

## **The Oligarchy Of Power And Women's Leadership In Politics Local In Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

*The stigma of good women in society is those who can carry out a dual role as wives as well as mothers. This article describes the ratio of analysis and redefinition of women's leadership in the local political constellation. The election of pesantren women to become regional heads shows the collapse of patriarchal culture. Women in the modern era have already undergone the functions that significant in the spaces public. They are no longer confined to domestic space. Many of them have become leaders in the community, certain organizations have even become leaders of the state. The purpose of this paper complements the lack of existing studies that ignore the rationality of women's leadership in the political realm as regional heads at the local level. In many cases, women who run for the regional government are many who have lost their elections. The data used in research is qualitative which is collected through the technique of observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were made when political women candidates nominated to become regional heads. Persistence and political style became role models for regional head candidates from leadership women cadres. Able to inspire cadres and able to generate trust themselves the cadres muslimat to fight and seize victory. The nature trust yourself, do not know to give up, and continued to fight*

**Keywords: regional election: leadership women: local politic: democracy: patriarchal culture**

### **A. Introduction**

The globalization age and the industrial era have given a moment to women to contribute as political leader in local areas (Joosse & Willey, 2020). Gender differences are no longer becoming a fundamental issue. Men and women have the same opportunity and rights to become leaders based on their abilities and qualities (Dhar, 2018). The ideas about women's leadership, Islamic economy, digital era, and web-based global collaboration called wkinomics for future business development are very interesting to discuss, especially in the Indonesian context (Dewi, 2017). One of the ideas is that it is necessary to strive continuously for 'affirmative action' towards the greater role of women in all fields of development including economy and business(Prager, 2020) .There has been a well established stigma in everyday life of society that women should be good mothers and wives and do not fit into the realm of politics. It is not uncommon to hear that women themselves do not support female political candidates because it is not in accordance with their conception with emphasis that "leaders should be men- (Sumbas, 2020).

Women are often considered to have different natures from men. Even among women themselves there have been fundamental problems in which they believe that it is

appropriate for men and women to share domestic and public responsibilities (Abdullah, 2016). Thus, in addition to men, women also need to be told about related issues. The institutionalization of the "conception of men leaders " which poses an obstacle to women's political participation stems from the patriarchal and subordinate structure (Lassébie, 2020; Shin, 2020; Sumbas, 2020). Social life as an extension of the patriarchal structure places women in subordinate positions and gives men the opportunity to lead. Women in the patriarchal culture are considered to be complementary to the existing system, so it preserves the unequal relations between men and women (Prager, 2020). The issue of women's leadership was selected as the object in this study because the rationality and acceptance of women's leadership in the political arena has become increasingly prevalent at the local level since the implementation of direct regional elections. Women's electability has undermined the dominance of men in the patriarchal culture (Azizah, 2014). There have been many female leaders in the era of democracy currently propagated in Indonesia. The case covered in this study is specific to women's leadership in several regions of East Java (Shaya & Abu Khait, 2017). It was selected based on the level of representation in which East Java is the barometer of national politics in line with its largest population in vote contribution.

This article aims to complement the shortcomings of existing studies which has not fully covered the rationality of women's leadership in the political sphere at the local level. In many cases, women who run for leadership of regional governments have lost in elections (Azizah & Armoyu, 2019). Moreover, two research questions are formulated: (a) Rationalization of Muslim Women's Leadership in East Java Politics. (b) What factors do lead Muslim women and fatayat NU to be elected as regional heads? (c) How does the leadership of Muslim women affect the democratic process in the local political dynamics. The methods and data used in this study are qualitative, collected through observation techniques, interviews, and documentation. The observations were made during the candidacy of political women to run for a regional head. candidates socialize themselves through flyers spread across various social media to map the data of research results. Interviews were conducted on nu female figures who enlivened the exchange of regional head candidates. Political parties as vehicles and carrying regional head candidates as a candidate in the Electoral Commission (KPU). The interview took place in Jombang Regency. Probolinggo, Lumajang, Mojokerto, Kediri and in Surabaya. Documentation is used to obtain information about the process of utilizing the big names of the local elite to hegemonize the community to vote. The data collection results are analyzed in a description and interpretation of both observation data and interview data.

