

Salasika

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The Struggles of Women Ad-Hoc Workers in General Elections amid Risks

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to elucidate the motivations and risks experienced by female poll workers (KPPS) who served at the village level during the 2019 general elections in Banyumas Regency. Research on the motivations and risks of KPPS members, critical to the success of election, remains limited. Existing studies have primarily focused on the implementation of policies to ensure 30% political participation by women. Employing a qualitative approach, this study identifies three main motivations that encouraged women to join as KPPS members in Banyumas Regency. Firstly, their established track record and expertise in coordinating elections motivated their participation. Secondly, having a background as social activists served as a driving force for active engagement in the electoral process. Thirdly, close and patron-client relationships with the village heads and officials provide additional motivation. The female poll workers also faced three risks. Firstly, working in a patriarchal culture posed challenges, as it tended to restrict women's employment opportunities in private sectors. Furthermore, there was a potential risk of assuming only a complementary role. Moreover, the patron-client political structure at the village level created vulnerabilities. A key finding of this study is that female KPPS members with a background in activism exhibit greater self-assurance in their participation compared to those primarily recruited through close and patron-client ties with village elites.

KEYWORDS: : *women, election organizers, motivation, risk, Banyumas*

INTRODUCTION

The discourse on the level of women's participation and representation in the post-democratic period in Indonesia still dwells on how political parties adopt the ratio and level of women's representation to participate in general elections, including the general election of the president and vice president, regional heads and

legislatures. This is considering that women are given affirmative rights through Law Number 12 of 2004 jo Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning general elections, namely through Article 65 paragraph 1 which states that 'each political party can propose candidates for members of the House of Representatives, Provincial Parliaments and Regency/City Parliaments for each constituency by

ensuring that women are represented by at least 30%.' With the emergence of *this affirmative action* policy from the Government of Indonesia, women's participation and representation in the political field is expected to increase.

Law Number 39 of the year on Human Rights is explicit in Article 6, which also states that 'the system of general elections, parties, election of members of the legislature, and appointment systems in the executive and judicial fields must make women's representation in accordance with the specified requirements.' This is in accordance with the ratification of the human rights convention, especially Women's Political Rights (*Convention on the Political Rights of women*) and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (*Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*) through Law Number 7 of 1984 and the ratification process of the Convention on Civil and Political Rights (*Convention on Civil and Political Right*) through Law Number 12 of 2005. The ratification explicitly shows the commitment of the government to increase women's political participation and representation in all fields.

The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, in a 2015 working paper document, stated that the increase in women's participation and representation has not reached the target of 30%. The level of women's representation in the House of Representatives increased from 11% in 2004-2009 to 18% in 2009-2014, as well as in representation in the Provincial and Regency/City Parliaments. There is still a gap in the fulfillment of this

ratio among political parties, including in the level of participation and representation in the executive ranks, in addition to public services and decision-making. Although the government has listed this target in the RPJMN (Medium-Term Development Plan) document to achieve the MDGs targets, the achievements seen in the 2014 and 2019 elections were still relatively small in the Southeast Asian region.

Table 1 shows that Indonesia's level of representation is still below that of Timor Leste, Laos, and Vietnam.

Negara	Kursi di Lembaga tingkat Propinsi/Kabupaten/Kota	# Perempuan	% Perempuan
Timor Leste	64	19	29,20%
Laos	115	29	25,2%
Vietnam	493	127	25,8%
Singapura	94	22	23,4%
Philipina	229	49	21,4%
Kamboja	123	26	21,10%
Indonesia	560	101	18%
Thailand	473	63	13,3%
Malaysia	222	22	9,9%

Source: Ministry of PPPA, 2014: 3

A study conducted by Nalom Kurniawan (2016: 714-729) shows that the increase in women's participation cannot be separated from the democratization process in Indonesia. Along with the increasingly open faucet of democracy in Indonesia, the demand for the fulfillment of women's rights is also increasing and has widely emerged at the central and regional levels. Associating gender issues with democratization is very relevant and accepted among the community, although there are still cultural barriers that can hinder women's participation. Women's representation in the legislative institutions also basically reflects the fulfillment of human rights, especially women's rights.

