be possessed by or the roles that are should be performed by, members of a particular social group". Then further Cook and Cusak [9] explain further that "gender stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics that are ought to be possessed by or the roles that are should be performed by men or women". Gender stereotypes are views or conceptions of the nature or character that must be possessed or the roles that should be performed by men or women. In general, this label has more negative connotations, and is more attached to women, such as women who cannot lead because they are emotional, indecisive, and others that often harm women.

In reality, there are many stereotypes or labels aimed at women and most of them are detrimental to the position of women because they impose restrictions on women's social roles. As stated by Paul and Smith (2008) which states that gender stereotypes generally provide assumptions about the different traits possessed by men and women where men are often seen as more competent, assertive, strong in leading, and have greater abilities. great for dealing with crises. While women are seen as more sensitive, expressive and honest. However, not all of these stereotypes have negative connotations when comparing the dimensions of behaviour, attitudes, by emphasizing what is considered more suitable for each gender. As stated by Brodi and Hall (2000) which states "women are better at sending and decoding non-verbal messages, in contrast men are better in controlling their nonverbal expressions". This opinion is not comparing which one is more powerful, but only conveying that women have better ability to convey and decipher nonverbal codes, while men are better at controlling nonverbal expressions.

Labelling of women in reality is often an assessment of the right position for women in carrying out political and government positions. Women are assumed to be more effective in dealing with issues of child care, poverty, education, women's issues, environmental issues, while men are seen as more competent in dealing with economic development, military, trade, taxes and agriculture [10]. This labelling has a considerable influence in determining the choice of candidates where for political positions at a higher level, there is a tendency for voters to prefer men over women because women are seen as unable to manage complexity. Even the experience in the practice of political competition in Indonesia, when there are female candidates are often attacked with religious arguments that seem to justify that women cannot lead and are not destined to be leaders, followed by other labels that tend to be "prejudice". The patriarchal culture and labelling must be recognized as the dominant factor that hinders women from achieving strategic positions in political and government institutions. To overcome this, it is appropriate for women to deconstruct patriarchal culture and break labeling by strengthening gender identity to attract voter support.

### **3 Result and Discussion**

The 2020 simultaneous regional election is the second phase of the simultaneous regional election after the first phase of the simultaneous regional election was held in 2015. The 2020 simultaneous regional election which was held on December 9, 2020 was considered the best decision after going through many debates about the various options proposed, including the proposed postponement of the regional election. not held in 2020 considering the COVID-19 pandemic situation. However, the government's decision to carry out simultaneous regional elections in 2020, only the elections that were originally scheduled to be held on 23 September

2020 were later postponed and held on 9 December 2020. The 2020 simultaneous elections were held in 270 regions Among them are 9 Provinces, 224 Regencies and 27 Cities. Pilkada in Central Java itself is held in 21 regions consisting of 17 regencies and 4 cities. There were 41 couples who participated in the competition with 82 potential participants. Among the 21 regions that held the Pilkada 6 of them were followed by single participants or against empty columns, namely Kebumen, Wonosobo, Boyolali, Grobogan, Sragen, and the City of Semarang. What is more interesting regarding the simultaneous Pilkada in Central Java is the significant number of female candidates, as many as 18 participants (19.75%) which means that it is almost the same as the average achievement of women in the DPR which is clearly supported by the affirmative policy of the 30% female quota. Besides not being supported by affirmative policies on the importance of involving women in the nomination of regional heads, the high political costs of Pilkada are also interesting to study further regarding the involvement of women candidates because in reality the women candidates are not individuals who independently have economic capital (for example, because the candidate is a woman entrepreneur).

In the 2020 simultaneous regional elections in Central Java, out of 18 female candidates, 11 of them are running for regional heads and 7 others are running for regional tax representatives. Of the eleven female candidates who ran for regional heads, 7 of them won the election, while 7 who ran for deputy regional heads, 4 of them won the election. Then how the results of the Pilkada in more detail for both regional heads and deputy regional heads are as follows:

**Table 1.** Results of the Regional Head Candidate Election

No	Candidate Name	Constituency	Election Result	Background
1	Dyah Hayuning Pratiwi	Purbalingga	Win	Son of Former Regent for Two Periods, Incumbent Deputy Regent
2	Sri Mulyani	Klaten	Win	Deputy Regent, Incumbent Regent
3	Etik Suryani	Sukoharjo	Win	Former Regent's Wife Two terms
4	Kusdinar Untung YS	Sragen	Win against empty box	Son of the former regent for two terms, incumbent regent
5	Sri Sumarni	Grobogan	Win against empty box	Former Member of DPRD, Incumbent Regent
6	Umi Kulsum	Blora	Lost	Wife of Former Regent for Two Periods
7	Estianah	Demak	Win	Doctor, son of a contractor businessman
8	Bintang Narsasi	Semarang Regency	Lost	Wife of Former Regent for Two Periods
9	Fadia A.Rafiq	Pekalongan Regency	Win	Former Deputy Regent, Chairman of DPD Golkar
10	Balqis Diaz	Pekalongan City	Lost	chairman of parliament
11	Dwi Astutiningsih	Blora	Lost	Former Member of DPRD from PDIP

(Processed by researchers from secondary data)

From the data contained in table 1, it is very interesting because of the background of female candidates in the 2020 Pilkada, where a number of these female regional head candidates when they first ran for candidacy were part of power because they were wives of former regents such as or children of former regents. This fact is often concluded by the public as an effort to perpetuate the dynasty of power. There are also female candidates who have a background as a politician and have held positions in the legislature or in the government, besides there are also female candidates who have a background as an entrepreneur or the child of a businessman. Pilkada is, in fact, a competition that requires complex support in the form of money, political networks, and commitment from the candidates through clear vision and mission. This fact makes it difficult for women to decide to run in the Pilkada competition.