The data is then analyzed with data analysis techniques similar to Milles and Hubermans (Miles, Matthew B, 1994), namely collecting data, exposing, then reducing and verifying. Data in the form of interview results, combined with observation and observation data is then presented and reduced data by discarding data that does not support research, and the final stage of verifying data. Theories on the issue of women's leadership in the local political democracy since the direct regional head elections were enacted in this study.

## **B. Literature Review**

### **The Rise of NU Women's Leadership in Politics**

Women's leadership in Islam (Ibrahim, 2018), female leaders should be eager to lead with any leadership model of both participatory and transformational (Paludi & Denmark, 2018). The leaders must be able to set the direction and goals of continuous quality improvement and make effective decisions about improving organizational quality

in order to increase the satisfaction of organizational members (Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, & Burke, 2017; Hoyt & Murphy, 2016). The research by Muslim and Wandu reveals several important characteristics of a leader, namely: (1) Having high self-confidence, optimism, and rationality in dealing with any problems; (2) Having the courage to take risks in realizing the shared vision of the organization and willing to make changes in new approaches, ideas, or of solving problems; (3) Having inspirational influence or strong personal attachment that makes all members feel close and can motivate better performance improvement from them; (4) Having the ability to stimulate individual efforts by identifying the existing potential and to help the intellectual development (Muslim & Wandu, 2019; Purnamasari, 2016).

Muslim women in Uzbekistan in this modern era have played important roles in the public space. They were no longer confined to the domestic space (Peshkova, 2015). In fact, many of them have become leaders in the community, certain organizations, or even the state leader. However, it is not uncommon for women to be positioned as the second being (the second sex). It seems that this phenomenon still appear in a religious context. For example, in Islamic leadership they should not occupy the highest position. Women are still considered to have no male leaders' characteristics such as bravery and strength considered as the most potential traits of leaders. This paper will attempt to uncover the problem of women's leadership by using a sociological analysis of religion, in this case Islam, the religion which provides ample opportunities for women to take part in various aspects of life (Hamka, 2016).

Women's leadership is equal to that of men in playing active roles in the public, social, economic, educational, cultural, and political sphere. From here, the discourse produces knowledge as well as creates power, namely knowledge of gender equality as well as creating power for women to take part in the public domain like men. In Foucault's view (Pollack, Lehmann, & Medina, 1991), power is productive because it creates a new constellation in the society. With this gender equality discourse, according to Jawad (Marsot & Jawad, 2000), the existence of women is placed in the positions with the same rights as men in public leadership such as: participating in elections, becoming political candidates, and obtaining political positions. Women are equal to men in the right to work and work protection, the right to economic independence, the right to higher education, the right to a healthy life, and the right to leadership (Purwanto, 2019).

### **Democratization and Local Politic**

The simultaneous regional head elections in Indonesia have been held since 2017. *Pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) women in East Java have made use of this momentum. Of the thirty eight (38) regencies / municipalities in East Java, ten (10) regional head elections were won by women and five (5) female regional heads, whether governors, regents or mayors, comes from *Pesantren* or from the independent institutional bodies of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) namely Muslimat, Fatayat NU and IPPNU. From several women who won regional heads throughout East Java Province, we can see some Nahdlatul Ulama cadres are from the independent institutional bodies including Muslimat, Fatayat, and IPPNU. Nahdlatul Ulama is the largest socio-religious organization in Indonesia with the highest influence during the general elections in Indonesia, both the presidential election, governor election, and regent or mayor election. NU cadres have high bargaining power and are considered candidates for regional heads.