Since Indonesia's first general election was held in 1955, the ratio of women's representation in the legislature has continued to increase from 3.8% in 1955 to 17.86% in 2014 as shown in the following table.

Representasi Perempuan di DPR-RI mulai periode 1950 - 2014				
Periode	Perempuan		Laki-laki	
	Jumlah	%	Jumlah	%
1950 - 1955	9	3,8	236	96,2
1955 - 1960	17	6,3	255	93,7
Konstituante : 1956 - 1959 *	25	5,1	488	94,9
1971 - 1977	36	7,83	424	92,2
1977 - 1982	29	6,3	431	93,7
1982 - 1987	39	8,5	421	91,5
1987 - 1992	65	13,9	435	87,0
1992 - 1997	62	12,5	438	87,5
1997 - 1999	54	10,8	446	89,2
1999 - 2004	45	9,0	455	91,0
2004 - 2009	61	11,09	489	89,3
2009 - 2014	101	17,86	459	82,14

Source: Nalon Kurniawan, 2016: 10

The study by Chintya Insani Amelia (2022: 189-192) mentions three obstacles to increasing women's participation in election organizing institutions at both the national and regional levels. Although in Law Number 15 of 2011 Article 5 paragraph 1 has guaranteed an affirmative policy of affirmation of women's political participation, namely by providing an allocation of 30% of the total membership of the KPU RI (central) which is 7 people, the Provincial KPU as many as 5 people, the Regency/City KPU is a maximum of 5 people, there are still challenges.

The first obstacle is a cultural barrier due to the dominance of patriarchal culture where women cannot decide independently and depend on their husbands. Second, a lack of knowledge about elections lead many to fail the written test as one of the stages of recruitment. Third, geographical constraints directly affect women from the regions who are constrained if they have to follow the stages in Jakarta. Thus, basically, various obstacles to

increasing women's participation occur in two main domains.

First, ensuring that the 30% affirmative policy can be fulfilled by political parties in the nomination of legislative members and regional heads. Second, fulfilling the 30% affirmative policy in election organizers both at the central and regional levels. Data in a *Fact Sheet* published by the Puskapol of the University of Indonesia (2019:2) shows this phenomenon, where during the period 2012-2017 there was only 1 (20%) member of the Election Supervisory Board and 1 member of the Central KPU (14.29%). Meanwhile, research in 6 provinces (Aceh, North Sumatra, Central Java, Maluku, Papua, and West Papua) also showed that the participation rate of women in the election organizers during 2013-2018 was still low. Participation in the Election Supervisory Agency almost reached the affirmation target of 29.41%, while participation in the Provincial KPU institution was only 5 out of a total of 32 members (15.62%).

This research aims to explain the motivation and risks faced by women, especially women election organizers, in the general elections in 2019 and 2024 in Banyumas Regency. Election ad-hoc workers are the spearhead of the implementation of general elections at the Village (or Kelurahan) level, but women ad-hoc workers still face challenges and risks in the election arena. This study is expected to identify the factors that affect the low political participation of women at the community level. This results are expected to contribute to the formulation of government policies to increase women's participation as election organizers in Indonesia.

METHODS

This research was conducted using several data collection techniques, including secondary data collection through literature studies (desk/literature review) to obtain relevant data and information from books, research results, and statistical data. Meanwhile, primary data collection techniques include in-depth interview with the Banyumas KPU and FGDs with women ad-hoc personnel for the 2019 and 2024 General Elections, especially at the KPSS and PPS/PPK levels.

