BREAKING BARRIERS: WOMEN'S POLITICAL MOBILIZATION IN RURAL VILLAGE HEAD ELECTIONS

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Article Info	Abstract
Keyword: Political Mobilization Village Head Women	This article describes the victory of female Village Head candidates in Village Head elections as a rare occurrence, mainly due to women's lack of access to leadership positions due to a solid patriarchal culture. However, once elected, women proved to have the competence to lead, demonstrating that women can be leaders at the village level. Cultural shifts, especially in Javanese culture, have allowed women to be involved in the public sphere, including in organizations such as Family Empowerment and Welfare (PKK), Dasawisma, and others. This study uses a qualitative approach and case study method to examine the victory of female Village Head candidates. Data was obtained through observation, dialog, and in-depth interviews. The results show that women can gather and mobilize political power from various sources to influence voters and dominate the dynamics of village democracy. Leadership habitus, symbolic domination, hegemony of social institutions, and kinship are the main instruments utilized by female Village Head candidates. They utilize leadership experience in kinship institutions and social kinship to win the Village Head election. Despite challenges such as cultural stigma and limited resources, these women demonstrated the ability to navigate and change the dynamics of rural democracy. This study contributes to an important discourse on women's democracy.
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Introduction

The victory of female village head candidates in village head elections is rare because women do not have access to positions or occupy important positions in everything, including leadership. Studies of the rejection of women as village heads (Nursholikah, 2016) evidence this. However, after being elected, women are considered to have the competence to lead (Nursholikah, 2016). This competence is proof that women can become leaders in a village. Meanwhile, women are considered only positioned in the domestic space, whereas in Javanese culture women are subordinated to "*konco wingking*", so that their space for movement is limited

and marginalized. This system is felt to be so firmly gripping on cultures that adhere to the patrilineal and matrilineal systems (Sabiq et al., 2022).

Several women have succeeded in becoming village heads and are considered to have succeeded in advancing their villages. Female village heads have run village government, discipline in time management, the ability to involve all groups, and finally openness to plan implementation, which is not inferior to male leadership (Utaminingsih et al., 2020). The stereotype of subordinated women gradually disappears with the existence of women who can become leaders by exerting all their abilities (Hasanah, 2020).

In its development, culturally (especially in Javanese culture). There has been a shift in the involvement of women in the public sphere, which was initially only in the domestic sphere. This implies that women have the opportunity to develop themselves in society (Budiati, 2010). Such as the involvement of women in the Pemberdayaan dan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (PKK), Dasawisma, and other community organizations that develop women. This cultural shift proves the potential for women to participate in the public sphere (including becoming village heads) (Budiati, 2010). It also shows that there are more opportunities for women to Show Off, Showing their existence in the form of leading a village and being able to mobilize politics with various parties, not just with fellow women.

At this time village heads are regulated through Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2024 concerning the Second Amendment to Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, this Law provides additional regulations on villages in Indonesia, between Article 5 and Article 6 there is an article regarding the regulation of villages in nature reserve areas, nature conservation areas, Production forests, and production plantations, are entitled to conservation and/or rehabilitation funds. Article 39 which regulates the term of office of the Village Head for 8 (eight) years starting from the date of inauguration can serve a maximum of 2 (two) consecutive or non-consecutive terms. This arrangement is a challenge for women to be able to serve in organizing government, development, community development, and community empowerment in the village following the provisions of laws and regulations by Article 26 paragraph 1.

The village head is the sole ruler in the village government to carry out and administer the village household affairs and government affairs (Surbakti, 1992). However, he has limits in carrying out his duties and cannot obey his wishes, the village head is bound by the applicable laws and regulations, so he cannot perform duties outside of the applicable laws and regulations. The village head also has severe challenges and opportunities in pioneering, directing, guiding, guiding, and mobilizing his community, the village head must have influence and supervision over the actions of the village community he leads so that his vision and mission while leading become realized (Averus & Alfina, 2020). Men and women have equal rights in leading their villages, thus no longer placing women in subordinated and weak positions.