The large size of NU base prompts NU elites to show their active political participation and their support for candidates who from NU, for example the support of the Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU) Executive Board in the East Java Governor election on June 27 2018 to Saifullah Yusuf also known as Gus Ipul, a former Chairman of the Central Board of the Ansor Youth Movement, a former Minister of Disadvantaged

Regions, and Deputy Governor of East Java for two periods accompanying Soekarwo. He again ran for the Governor seat of accompanied by Puti Guruh Sukarno who was promoted by two parties, namely the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) and the National Awakening Party (PKB). Meanwhile, his competitor, Khofifah Indah Parawansa, also came from NU cadre. She was then elected as Governor of East Java for the period 2018 - 2023. Khofifah is the General Chairperson of Muslimat NU, the first woman to run for the position of Governor of East Java.

In fact, this election led to the NU women's victory of becoming the Regional Head after experiencing two defeats in the 2008-2013 election and the 2013-2018 election respectively. Apart from khofifah, there were four other names of NU women who won and were elected in regional head elections in East Java, namely; munjidah wahab as the Regent of Jombang, Ika Puspitasari as the Mayor of Mojokerto, Ana Muawanah as the Regent of Bojonegoro, and Lilik Muhibah as the Deputy Mayor of Kediri. Based on the background of the above problems, there are two problem formulated, namely: What kind of *Pesantren* women's winning achievements are able to broaden the constituent base (Broadening Base). How are the strategies and movements of *pesantren* women on the political stage to defeat male political elites and change the patriarchal culture in East Java.

The practice of local politics is implemented through the provision of infrastructure and technical services such as road construction, drainage facilities, street lighting, water supply, and so on. All of these contribute to the societal development that reflects political ideas as community development and social service (Haug, Aasland, & Aasen, 2020). Local politics and policy-makers are always extra-local, which is carried out in various ways. This local politics functions as part of policy mobility (Temenos & McCann, 2012). In Madura, the applied local politics is placed on the basis of local wisdom with the aim of ethically creating a local political life as a space for self-actualization without any form of intimidation, intervention or dictation. If this does not happen, local politics cannot become independent politics (Hidayat, 2012). In Routa, Papuan local politics are created in a polemic of identity as indigenous people. In the election for the Regent position, a candidate promotes his status as the only "Papuan" candidate in the hope that such qualification will attract a large majority of native Papuan votes (McWilliam, 2011).

In Korean national politics, patronage greatly influences politics, but it does not have similar influences in the local context. It happens because local civil society can play an important role in improving the quality of local politics (Kim, 2006, 2015; Kim & Han, 2015). Local politics in Indonesia has undergone very dynamic changes over the last few decades. Two aspects that stand out from the dynamism of Indonesian local politics are: first, the attempt to control local politics by the central power because of its seductive resources; second, the emergence of local strongmen as a result of political control by the central power. From the beginning of national independence until the New Order era, Indonesian local politics were intervened by the interests of the political elite from the central power. However, in the reformation era, the local politics succeeded in accentuating its identity and easily gained space and power through the decentralization system as part of regional empowerment even though it is still heavily influenced by national political dynamism (Yusoff, 2010)

### C. Result and Discussion

#### The Victory on NU Women as Regional Head

Broadening Base or mass base of pesantren women winning the East Java regional elections are Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) cadres. Three independent institutional bodies housing the *pesantren* women are Muslimat, Fatayat and IPPNU. However, all women candidates elected as regional heads in East Java in the simultaneous regional elections on 27 June 2018 came from Muslimat NU organization. The following are the names of *pesantren* women elected as regional heads:

Table.1. Muslimat NU Women Cadres Winning Regional Election

No	Name	Regional Elections	NU Organization	Supporting Parties
1	Khofifah Parawansa	Indar Governor East Java	of General Chairperson of Muslimat	Demokrat, Golkar, PAN, PPP, NasDem, Hanura
2.	Munjidah Wahab	Regent Jombang	of Chairperson of Muslimat Jombang	PPP, Demokrat, Gerindra
3.	Ika Puspitasari	Mayor Mojokerto	of Chairperson of Social Division of Muslimat NU Mojokerto	Golkar dan Gerindra
4.	Ana Muawanah	Regent Bojonegoro	of IV Secretary of PP Muslimat	PKB-PDIP-PKPI
5.	Lilik Muhibah	Deputy Mayor of Kediri	Chairperson of Muslimat NU Kediri	PAN, Nasdem, Demokrat dan PKS
6.	Puput Tantriana Sari	Regent Probolinggo	of Chairperson of Fatayat Probolinggo	Nasdem, PDIP, PPP, Golkar, Gerindra, Hanura, Demokrat