Pilkada is a political competition that requires large costs and also a strong political network, so it is almost impossible for a woman to run as a candidate for regional head without having financial support or political networks, even though the female candidate has excellent leadership skills and is rich with The idea as conveyed by the Council Member who is also the Success Team of one of the candidates for Regent is as follows:

“The Pilkada is a competition that requires a very large cost where a candidate must spend at least 20 billion. The financial readiness of this candidate is also undeniably a consideration for the party in determining the nomination of candidates, in addition to other considerations related to whether the candidate is popular enough and has good electability. I always tell the truth that don't ever dare to participate in Pilkada if you don't have money. Especially for female candidates, because the party itself will also prefer male candidates, unless there is no other alternative. And in general, these female candidates are supported by people who are financially strong or have a political network” (interview with Ibu Irna S, member of DPRD Central Java Province)

The need for large funds in this Pilkada event is not only due to the large costs required for campaign activities in order to introduce candidates to the various excellent programs offered, but rather to mobilize support. The fact is it's no secret that in every election event, people are used to receiving money from candidates through their Success Team. Therefore, it seems like a natural thing if the candidate recommended by the supporting political party is a candidate who has adequate funding. The problem of the high cost of politics is one of the causes of women's indecision to run in the Pilkada. So, there is still a small number of women to take part in the Pilkada competition, not because women are not interested or have no political interests, but rather are faced with the problem of the high cost of the Pilkada. This was also conveyed by female politicians as follows:

“We do not deny that Pilkada is a very expensive political event. Candidates like it or not have to be prepared with this large amount of money. While we know that the average woman does not have the financial ability independently because usually it is her husband or parents who have the money. This fact often raises concerns about female candidates who often have doubts in the community that when they are elected, they will be controlled by parties who have paid for their political costs” (interview with Mrs. Rini, a member of the Central Java DPRD who is also a Blora Regency Pilkada Success Team)

The high cost of politics is not only a problem for women in Indonesia who want to reach political positions. This is also a phenomenon in the practice of democracy in America as said by Thomsen [11] which states that "US democracy is not simply the competitive struggle for people's vote, but also the prior competition over who will wage that struggle". about the struggle of competition to get the people's vote but also the competition about who can pay for

the struggle). This is also the cause of the limited number of women who enter the election competition. Only women who have financial support can ultimately enter into political competition. In the end, money can become a barrier for women to enter political competition, no matter how capable and rich they are with ideas. But on the other hand, there are women who benefit from having the opportunity to take part in political competitions even though they individually lack political experience and leadership capacity, let alone ideas.

The challenge for female candidates to win the nomination or the Pilkada competition is not only related to financial problems, but also the strong patriarchal practice within the party and society so that in the nomination of nominations, political parties actually prioritize male candidates. Even if the recommendation ends up falling on a female candidate, usually this cannot be separated from the strong people behind the female candidate, be it parents or husbands who are known as politicians, community leaders or businessmen. So, it is not surprising that most of the women who run as candidates in the Pilkada cannot be separated from the shadows of the strong people around them who may later become shadow power. It is this strong figure behind the female candidate who is suspected to be controlling policies when she is in the top position as regional head. This is certainly an unfavorable political fact because the entry of women into political positions in the government ultimately does not have the freedom and independence in making policies, including to make policies that are expected to be more in favor of women's interests. This condition is often known as policy corruption, which is very likely to occur when a candidate in the nomination of political costs does not come from himself but comes from powerful people who have money who often have their own agenda to protect or perpetuate its importance.

Another thing that cannot be denied and also becomes a challenge for female candidates is the labelling attached to them because of their status as women. Often negative labels are used as a weapon for political opponents to bring down female candidates. Even the issue of gender is quite strong in colouring the regional elections in Demak Regency. It is not uncommon to attack female candidates using religious arguments that seem to justify that women are not justified and unfit to be leaders. A number of attributes about women's characteristics such as feeling women, irrational, emotional, less assertive, become negative connotations that are widely echoed to bring down female candidates. However, in addition to a number of negative labels, there are also a number of traits attached to women which actually have positive connotations such as women being good listeners, women being good at building relationships, women being very interested in social issues, women being easy to empathize with, and the like. This is what female candidates must strengthen in an effort to break negative labelling so that they can be used to gain voter support. The identity of women with various attributes that have positive connotations is used as a way to convince voters that leaders not only need a firm character, but also need gentle and empathetic characters, and this is inherent in women. The strengthening of women's identities is considered very useful in attracting support, especially women voters through approaches with women-based communities and organizations. This strengthening of women's identities is considered by the Success Team to be quite effective in attracting voter support. Thus, strengthening women's identities indirectly actually deconstructs patriarchy and breaks the labelling of female candidates.

## 4 Conclusion

The election of female candidates in the regional elections is not an easy path because there are many factors that determine success. The first factor, of course, is financial support, which is actually a determining factor for female candidates, both in the nomination process and in the competition for voting support. Another factor that is no less important is the political network, because after all in the Pilkada, candidates need political support from various forces, both political parties and other interest groups. However, what is no less important is how female candidates deconstruct patriarchy and labelling that tends to harm and hinder female candidates by strengthening women's identities. Positive attributes as women are used as a theme in promoting female candidates with leadership qualities who can listen, have empathy and take sides with women and weak parties.

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