Previous literature studies on village democracy are generally divided into several, namely: studies conducted by Baogang He on village democracy and kinship in China show kinship access that enters the village political process, such as manifestations of kinship increase one's electability, kinship affects voter behavior in the village, and the main lineage that dominates an area affects electability in the village (He, 2007). Neneng Yani Yuningsih and Valina Singka Subekti in the study of village democracy in the West Java region with a comparison of traditional, transitional, and modern villages show the experience of community organizations / social institutions as social capital for village head candidates in gaining the votes of villagers because the experience of village heads shapes voters' views of village head candidates (Yuningsih & Subekti, 2016). The study conducted by Wawan and Mohamad Iyos Rosyid shows that in the Village Head election, there is a Local Strongman factor that can make

female Village Head candidates win, this Local Strongman can mobilize the masses, so instead of challenging patriarchy, this victory uses patriarchal methods (Wawan & Rosyid, 2023). Study Frans Bapa Tokan and Urbanus Ola show closeness to a figure who has a significant influence/village elite as a means of gaining power in village studies in the East Flores area (Tokan & Ola, 2020). Regi Refian Garis and Tina Trisnia found a lack of women's participation in village democracy in Muktisari village due to a lack of support from village elders/influential people (Garis & Trisnia, 2021). Istri Nursholikah explains the model of women's leadership in rural democracy (Nursholikah, 2016). There are few studies on how female village head candidates gather strength to win village head elections. This paper aims to be a means of critiquing the opinion that states the still strong patriarchal culture in rural communities, showing that women are also capable of mobilizing political power and instead become actors in supra-village politics. In addition, this paper also aims to develop previous studies on women's political power in village democracy with women as village heads.

Research Method

The writing uses qualitative approaches and case studies (Creswell, 2003). The data collection techniques used are observation, dialogue, and deep interviews (Conger, 1998) with village chiefs, informants (voters and villagers), and local religious leaders. The tentative hypothesis is that the results of this paper show that women can gather and mobilize political power from various countries. Resource/a source of political capital to influence voters and demonstrate their dominance in village democracy. This paper cannot only focus on the dynamics of village head elections followed by the village head mother. The data in this paper, both the identity of the place and the identity of the informant and respondent, are kept secret and then disguised with the consent of all parties (Johnson & Reynolds, 2016).

Results and Discussions

Habitus Leadership and Symbolic Domination

The concept of habitus is a system of internalization of mental and cognitive structures due to everything that people face in the social world (Ritzer, 2011). The process of internalization cannot be separated from experience, perception, or action (Turner, 2009). The existence of habitus cannot be separated from the arena/Field Because the two interact. Then, the arena that interacts with habitus understands a network of relations between objective positions. It aims to limit agents (Ritzer, 2011), especially in the arena of power where each other shows strength (both economic and political). Everyone competes to legitimize as the domineering. It became a symbol of the struggle to dominate others. A class domination that becomes that power in an arena leads to political capital (Pierre Bourdieu, 2019).

Based on results deep interviews with respondents and dialogue with several informants indicate that there is a leadership habitus attached to the village head. This is because the village head has long been active in social institutions in the village such as the PKK, Fatayat, Muslimat, and Dasawisma. She even became the chairman of the village PKK and the village Muslimat (Pierre Bourdieu, 2019). This shows the existence of a mechanism of reproduction of local leadership and the rise of identity politics in rural contexts as shown in Sofyan's research in successfully photographing social reproduction in the form of leadership and the rise of identity politics in South Sulawesi (Sjaf, n.d.).

In addition, based on observations and dialogues with several informants, the village chief's family is a family that has positions in several government agencies. So, the family in this

case can be an arena that creates the village head mother as a leader. Thus, there was an internalization of leadership in the figure of the village head mother due to being active and being a leader in these social and family institutions as her arena so far (Ritzer, 2011). This internalization shapes the behavior of the village head in her desire to advance and develop the village. So, she felt compelled to be one of the candidates for village head in the village head election, this habitus is considered to be an important factor in gaining support from the community, the social capital owned by the village chief's wife is well accumulated and plays an important role in gaining large community support votes so that it can lead to the victory of the village head election contestation (Yanur, 2019).

Habitus, as the leader of the family arena and social institutions, turned out to be a symbol of the struggle of the village head. The existence of symbols that are unconsciously shown to the village community forms the residents' perspective on the dominance of the village head. Facts from field data show the symbolization of power and cause changes in voter behavior. This was proven in dialogue with several informants that the social institutions that were followed and the extended family became one of the winning factors of the village head. This influence also shows that the habitus of the village head interacts with the structure of the village community as an arena and creates a symbol of power and dominance over the village leadership (Pierre Bourdieu, 2019).

The Hegemony of Social Institutions and Kinship as Political Capital

Chillford Geertz in "The Nation The Theatre of State in Nineteenth-Century Bali," found that there are institutions that underlie supravillage politics. The institution is more in the form of an alliance than a clan of each level of society that unites itself and forms a community of alliances in which it has hegemony to show/perform political theatrics in the form of intrigue, access, and dominance of its alliance. Everyone tries to bind themselves to it for privileged access (Clifford Geertz, 1980).

