

# The Problem of Attitude's Consistency and Voting Behavior for the People of West Sumatra towards Female Regional Head Candidates in Regional Elections

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**Abstract.** In this modern age, public perception fully supports women in participating in political activities without distinction from men. Unfortunately, this public perception support is not consistent with their political actions in the regional head elections. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. These data come from previous publications of scientists, journalistic reports, official government documents relevant to this research, and other data available online that can strengthen the analysis in this article. We explore why individual perceptions were not aligned with their voting behavior in the simultaneous regional head in 2020. This article finds four reasons why voters' perceptions in West Sumatra are inconsistent with voting behavior, namely the existence of value pluralism, failure of political education, money politics, and the dominance of information that changes voter perceptions.

**Keywords:** Political behavior, Women, Local election, Consistency, Representation

## 1 Introduction

The issue of women's representation in public positions has always been a topic of discussion in society. In politics and government, the number of women occupying positions is far less than that of men. Many studies explain why women rarely get a place in political and government positions (Jordan-Zachery, 2017; Waylen, 2015; Alexander, 2012). Even the offer of solutions to overcome the crisis of representation has also emerged. For example, Waylen examines several European and Latin American countries that encourage women's participation in democracy to overcome this crisis of representation (Waylen, 2015).

Logically, encouraging women to participate in general elections opens up opportunities for them to occupy political positions in the legislature. Therefore, it is not surprising that pre-election campaigns appear in many democratic countries, so that female voters choose female candidates in elections (Dolan, 2004). Not only that, but the affirmation policy is also the choice of political parties to get the attention of women voters.

For example, they are providing opportunities for women to become members of the legislature by requiring political parties to compile a list of candidates for legislative members by placing female candidates among the nominations of male candidates. Campaign issues on

women's issues have also become a strategy for some political parties to attract the attention of female voters to vote for the female candidates they nominate.

However, not a few scholars doubt that the implementation of this strategy can answer the problem of representation. For some scientists, the primary problem of women's representation is an issue in many countries because of social and cultural factors in society. In many countries, this social and cultural problem is the main obstacle why it is difficult for women to win elections. The problem is that there are still social and cultural values in traditional societies in a country that view women negatively when they are in the public sphere.

For them, women have to carry out their activities in private areas rather than entering the public arena. It is a tough choice for women who insist on participating in political contestations, so usually, they will not get support from the community in the area. This phenomenon is indeed a dilemma for women who have to fight for their representation in the public sphere. The process of political modernization has had a significant impact on changing the way traditional society views women involved in politics. The process of political modernization changes the political system into a modern one with its structure and function and impacts changes in the value system, beliefs, and behavior of individuals and community groups in a political system.

One of the most prominent is that the public's perspective has begun to open up to the political system and its activities due to the mixing of their values and beliefs with the new values and beliefs around them. For example, how they view women in political activities that have been taboo has become more open. Dolan and Lynch asserted that there is no difference in voter preferences for placing female candidates differently from male candidates in the legislative and gubernatorial elections (Dolan & Lynch, 2016). Society has tended to position women in the private sphere, then when political modernization took place, this society's perspective changed. They understand that women are in the public sphere, such as participating in political contestations through general elections or regional head elections.

This article explores the changes in traditional society in Indonesia, which is starting to transform into a modern one. Indonesia, which has 1,340 ethnic groups, illustrates the collectivity of nations incorporated into modern Indonesia with a system of cultural values that continues to develop. This diversity is the potential to build a modern Indonesia based on pluralism in its society.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the assimilation strategy during the New Order era resulted in the assimilation of the Indonesian value system fused into the Pancasila ideology. Although on the other hand, the government also implements an acculturation strategy that maintains the local community's cultural values. The democratic transition process marks the process of political modernization from an authoritarian political system to a more democratic system after the collapse of the New Order regime in 1998 (La Ode, 2012).

However, people in Indonesia still use their values and beliefs as the basis for their political actions and behavior. Political modernization that changes the political structure with a more modern function is not in line with changes in their values, beliefs, and behavior in responding to the phenomena around them. For instance, the Minangkabau community's perceptions in West Sumatra, Indonesia, respond to women's political representation in political positions and women. A local survey institute in West Sumatra, Spectrum Politica, found an inconsistency of values and attitudes with community behavior related to the nature of women's representation.