Sources: data processed by the author 2020

The simultaneous regional elections on 27 June 2018 in several regions in East Java gave birth to the female leader from Nahdlatul Ulama. The positions of Governor and Deputy Governor, Regent and Deputy Regent, Mayor and Deputy Mayor were contested because they have an important role in the wheels of regional government. They can determine policies in favor of the public. This regional leadership chair is an important issues because

many people in East Java are Nahdliyin people, especially namely the Muslimat and Fatayat who wants their board members to occupy the position of regional head. The boardening base of female candidates for the NU *pesantren* is the client patrons built from the *pesantren* and *santri* networks.

The areas in East Java have many *pesantrens*, and their people adhere to *Ahlussunnah Waljamaah* included in the largest religious organization in Indonesia, Nahdlatul Ulama. It is clear that Khofifah's participation as a governor candidate has a positive effect on the rise of women activists in independent institutional bodies such as Muslimat, Fatayat, and IPPNU because they have strong correlation with the votes of female voters who share the same ideology and values -the same followers of traditional Islam. Regarding the 2018 East Java Governor Election, it was clear on the surface that there would be a battle between NU structural and NU Cultural. Officially, NU structural is under the leadership of the Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board, KH. Said Agil Syiraj. The Regional Leader of Nahdlatul Ulama (PWNU) of East Java also instructed NU followers to support Saifullah Yusuf (Gus Ipul) for governor candidate and Puti Guruh Sukarno for Deputy Governor candidate who were supported by four parties, namely PDIP, PKB, PKS and Gerindra.

However, this official instruction proved ineffective especially among women voters who had psychological reasons for choosing Khofifah because she came from Muslimat NU cadre. It shows that the power of the boardening base became the strength of the votes so that Khofifah won a landslide victory over Gus Ipul. As time goes by, people's rationality have also begun to increase, so Nu cultural has become the biggest magnet for gaining votes. The strong relationship between Khofifah and the independent institutional bodies of Muslimat Fatayat and IPPNU led to very strong loyalty and created a very strong emotional relationship among Nahdlatul Ulama followers, especially among women. It also creates the social identity and broadening base or mass base because her position as general chairperson of NU Muslimat, as a board member of Fatayat, and as the leader of IPPNU led her to become Governor of East Java in the period of 2018-2023 .

Similarly, in the regional elections in Jombang Regency, Nyai Hj. Munjidah Wahab, the Chairperson of the Muslimat NU in Jombang Regency for two periods, won the election. Besides, she is the biological daughter of KH. Wahab Hasbullah, one of the NU founders and the composer of the song *Hubbul Wahton*, the mandatory song of the Nahdlatul Ulama as the largest religious organization in Indonesia. These facts has very large social capital and mass base. Nyai Munjidah Wahab began her career as an IPPNU activist, then Fatayat and Muslimat NU. She is also active as a political organization administrator. She has also served as a legislative member of the United Development Party (PPP) g from the Legislative Level II of Jombang Regency to Legislative Level I of East Java Province.

In this regional election, Mujidah was an incumbent candidate who had previously served as the deputy regent of Jombang with Surambah. She was supported by United Development Party, the Democratic Party, and Gerindra. Meanwhile, another incumbent candidate, Sunyono, the regent of Jombang district and the chairman of the Regional Leadership Council of East Java Province, was arrested and detained by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). It was an advantageous momentum for Munjidah. The winner in the Regional Elections in Mojokerto on 27 June 2018 was also the leader of Muslimat NU Mojokerto, Ika Puspitasari accompanied by Achmad Rizal Zakaria. This candidate was supported by the Golkar and Gerindra parties with 23,644 votes and was able to beat three other competitors.