This study uses qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data analysis is the process of systematically searching for and compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation, by organizing data into various categories, describing it into units, synthesizing, organizing it into patterns, selecting which data are important and which will be studied, and making conclusions so that they are easily understood by oneself and others (Sugiyono, 2018:244). The data was analyzed with the Miles & Huberman interactive model until conclusions could be drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Women's participation in politics in Indonesia continues to face challenges, as well as structural and cultural barriers that limit women's involvement in the public sphere. Farjana Bari (2010) identified three main obstacles, even though quotas and affirmative policies exist to encourage involvement in various public spheres, especially politics and government. First, there are

socio-economic barriers culturally related to patriarchal norms, with the stigma that the world of politics belongs to men, while the private domain is for women. Second, political and institutional obstacles persist, where openness only began to emerge in Indonesia following the 2009 elections, accompanied by affirmative policies. Although a 30% affirmative policy is in place, structurally and institutionally, political parties still have very few female cadres. Third, there are personal and psychological barriers, where women's roles continue to be overshadowed by the ideology of gender roles and sexual division of labor.

Farjana Bari (2010: 12) has identified the issues and obstacles that affect the level of women's participation in politics in Indonesia as follows.

Types of Barriers to Women's Political Participation	
Direct Obstacles	▪ Women's lack of trust in the political system ▪ Lack of political skills and education ▪ Lack of knowledge of the system ▪ Women's lack of interest in politics ▪ Lack of financial resources ▪ Lack of confidence ▪ Lack of mobility ▪ Family responsibilities ▪ Lack of active women as political party cadres ▪ Lack of support from political parties ▪ Perceptions that consider politics dirty
Fundamental Obstacles	▪ Masculine culture and male dominance ▪ The agenda of political parties that are oriented towards men only

	▪ Lack of democracy within political parties ▪ Political commercialization ▪ Electoral system ▪ Nepotism and elitism within political parties ▪ Political violence ▪ Corruption in politics
Structural Barriers	▪ Discursive dichotomy of the public-private realm ▪ Public and private patriarchy ▪ Patriarchal social behavior towards men and women ▪ Religious fundamentalism

Women's Political Participation

Based on the Constitutional Court Decree Number 14/PUU-11/2013 concerning elections, it is stated that the purpose of simultaneous elections is to minimize the cost of holding elections, reduce high political costs for election participants, avoid the potential for money politics, prevent abuse of power and politicization within the bureaucracy, and streamline the government's working mechanism. This Constitutional Court decision was issued in 2013, and considering several considerations related to its readiness, it was only implemented in the 2019 General Election (Constitutional Court Decision, 2013:85-87).

Simultaneous general elections make general election organizers at the Village level as the main spearhead to achieve success. In this context, research conducted in several villages in Banyumas Regency becomes particularly interesting to observe how women participated at the community level.

The implementation of simultaneous general elections raises the question of whether it has had a direct impact on increasing women's participation in various election institutions.

Political participation generally connects the interaction between individuals and organized groups with the state and tends to focus primarily on indirect participation. Classical terminology, as defined by Nie and Verba (1972:2), describes political participation as 'those legal activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take.' A broader understanding has been provided by Parry, Mosley and Day (1992:16), who define it as acts of 'taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies' (Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999:2-16).

This research focuses on two main concepts: first, the motivation to be involved and become an election organizer; and second, the risks faced by women. This focus is highly relevant because the implementation of the 2019 simultaneous general elections resulted in considerable casualties in Indonesia, largely due to the heavy workload among general election organizers, especially at the village/sub-district level. The Chairman of the General Election Commission (KPU), Arief Budiman, as quoted by *Kompas Daily*, revealed that the total number of election organizers who died during the 2019 election reached a total of 894 officers, with an additional 5,175 officers falling ill (Kompas, 2020). In Central Java Province, according to

the data from the Coordinator of the Data and Information Division of the Central Java KPU, Paulus Widiyantoro, the victims included 62 deceased officers, 568 hospitalized, and 32 female officers suffering miscarriages. Meanwhile, in Banyumas Regency, four election officers were reported to have died according to Banyumas KPU data (Kompas, 2019).

Based on the analysis of various data in this study, the complexity of the motivation among female organizers at the Village level in Banyumas Regency cannot be separated from socio-cultural dimensions, patron-client political and organizational networks, kinship ties, and economic factors. Women who are active in social and/or religious organizations tend to show more rational and idealistic motivations, supported by their organizational background and ability to actualize their ideals. However, not all informants involved in this study demonstrated independent motivation, as some were selected based on kinship factors or affiliation with village/sub-district government institutions.