According to this survey, 56.9% of people believe that the Minangkabau social and cultural system supports women's political activities. This belief aligns with their perception; namely, 68.5% believe that there is no prohibition in Minangkabau ethnic customs and

traditions for women to participate in politics. 60.3% of the people of West Sumatra believe that women can compete with men in political activities.

This situation gives hope to women activists who fight for gender equality in politics. Moreover, the Minangkabau ethnicity is a very egalitarian and democratic ethnic group in everyday life (Asrinaldi, 2017). However, the problem is that the perception of West Sumatra's people is not in line with their political behavior when dealing with political choices. For example, in the 2019 legislative elections, there was a decrease in the number of women who won the legislative elections. In the 2014 election period, seven women were elected as members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) of West Sumatra Province.

Nevertheless, in the 2019 election, only four people were able to win seats in the DPRD. Whereas following Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, political parties must nominate women as much as 30 percent of the number of seats available in the electoral district. Unfortunately, the 30% representation rate has never been achieved in Indonesia and the West Sumatra DPRD. This article will explain why voters in West Sumatra have different values and beliefs from their voting behavior? What factors make this different, and what are the implications for women's political representation in West Sumatra? This article uses a political modernization approach—something different from the current approach that analyzes women's representation from a feminist perspective.

## **2 Political Modernization and Perceptions of Women's Representation**

The problem of women's representation has attracted the attention of many scientists. For example, the perspective of feminism emphasizes the need to strengthen the role of women in political activities by providing opportunities for them through the affirmative movement. So far, the way of looking at gender places men superior to women in almost all activities.

However, along with the development of science and technology, a feminist movement has emerged to demand role justice for women, especially in the political field. In addition, the emergence of political modernization theory has further strengthened this feminist movement by encouraging women to be active in political activities. In addition, this movement also raises public awareness so that there is no gender bias in placing women in the public sphere. This article tries to elaborate further on how political modernization affects public perception in seeing the role of women in political activities.

Political modernization in a political system brings changes to the structure and function of the system. Changes in the structure are in institutions and units that become more modern and play a role in carrying out their functions and individuals as a system of values, beliefs, and behavior of actors in the change process. Inevitably, in political modernization, there is also a shift in the political culture of society to become more modern (Abid, 2004).

If so far people in traditional political systems have a subjective political culture, then political modernization impacts changing the political culture to become participatory. This participatory political culture encourages the operation of a political system illustrated by the work of political institutions that become system units carrying out their functions in society. The implementation of this function causes the political system to become more responsive, accommodating, and democratic.

Political modernization will change the value system, beliefs, and behavior of individuals in viewing their environment. This change gave rise to different perceptions and behaviors

before political modernization. Many factors cause modernization in a political system. One of the most influential is the progress of science and technology, which impacts the development of a country's society. In post-colonial countries, modernization has a significant impact on the development of a country's regime. Not a few post-colonial countries became advanced because of the science and technology that developed in the international system. In addition, science and technology indirectly also influence the development of a more democratic political system.

The development of the political system can also change the traditional individual value system into a more modern one. For example, in terms of values, they understand the position of women in political activities. Generally, in a society with strong traditional values, women's activities in the public sphere are forbidden. Many customs and traditions in Indonesian society "forbid" women from being active in activities outside their homes. As a result, women rarely participate in public activities, especially in the political and government processes.

Even so, not all of this political modernization goes according to the expectations in this theory. Acemoglu and Robinson see that the regime carries out "manipulative" efforts by strengthening cultural values in society for the benefit of power (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2021). For example, they took the example in China by looking at how cultural values in Confucius place the ruler as a dominating force and place it as a force that leads society. There is no need for participation because leaders in Confucian cultural values understand public interest by looking at the conception of a despotic leviathan state, which is the choice of leaders in China, thus eliminating democracy in that country. The theory of modernization that should change cultural values in Chinese society has not changed anything. This phenomenon is undoubtedly an anomaly of the theory of political modernization, which is the study of political scientists.