The elected mayor Ika Puspitasari was at that time serving as the Chairperson of Social Division in Muslimat NU Mojokerto. With high confidence and enthusiasm, Ika encouraged herself to become the Mayor of Mojokerto. Besides having a mass base of NU Muslimat female voters, Fatayat ,and IPPNU, Ika is the younger sisted of Mustofa Kamal Pasa, the Regent of Mojokerto well known as a wealthy businessman. With these two big

social capitals, Ika became the first NU woman to serve as a Regional Head in Mojokerto. Another Muslimat NU Women who won simultaneous regional elections on 27 June 2018 was Anna Muawanah as the Regent with Budi Irawanto as the Deputy Regent by the PKB, PDIP and PKPI parties in Bojonegoro. The election in Bojonegoro proved that dynastic politics could be defeated because most of the people wanted change.

The last ten years of Suyoto's leadership had not proven effective in supporting his wife to step forward to replace him as the Regent of Bojonegoro. The dynamics of the local elections in Bojonegoro can be identified as the battle between the Muhammadiyah Organization and Nahdlatul Ulama. Suyoto as an active Regent came from the Muhammadiyah supported by PAN while Anna Muawwanah came from NU and served as deputy secretary IV of Muslimat NU in Jakarta as well as a member of the People's Representative Council of the Republic of Indonesia from the PKB faction from Bojonegoro and Tuban electoral districts. Anna Muawwanah has the power of social identity from Nahdlatul Ulama, the voice of female voters who want Muslimat candidate to be elected as Regent of Bojonegoro, and the social capital of the National Awakening party cadres in the Bojonegoro and Tuban electoral districts. Thus, there is no guarantee that the Political Dynasty will remain in power since the case here shows that society is getting more aware in determining the best choice for their life.

The next Muslimat NU cadres who were elected as Deputy Mayor in Kediri City was Lilik Muhibbah with Abdullah Abu Bakar as the mayor during the simultaneous regional elections on June 27 2018. This candidate was supported by the PAN Party, Nasdem party, the Democratic Party and the PKS party. The social identity attached to Lilik Muhibbah was the power to gain votes from nahdiyin and Muslimat women voters, Fatayat, and IPPNU. Lilik Muhibbah was the head of the Pesantren Putri Al Islah in Bandar Kidul Kediri. She had active experiences in several social organizations, namely the chairman of IPPNU, Chairperson of Fatayat, Chairperson of the Muslimat NU Kediri since 2010, secretary of the Indonesian Hajj Brotherhood Association (IPHI) Kediri. Next was Puput Tantriana Sari, the incumbent candidate who was re-elected in Probolinggo Regency. She is the first female regent of dynastic politics in Probolinggo Regency to replace her husband KH. Hasan Aminuddin, who had served two terms before she got elected. Puput also serves as chairman of Fatayat NU Probolinggo. Puput is the youngest woman to hold a Regent position at the age of 30.

### ***Pesantren Women Strategies and Movements to Change Patriarchal Culture in East Java***

*Pesantren* female candidates running for regional heads followed the footsteps of the chairman of the Muslimat NU, Khofifah Indar Parawansa who had persistently fought for three regional elections and twice defeated. However, in this election she was elected as the Governor of East Java Province for the period of 2019 - 2024. The achievement of *pesantren* women cannot be separated from Khofifah Effect fighting for the governor seat for three periods of election. It also increased people's rational choice in choosing candidate leaders from *pesantren* women who took part in various religious organizations such as Muslimat NU, Fatayat NU and IPPNU. The victory of female *pesantren* cadres in Muslimat NU was the victory of NU cultural based on the strength of the mass base in the community and defeated NU structural with the power of command at the Central and Regional Level of Nahdlatul Ulama, especially in the region of East Java. The rationalization of women's leadership in California is fair and equal between men and women. They have a good perception and rationality in understanding the differences and skills they possess (Bielby & Baron, 1986). There has been a well established stigma in everyday life of society that women should be good mothers and wives and do not fit into the realm of politics (Nimrah dan Sakaria, Kunci, & Budaya Patriarki, 2015). It is not uncommon to hear that women