It is also found in conservation, dialogue with informants, and deep interviews with respondents. That, the village head mother invites and gets access to social institutions such as Fatayat, Muslimat, PKK, Dasawisma, and Ansor to win her. She seemed to make the institution her alliance (just as was done in supra-village politics in Bali in Chillford Geertz's research) in the election of village heads (Clifford Geertz, 1980).

Social institutions that became the "winning" alliance of the village head based on observation and dialogue performed supra-village political plays in the form of "alms" and the doctrine of choosing buds for the villagers (Clifford Geertz, 1980). The hegemony of the institution is presented in the politics of electing village heads supported by observational data on the existence of traditional Islam (N.U. / Nahdatul Ulama) and social institutions affiliated with it, such as Muslimat, Fatayat, and Ansor control the area. Thus, access to social institutions in the name of religion was used by the village head and proved effective in demonstrating the dominance of religious power in the villagers (Clifford Geertz, 1980). Moreover, traditional religious traditions in the style of Nahdatul Ulama' (which, of course, are carried out by social institutions such as Fatayat, Muslimat, and Ansor) are still thick and firmly rooted there. Thus, this is also evidence of a political charade in the form of doctrine with social institutions as an 'alliance' of the village head (Clifford Geertz, 1980).

Then, there are "alms" distributed through social institutions. "winning" the village head (based on data from deep interviews with respondents and dialogue with some informants) is a form of existence money politics. Money politics is one of the inhibiting factors of reform in democracy in Indonesia (Ulum, 2020). This is because money politics Harm the existence of objective voter participation, especially in the context of village head elections (Tjahjoko, 2020).

Thus, the existence of actual 'alms' in the context of money politics has changed the objectivity of voters. Based on the dialogue results with several informants, they felt they had been given "*gawanan*" (souvenirs) by the village chief's mother. Thus, there must be an appropriate reply for the 'gift of the village chief's mother,' namely by electing the village head mother in the village head election (Adhinata, 2019).

The election of village heads, kinship is one of the instruments used in the democratic process of selecting village heads. Georges Balandier, in his book "Political Anthropology," mentions that in the political aspect, kinship contributes as a form of the development of ancestral descendants (Ancestor) who continuously form a group of lineages combined with external relations (usually marriage, thus causing the formation of a group of descendants (lineage group), this is the trigger for the formation of a territory or territory of a group to produce a political entity (Balandier, 1970). For more details please look at this chart.
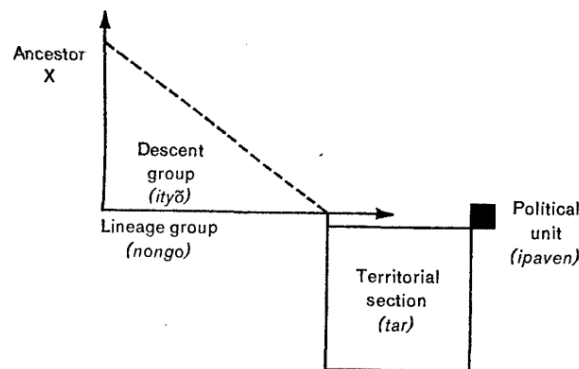

Figure 1: Lineage Structure, Territorial Structure and Political Structure. (Balandier Quotes from The Tiv Opinion).

Baogang He in a study entitled "rural democracy in China" Stating that kinship is a valuable mechanism against the Communist Party-dominated Chinese government structure makes the domination of kinship forces essential (He, 2007). So in this case kinship becomes an access privilege in maintaining village power hegemony.

In interviews with respondents, it was found that the village head's mother also used kinship as a tool to achieve victory in the village head election with the support of three bani/families being a factor in the victory of the village head election. The extended family has formed a political entity that supports the village chief in the village head election (Balandier, 1970). In addition, three families of the village chief's mother settled in the same village as the election. Thus, this fact shows the trigger for territorial kinship formed in the village. Furthermore, according to data obtained from some informants, they perceive the necessity to choose the village head's mother because they feel like relatives (although in fact observation, they/informants do not belong to the lineage/relatives of the village chief's mother) (Balandier, 1970).

In terms of kinship as an instrument of election of the village head, the informant provided data that the village head's mother's family had occupied the seat of village government for decades, this was evidenced by the respondent's statement, which had been validated by the informant as well as the extended family part of the village head's mother was a village secretary who was not yet in office. Kinship dominance in the village apparatus structure is a privilege for the village head mother in increasing her influence to win village head elections, as in Bagong He is finding dominance in increasing electability (He, 2007).