Meanwhile, the complexity of the risks, challenges, and obstacles faced by women involved in general election institutions at the Village level is consistent with those analysed in previous studies. Obstacles related to patriarchal culture, the dichotomy of the public and private sectors, the concept of sexual division of labour, and gender discrimination were also experienced by these election organizers. In more detail, the following section presents the research findings conducted in

Banyumas Regency, Central Java Province.

Access to Recruitment

A study by Muhammad Nuh Ismanu (2019:191-193) found that the recruitment process is one of the root problems among election organizers at the polling station level, which contributed to casualties during the implementation of the 2019 simultaneous general elections. The case study raised by Muhammad Nuh Ismanu in Depok Regency shows problems in the recruitment process for members of the PPK (District Election Committee) and the Voting Committee (PPS) at the Village level. One of the issues identified is that socialization for recruitment at the Village level was not carried out optimally, as some RW or RT administrators deliberately did not disseminate information openly. In addition, recruitment information tended to be targeted only at certain individuals recommended by legislative candidates or their successful teams in mutually beneficial arrangements (*clientelism*). In some cases, money politics was also used as a lure, which ultimately undermined neutrality and cast doubt on the independence of those selected as general election organizers.

Based on the analysis of the data in this study, the motivations and access points for women's recruitment as election organizers reveal four main typologies of findings.

First, motivation and access to involvement in election institutions are linked to prior experience and a track record in previous election

processes. Informants who fit this typology actively sought out recruitment information and data on various election stages. Their motivation to be involved at the local level is based on prior experience and knowledge, leading them to consciously decide to register as members of the Election and Voting Committee (KPPS).

A research informant representing this category is Mrs. Mift, who had experience as Secretary of KPPS during the 2014 election. Mrs. Mift had also been involved in regional head elections (Governor and Regent) and village head elections (Pilkades) as a field team member. Although she had prior experience, in the 2019 Simultaneous Elections, Mrs. Mift was directly recruited by one of the KPPS Chairpersons and was placed as Secretary of KPPS. According to her, recruitment for KPPS-level election organizers was typically carried out by Village apparatus, which contributed to low youth participation in Kebocoran Village. Recruitment information did not reach many young people through official village channels. Furthermore, certain requirements, such as computer and internet literacy, discouraged young people from participating. As a result, among the nine TPS members in Desa Kebocoran, all were older individuals, with few young people willing to serve as KPPS members.

Second, personal motivation to be involved at the village level stems from participation in social and community organizations. Through their involvement in social institutions or various non-governmental organizations, women gained access to recruitment

information and opportunities to compete. With this background, their motivation to participate in the KPPS recruitment was stronger, and they already possessed the organizational experience necessary to navigate the recruitment process.

An example of this is Mrs. Ev, who is active in the Fatayat NU organization. Mrs. Ev registered for KPPS recruitment because she knew that in Cilongok District, most KPPS members were civil servants, and that recruitment information had not been disseminated evenly to the entire community, especially to young people and women. Because of her active involvement in Fatayat NU, Mrs. Ev had access to recruitment information and subsequently registered as a KPPS candidate. Her organizational experience with Fatayat NU, combined with strong personal motivation, became key factors in her acceptance. According to Mrs. Ev, access to recruitment information for woman and youth organizations in Banyumas Regency remained generally low, resulting in few organizational activists registering as election organizers.

Third, motivation to get involved and gain access to recruitment comes from the mechanism of political patrons at the village level, either because of kinship factors or friendship with local government officials. This category of informants had no prior experience in previous elections but obtained information and access to the recruitment process through connections with local government officials. In contrast to Mrs. Ev, whose personal motivation stemmed from her organizational experience, these female election organizers at the

village level had no organizational background and were instead selected because of close relationships with the village apparatus and local government figures.