On the other hand, historically, political modernization has also changed the perspective of post-colonial society towards the position of women in politics. Generally, there is a significant change in the position of women on an equal footing with men. Post-colonial society is very tolerant of women who enter the public sphere and engage in political activities, especially since the strengthening of the second wave of the feminist movement in the 1960s, which freely campaigned for the role of women in politics (Rampton, 2015).

Indeed, this change does not necessarily change the whole system of traditional values and traditions in post-colonial countries. It was considering that there are still many who object to the position of women in the public sphere, especially from puritanical community leaders. Meanwhile, those already in contact with advances in science and technology open up space and encourage equal rights in the political field for women.

The integration of the world into a single world system known as globalization has accelerated changes in political structures in countries worldwide, which also impact individual behavior. The democratic values that are part of the globalization process are spread to almost all post-colonial countries to affect the political values in these countries. According to Arts and Tatenhove, globalization is a structural transformation of the political modernization process that changes countries' policies in the world (Art & Tatenhove, 2006).

One thing that has received attention in new democracies is how to place women's representation as to the main agenda in democracy, especially in general elections. The affirmation movement for 30 percent of women's representation in Indonesia, which is contained in Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, is a political strategy that is quite effective in increasing women's representation in political institutions.

At least, this has succeeded in increasing the number of women's representation in the Indonesian legislature (DPR). For example, in the 2014 general election, women's representation in the DPR only touched 17% or around 97 people. However, in the 2019 election, the number of women who won seats in the DPR has reached 20% or 117 people.

The hope of the feminist group is, of course, a massive movement in society so that women will increasingly have a place in people's hearts in elections. Because, although there is a process of political modernization, not all people change their political behavior. Not all voters are automatically willing to make their political choices in response to their changing environment. Indeed, their value and belief system has begun to shift by believing that politics does not recognize gender differences. However, when it comes to the political choices they have to make, it turns out to be inconsistent with their value system and beliefs that have changed due to the ongoing political modernization (cf. Dolan, 2004). Then, why did this happen?

A person's political behavior does not stand alone. Many factors influence the formation of the individual's political behavior. First, there are factors within the individual known as push factors, consisting of individual value systems and beliefs. This system of values and beliefs forms the basis for individuals to understand the environment around them. The second is factors from outside the individual or pull factors in the environment that influence individuals to act in response to their environment. These two factors are essential in the process of forming individual political behavior.

However, explaining in detail the political behavior of these individuals is not easy because the system of values, beliefs, and motives of a person in politics is very complex. The system of values, belief, and motives in line with the explanation of Woshinsky. Behavior occurs when a particular person (an organism) faces a particular situation (the environment). Only through the interplay of individual and institution can we explain political outcomes. People act in politics to satisfy personal motives, beliefs, and ambitions. But they also act as they do because their culture compels them or because institutions demand it. Politics, like life, is complex, and there are no simple explanations. Only by examining the relationship between internal and external forces can we start to understand political realities (Woshinsky, 2008).

Likewise, voters in West Sumatra, who are predominantly ethnic Minangkabau, determine their voting behavior from push factors based on values and beliefs and their environment as the pull factors around them. For example, how individuals understand the problem of women's representation is the concern of the Minangkabau community. Moreover, this issue has always been the subject of campaigns among women activists in this area. Through this campaign and policy advocacy on women's representation, they succeeded in changing the perspective of the Minangkabau ethnic community about the importance of women's representation.

This transformation process is in line with changes in the value system of the people of West Sumatra in terms of education, health, and economy. This change can be seen from the Human Development Index (HDI) indicators of the people of West Sumatra, which reached 72.38 points above the national average HDI, which was only 71.94 points. With an average length of school age of 8.99 years, although not maximal, it has changed the perspective of the people of West Sumatra regarding the role of women in political activities.

The formation of the value system and individual voter beliefs is certainly not solely from education, but also the strong influence of the external environment from the individual (pull factor), which impacts the political attitudes of West Sumatran voters towards the role of women in politics. Push and pull factors or internal factors and external factors impact

changes in individual perceptions of the role of women in political activities. As a result, the perceptions formed are not in line with changes in their value and belief systems. The existence of new information that they absorb from the environment has an impact on the perception that they are not in line with the reality they face.