Not only that, the informant also stated that the relatives of the village chief's mother, both internal in her lineage and external descendants, significantly dominated the arena of power

of the village, so based on the statement of rival informants from the village chief's mother was still within the scope of her kinship. This fact shows the formation of relations towards supra-village political entities formed by three large family members of the village head mother (Balandier, 1970).

When viewed from its historical aspect, in the struggle for women's emancipation during the Dutch colonial period, R.A. Kartini indirectly used kinship space as an instrument in hegemonizing the Dutch colonial in "exploiting" Kartini's narrative about "After Dark Comes Light." Behind the strength of R.A. Kartini in her struggle, her father's status as regent and R.A. Kartini, who incidentally came from a noble family, were also influential in her struggle (Nur Said, 2014). When viewed from the data obtained, both from observations results of deep interviews with responders and dialogue with informants. The dominance of kinship owned and utilized by the village head was a model of a noble family, just like R.A. Kartini (Nur Said, 2014). This view also helps the village head mother to win the village head election and 'control' the voters' votes given the reputation of the village head.

After examining data obtained from the field in the form of observations, deep interviews with respondents, and dialogue with informants by conducting descriptive analysis with various theories and findings in various studies. Thus, it can be concluded that the hypothesis about women having the ability to gather and mobilize political power from various sources/sources of political capital to influence voters (Bahtiar & Purwaningsih, 2019) and show their dominance in the dynamics of village democracy is proven through data and analysis in this paper (Ahmad et al., 2023; Singh, 2016).

The leadership habitus of the village head's mother makes motivational behavior to participate in the village head election. Then, this leadership habitus, accompanied by the existence of an arena of power that has long been controlled by the village head (such as her position as Muslimat leader and PKK chairman), has unwittingly formed a symbol to the voters that the village head deserves to lead (Hamzah & Purba, 2023). Capital in the form of mobilization with social institutions such as Fatayat, Muslimat, Ansor, Dasawisma, and PKK is used by the village head using doctrine and 'alms'. This fact shows the hegemony of social institutions affiliated with the village head to win the village head's choice (Aminuddin & Ramadlan, 2022). In addition, hegemony is like a political charade carried out to win the sympathy of voters/villagers. Then, the dominance of the institution is also evidenced by the fact that the village is controlled by traditionalist Islam in the style of Nahdatul Ulama' so that organizations such as Fatayat, Muslimat, and Ansor have strong supra-village political power and show their dominance in the village (Ainiyah, 2018).

The strong kinship that has formed a unified political entity within the village is put to good use by the village head ("The Grassroots Reform and Reconstruction of the Countryside in China," 2020). This is supported by the fact that most of the village head's extended family is domiciled in the same village. In addition, her extended family, consisting of 3 (three) bani families, became a village head through kinship lines passed down from generation to generation in turn namely a political dynasty (Ivanna & Hutasuhut, 2021), this can happen in the election of Kabupaten, Kotamadya, and Provincial leaders (Suranto et al., 2019; Widyastuti et al., 2022). Thus, the field facts are in the form of informants' confessions that they chose because they felt that the village head was part of a unique family (such as nobles/village elites) and part of the village head's extended family (even though in field data they were not part of the village head's extended family).

With these three instruments, which were put to good use by the village head, the village head gave results in the form of victory in the village head election. Then, it shows that women can also form political power in the village and mobilize crucial elements in the village. However,

in terms of access to kinship dominance, not all women get it (Anisa Agustin et al., 2022). However, suppose women already have access to kinship dominance and they use it well. In that case, it does not rule out the possibility that women can become leaders and break the stigma that women are less able to become leaders and even gather political power around them. Thus, this paper offers a critique of views that still emphasize patriarchal culture in rural communities, as well as showing that women also can mobilize political power and become actors in supra-village politics (Adawiyah et al., 2020). In addition, this paper also proposes to develop further studies on the role and political power of women in village democracy, especially in the context of women as village heads.

Conclusion

The victory of female village head candidates in the contestation of village head elections in Indonesia shows the potential of women's competence to become leaders in a village. It is undeniable that Javanese society has experienced a shift in patriarchal culture; it is not wrong if women are actively involved in the public sphere, including in leading a village. Various factors influence the dynamics of village democracy, including kinship relations, experience of community organizations, closeness to village elites, and support from influential figures. This article shows that women, when they have access to and utilize existing political resources, can win village head elections by mobilizing support from various parties, including social and kinship institutions.

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