A study by Yeni Siska et al. (2022:270-281) on KPPS recruitment in Solok Regency, West Sumatra Province, reveals even more complex findings. In several villages, the KPPS recruitment process opened space for nepotism, threatening the independence and neutrality of PPS and KPPS, as recruitment heavily depended on government facilities was channeled through Village Head (or *Lurah*) and RT/RW, or the neighborhood units. This process triggered interventions by incumbents, including Village Heads, Village Representative Bodies or Village Councils. Research also shows that recruitment was often based on family ties and kinship. Although no regulations are violated if PPS recruits relatives as KPPS members, the absence of a written test to assess the capabilities of candidates exacerbates concerns. A PPS officer's sensitivity in recruiting close relations—such as relatives, friends or acquaintances—can be a factor that inhibits broader, more neutral recruitment. This pattern can be found in the case of Mrs. Ulf, a Karang Gede Village PPS officer. Initially, Mrs. Ulf had no personal motivation to participate in the KPPS recruitment process. On the last day of registration, she visited the sub-district office merely to handle some registration documents. While there, a sub-district staff member offered her the opportunity to register as a PPS officer, because, until that point, no one from Karang Gede Village had registered.

Eventually, Mrs. Ulf decided to register and take the test, despite having no preparation or prior knowledge about the duties of PPS members. After receiving technical guidance and training from the KPU, she was placed in the socialization division, although she lacked prior experience. Mrs. Ulf showed strong willingness to learn and gain experience, eventually adapting and carrying out her duties as a PPS member for Karang Gede Village.

Another finding relates to Mrs. Lipur, an activist from the non-governmental organization SERUNI and a village official from mid-2017 until the 2019 general election. In her experience, KPPS recruitment at the village level was not conducted openly but rather through individual channels, often using family connections. According to Mrs. Lipur, regeneration in KPPS recruitment was necessary. She noted that the recruitment process, based on close ties with village officials, was not ideal. Mrs. Lipur's experience demonstrates that information about KPPS recruitment was circulated only among a limited circle—typically family members or neighbors of previous election officials or village apparatus—limiting broader community participation.

Fourth, economic motivation is also a major reason for women's involvement as election organizers, prompting them to take advantage of whatever access was available to participate in the recruitment process. Those motivated by economic factors typically had no previous election experience and were either unemployed or housewives. They participated in recruitment not only to gain

experience as election organizers or to actualize oneself but also to secure additional income. This is exemplified by Mrs. Meg, who registered as a member of the Village KPPS to develop herself and improve *public speaking* skills. By becoming a KPPS member, Mrs. Meg was able to interact with many people, socialize broadly, and also benefit economically. According to her, the honorarium for KPPS members during the one-month period was Rp.750,000, before tax deductions, while KPPS chairpersons received Rp.700,000, also before tax deductions, which significantly helped family's finances. As a home-based seller, Mrs. Meg found that her KPPS duties did not interfere with her business activities because the work could be done part-time or alongside her selling activities.

Risks and Challenges

The first risk that must be faced by women election organizers, based on the results of this study, is the risk of working in a patriarchal society, where women's involvement is often confined to private spaces (the domestic sector) rather than public spaces (the political and institutional sector). Although women's involvement in public institutions is legally recognized and accommodated by laws and regulations in Indonesia, the dominance of patriarchal cultural values remains a strong barrier for women election organizers in Banyumas Regency. Although their involvement is not hindered and women can actively participate in electoral institutions, the prevalence of patriarchal norms means they have to perform dual roles—

responsibilities both in the private and public sectors.

A study by Soni Ahmah Nulhaqim (2020:1-12) identified several gender-biased contexts and obstacles for women in election monitoring institutions. First, there is public distrust toward women working in political fields, which results in the very low presence of female security staff at polling stations. This is due to the perception that the mobility demands of election monitoring—such as moving between locations—are dangerous for women, compounded by the lack of infrastructure that would facilitate women's active participation in monitoring and campaign activities against money politics. Obstacles for women remain significant, especially for women with disabilities, pregnant women, elderly women, and women from minority groups who often live far from polling stations.