As seen in Figure 1 below, how the position of push factors and pull factors always attracts, causing inconsistent perceptions with individual voting behavior.

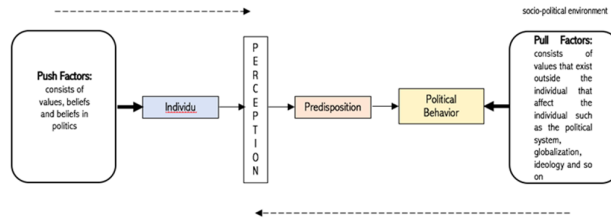


Figure 1. The relationship between push factors and pull factors in the formation of individual perceptions, predispositions and responses

### 3 Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. The research character of this literature study relies on secondary data to answer research questions. These data come from previous publications of scientists, data from journalistic reports, official government documents relevant to this research, and other data available online that can strengthen the analysis in this article.

Especially for online data searches, this study uses several keywords to obtain secondary data such as women's representation, voting behaviour, Minangkabau ethnicity, Pilkada, elections, feminism, gender, modernization, and community culture. There is no specific year in tracking these secondary data because this study also looks at the chronological aspect to see voting behavior in West Sumatra to collect all relevant data. The analysis of this study uses the researcher's interpretation through the classification of secondary data and categorization of data into themes according to the research problem.

### 4 Results and Discussion

This section describes some of the factors that lead to inconsistent perceptions of the people of West Sumatra with their political choices. Although in general, they do not object to the presence of female candidates in the Pilkada. Unfortunately, when they had to manifest in a political choice, they took action not to vote for the female candidate. This inconsistent perception and voting behavior they display indeed raises questions. Why does this inconsistent attitude appear when they strongly support women in the public sphere?

Most of these voters are young and pre-adult generations with a high level of education and are literate in information and communication technology. By his theory, political modernization can change individual perceptions and influence the formation of their behavior according to values and beliefs to respond to the stimulus that comes to them.

For example, it is related to individual choices to support women in political activities to fulfill the number of women's representation. The stimulus is the strengthening of the affirmative movement over the last two decades in Indonesia to support the representation of women in political positions. Even the laws and regulations emphasize this so that women get the same opportunity to become regional heads or legislature members. Unfortunately, with this inconsistent choice of voters in the Pilkada, the representation of women has become low and even tends to fall.

For example, women's electability as members of the West Sumatra DPRD in the 2014 election as many as seven or 10.76% of female seats dropped in the 2019 election to four seats or 6.15% of the existing 65 seats. Has political modernization in West Sumatran society not occurred so that the affirmative movement related to women's representation does not get support.

The Spektrum Politika survey results found the position of women in political activities as follows. The survey found that as many as 58.2% of the people of West Sumatra believe women can face the "hardness" of the political world full of intrigue. As many as 61.6% of voters in West Sumatra also do not discriminate between female and male candidates when making political choices in the Pilkada.

Likewise, community values and beliefs about the ability of women to lead political institutions are as good as men, which is 46.6%. Unfortunately, when the various values and beliefs that shape the perceptions they argue are related to whether they are willing to vote for women if they run for regional heads or members of the legislature, it turns out that their choices are polarized on women the following three attitudes. As many as 45% of the public are still hesitant to vote for a female candidate, 29% said they would vote for a female candidate, and as many as 26% said they would not vote for a female candidate (Kampai, 2020).

Another interesting fact, in terms of nominating women as regional head candidates, it turns out that not many women have volunteered as regional head candidates in West Sumatra. For example, in the 2015 simultaneous regional head elections, out of 13 elections held in districts/cities and one province with 42 pairs of candidates for regional head/deputy regional head, there was only one woman who ran as a candidate for deputy mayor of Bukittinggi. Then, in the simultaneous regional elections in 2020, out of 13 regencies/cities and one province that held elections, of the 49 pairs of candidates who registered, only one female candidate appeared in Tanah Datar Regency for regent.

These two candidates were also not elected in the simultaneous regional head elections in 2015 and 2020. A small number of women registered as candidates for regional head or deputy regional head, but they also lost in the contestation. The perception built on values and beliefs when the survey was conducted very supportive of this female candidate. Unfortunately, when this perception becomes voting behavior, it turns out to be not in line with the perception they have in mind.