themselves do not support female political candidates because it is not in accordance with their conception with emphasis that "leaders should be men". Women are often considered to have different natures from men. Even among women themselves there have been fundamental problems in which they believe that it is appropriate for men and women to share domestic and public responsibilities. Thus, in addition to men, women also need to be told about related issues. The institutionalization of the "conception of men leaders" which poses an obstacle to women's political participation stems from the patriarchal and subordinate structure. Social life as an extension of the patriarchal structure places women in subordinate positions and gives men the opportunity to lead.

Women in a patriarchal system are often considered to complement the enactment of the patriarchal system and contribute to the existence and prevalence of an unequal relationship between men and women (Said, 2020). Thus, it is necessary to strengthen women's leadership to make it equal to men in active roles within the public, social, economic, educational, cultural, and political domains. From here, the discourse produces knowledge as well as creates power, namely knowledge of gender equality as well as creating power for women to take part in the public domain like men. In Foucault's view (Foucault, 1990), power is productive because it creates a new constellation in the society. With this gender equality discourse, according to Jawad (Marsot & Jawad, 2000), the existence of women is placed in the positions with the same rights as men in public leadership such as: participating in elections, becoming political candidates, and obtaining political positions (Purwanto, 2019).

Democracy in the last two decades, the term democracy has become increasingly popular especially in various developing countries. Contrary to this, according to Menchik, more ulama and activists are now starting to doubt that democracy will develop in Indonesia due to the recent destruction of democracy and the emergence of modern Islamic organizations that support anti-democracy people, so this is what contributes to the decline of the democratic process in Indonesia (Menchik, 2019). In America, democracy is the basis of political theory, the source for solving major problems, and the central theme to discuss future political ideas, both at the level of discourse and at the level of socio-political movements. As a political system, democracy has occupied the top stratum accepted by many countries because it is considered capable of regulating and resolving social and political relations, involving interests among individuals in the society, relations among communities, relation between communities and countries, and relation among countries in the world.

As a concept, democracy has a broad meaning and contains many complex elements. Democracy is a political method, a mechanism for electing political leaders (Ebegbulem, 2017; Morrow, 2017). Citizens are given the opportunity to choose one of the political leaders who compete for votes (Pollack et al., 1991). Communism is capable of destroying democracy with its characteristics of rampant culture of corruption, the increasing price livelihoods and basic needs, and the creation functional structures in the corrupt behavior that is entrenched in the society as it was reflected in the communist ideology of the Soviet Union in 1989 (Sandholtz & Taagepera, 2005).

#### **D. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Khofifah's persistence to run for the election for the third time gave great enthusiasm for Muslimat cadres such as Munjidah Wahab, Regent of Jombang, Lilik Muhibah, Kediri, Anna Muawwana, Regent of Bojonegoro, Ita Puspitasaru, Mayor of Mojokerto, and Puput Tantriana Sari, Regent of Probolinggi, to participate as candidates for regional heads. The persistence and good political style that the khofifah Indar Parawansa Governor of East Java shows is a role model for regional head candidates from Muslimat cadres. It provides inspiration for them and raises their confidence to fight and win the election. Self-confidence,



persistence, and self-determination t are powerful weapons for Muslimat *pesantren* women to fight for the regional election. It is, therefore, suggested not to bring in and take advantage of religious organizations in the realm of practical politics. Religion should not be used as a means only to gain political victory and power as well as to achieve other materialistic and worldly goals.

Finally, discussing NU women's leadership within local politics level on direct regional head elections in Indonesia becomes very interesting to discuss. Discussion, where women from Islamic pesantren appear to be the winner to be the head of the region, may, in general, bring blessings to society, nation, and State.

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