This article finds that four factors cause inconsistency in their perceptions, attitudes, and actions in elections, especially Pilkada. First, the effect of pluralism that affects voting behavior in the simultaneous regional elections in 2020. With a minimal number of women running for Pilkada and pragmatic voters, it is difficult for women to be elected in Pilkada. Political pluralism eliminates the pragmatic way of thinking in individuals when understanding politics in the short term, namely the desire to prioritize women's representation in political positions. This pragmatism relates to the short-term thinking of individuals to benefit directly or indirectly from the choices they make. Political pragmatism is an individual's effort to build consensus from the reality around them (Marsonet, 2009).

However, the fact is that the consensus that they get from the values and political beliefs of the political modernization process that occurs must change because of the pluralism that lives and develops in the unique political environment. On the one hand, pragmatism tries to view agreements as homogeneous by looking at the values that develop in people's lives. Although, in reality, not all of them can accept this consensus.

Therefore, this political pragmatism is somewhat contrary to pluralism which gives space to the diversity of values that develop in reality, such as in the life of the Minangkabau ethnic group in West Sumatra Province. However, there is a formation of political perceptions through processing cognition with their political values and beliefs in the long term. The powerful influence of political pluralism changes that perception. This pluralism is in line with the theory of liberal democracy, placing elements of open competition in an election so that the representation of women in political institutions is rarely realized (Waylen, 2015).

In this context, political modernization has given birth to pragmatic values amid pluralism that shapes individual political beliefs in their communities. Unfortunately, not all individuals agree with the affirmative movement to involve women in political activities. They oppose the idea that feminist struggles encourage women in political activity. The fact is that political modernization is not strong enough to shape individual values and belief systems to elect women to participate in political activities. The proof is that although they have gained knowledge and knowledge about women's involvement in politics, they have not been able to shape their political behavior to elect women candidates in the Pilkada.

Pluralism related to the cultural values of the people of West Sumatra, especially the Minangkabau ethnicity, is difficult to agree with the new values and beliefs resulting from political modernization. As a result, the feminist agenda that developed in the 1960s encouraged women to be represented in political office. In the life of the Minangkabau ethnic group in West Sumatra Province, value pluralism dominates their preferences by liberating their political choices, and political choices are not specifically aimed at women for particular political positions. The strength of pluralism as a pull factor dominates people's thinking so that it affects their political behavior not to vote for women in the Pilkada. However, their perception of women is very positive because of the result of political modernization.

Second, political modernization has encouraged political institutions to carry out their functions in society. One of them is a political party in the political system that carries out political education. Political education is carried out in the form of internalizing political values through a socialization process.

Unfortunately, political parties cannot carry out these functions, thus influencing the formation of individual political behavior. If the socialization of political values does not go well, then the perception formed related to politics will also be harmful. Although their value systems and beliefs related to politics have been formed from within the family or school environment, strengthening new political values through political socialization is also needed to emerge positive public perceptions of women's involvement in politics.

It is public knowledge that political parties fail to carry out their functions in society. People try to understand the political realities around them. As a result, the absorption of political values does not match their expectations. Although individuals receive information about the importance of women's representation as part of the democratic process, unfortunately, their positive perceptions are not in line with the dominant voting behavior shaped by the environment around the individual (Connors, 2020).

The case in West Sumatra Province emphasizes this, namely when the community has a positive perception of the values of women's representation. However, due to the absence of education through the socialization of political values by parties, their political values and



beliefs do not parallel their voting behavior. As a result, individual political perceptions and choices of female candidates in the Pilkada are inconsistent. Not many people in West Sumatra receive routine political education from parties, except only before the general election and during the campaign period. This condition changes the public's perception of politics so that their attitudes and behavior will also change when choosing a female candidate.

Third, another problem in choosing political positions in society is the rise of money politics. This money politics led to transactional politics, which ended in buying and selling votes involving political brokers. This political broker acts as a winning team for regional head candidates or legislative candidates. They distribute money to voters to direct people's choices to particular candidates. Money politics is getting more robust due to political patronage and clientelism in Indonesia (Aspinall, 2016).

Moreover, the condition of poverty in society further exacerbates this practice of clientelism. Usually, this means of buying and selling votes involving patron-client relations occurs during the Pilkada campaign. Brokers try to bridge the interests of regional head candidates or legislative candidates to get votes from voters (Asrinaldi, 2020). Of course, the patron's efforts to fulfill the client's interests are with money and giving gifts and souvenirs in the hope that there will be votes for the candidate who gave the gifts and souvenirs.

The perception formed due to the political modernization process that occurs is not strong enough to encourage voters to behave rationally. This money politics has much influence on voters in the Pilkada. Moreover, with economic problems, it becomes a severe problem for people on the outskirts and who live in rural areas far from the supervision of the Pilkada organizers so that money politics becomes an alternative for them to meet their needs. They are using money to win the Pilkada since the democratic transition after the New Order regime has worsened democracy in Indonesia. People always expect money, gifts, and souvenirs in every election to be exchanged for their votes.

Although the number of people who fall into this category is not large, it tarnishes the practice of electoral democracy, especially in forming rational voters. Therefore, it is not surprising that the public's perception of women to occupy political positions was initially positive. However, because of the urge to meet economic needs, they replaced their choice with a sum of money or gifts from brokers or candidates.

Fourth, the problem of non-parallel perception with voting behavior is because of information engineering. This information engineering exists in various forms, such as misleading opinions, fake news, or opinion swaying to specific candidates in the form of news that they absorb. As a result, the perceptions they form based on values and beliefs change. The fact is that although political modernization can shape individual perceptions, the dominance of misleading information affects their political behavior.

For example, the Spektrum Politica survey found that the people of West Sumatra perceive female candidates in the Pilkada as positive. This individual's positive perception is the result of political modernization that affects public knowledge about the importance of women's representation in political positions. Unfortunately, the influence of environmental factors around the individual through the circulating news dominates the information so that it affects the individual's political behavior.

Especially in the development of information and communication technology, the emergence of a lot of news and information that is a hoax, misleading information, and opinionated information affects individual perceptions (Park & Zùñiga, 2020). The formation of individual perceptions is directly related to absorbing information that they absorb from the existing mass media and social media coverage.

Although individuals have sufficient knowledge of the substance they understand about female candidates, the dominance of reporting that takes place systematically and continuously can change the individual's perception. This phenomenon occurs in voters in West Sumatra Province so that they do not vote for female candidates in the Pilkada because their perception is lost because of the dominance of information systematically to change people's perceptions.

## 5 Conclusion

This article explains the influence of political modernization in shaping public perceptions regarding the position of women as candidates for regional heads or legislative candidates. Political modernization adds knowledge to individuals and improves the political system, including its units, to function correctly. Although political modernization can affect the formation of individual perceptions, stimulus factors originating from the individual's environment can change the individual's values and beliefs.

Of course, there needs to be a strengthening of individual perceptions based on their political values and beliefs so that their political attitudes and actions are in line. This strengthening is the responsibility of political parties to affirm individual political values and beliefs and in line with their voting behavior. For example, political parties in the political system carry out the function of political education to strengthen individual perceptions in understanding the surrounding environment. Unfortunately, the ineffectiveness of this political education function has an impact on inconsistent perceptions of their voting behavior.

In addition, this article also finds that individual perceptions that are not in line with their voting behavior impact the substantial value of pluralism that dominates the perception of the people of West Sumatra. Indeed, the values and beliefs of individual voters who are ethnically Minangkabau do not question the involvement of women in political activities. However, the pluralism of values and beliefs that develop in society affects the consistency of perceptions with individual political actions, namely voting behavior in Pilkada. Precisely the influence of pull factors from outside the individual is more dominant than push factors from within the individual. Another problem that causes this inconsistency is the community's weak economic factors, which affect the formation of their political attitudes.

Moreover, in the context of elections in Pilkada, brokers always offer money in exchange for their votes to elect specific candidates. As a result, their perception of women has changed due to the influence of money politics. This condition worsens when the information that develops within the individual circles the position of women because of negative campaigns, the spread of false news, and the swaying of opinions for specific political interests. This group utilizes mass media so that individual perceptions are not parallel with voting behavior when offered by female candidates in the Pilkada.

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