The first finding regarding challenges in recruitment was that of Mrs. Lipur, who had prior experience as a KPPS member in Seruni Village and was serving as a village official at the time of the study. Mrs. Lipur had been a village official since 2017 and later became a KPPS member in 2019, giving her a comprehensive understanding of the recruitment process and the policies affirming women's involvement in elections. One major barrier to women's involvement was the lack of open information about recruitment opportunities, especially among women or women's organizations at the village level. Mrs. Lipur learned of the KPPS recruitment in 2019 not through official announcement, but through

limited channels within her youth organization. Recruitment information was not disseminated openly by the Village Government but spread individually or through networks, limiting community access—especially among women not actively involved in organizations. Although Mrs. Lipur was also a village official, she did not receive recruitment information through official announcements at the village hall or other public media. Instead, she learned about the recruitment through a member of the Youth Organization in which she was active. Based on her experience, Mrs. Lipur emphasized the importance of ensuring that recruitment information is transparent and accessible to all community members. A lack of open information leads to low participation and reduced involvement of women, especially those who are not engaged in village-level institutions or organizations. Mrs. Lipur also noted that the closed, informal recruitment model also reflects a tendency to prioritize KPPS membership for certain groups closely connected to the Village Head. Her experience highlights how even village officials, like herself, were not formally informed through official channels but had to rely on informal networks to access recruitment information.

The second finding concerns Mrs. Ev, who experienced how patriarchal bias made it challenging for women participating in election organizing institutions. Women who are active in social institutions and join electoral organizing efforts often face resistance from their families. If husbands or extended family members do not support

their activities, they will have to face a great challenge in balancing public duties with cultural expectations. In Javanese culture, reinforced by patriarchal biases, women are expected stay at home (the domestic sphere). This is especially strong for newly married women or those with young children, making participation in public activities such as election organizing a significant challenge.

The second risk faced by female election organizers is that affirmative policies aimed at achieving women's quota are often not implemented sincerely. Instead, women candidates are sometimes recruited based on close ties to village or other local officials rather than on capacity or experience. As a result, many women selected lack the necessary skills to effectively carry out their duties despite undergoing training. The study found that not all female KPPS officers interviewed had sufficient knowledge and capacity in information technology, limiting their effectiveness. In fact, Sholehuddin Zuhri's analysis of the general election information system (SITUNG) during the 2019 elections highlights that IT skills were crucial for the success of vote counting. The Election Law designed a manual vote-counting system reliant on KPPS officers, the spearhead of the vote counting process at the polling station where they opened and counted the ballots. The consolidation of the results was done through the SITUNG system.

However, SITUNG faced criticisms. First, there were questions about its legality, as the Election Law does not mention its use. Second, technical difficulties, such as slow

server networks due to heavy traffic, hampered real-time data updates. Another technical obstacle is related to infrastructure inequalities across regions, causing delays in uploading data and raising suspicions of electoral manipulation by the KPU (2019: 8-9).

An example is seen in the experienced of Mrs. Fer, who had no prior experience and could not initially operate a computer. Her duties required her to manage lists of election participants using Microsoft Excel. Mrs. Fer initially felt that it was difficult, but she gradually learned how to use the necessary applications, including sorting prospective voter lists based on their RT and RW areas. Her experience as a PPS member not only expanded her technical skills but also provided additional income, as she had previously worked exclusively as a housewife. In addition to developing IT skills, Mrs. Fer also gained exposure to basic organizational work, an area she had never imagined entering before.

The study and analysis by Andreas Pandiangan (2018: 4-17) show that the issue of resources and individual capacities of KPPS members is crucial, as they must have the knowledge, skills, and ability to carry out their duties. However, the training or technical guidance received by KPPS members is often not optimal, leading to confusion in the field when understanding guidelines or coordinating with various parties. In fact, the implementation of the simultaneous elections in 2019 added to the duties, responsibilities and workload of KPPS—not only in terms of administering the election process but also due to the

increasingly complex recapitulation process. Meanwhile, policymakers at the central level did not seem to pay attention to the quality of KPPS resources, even though KPPS members function as street-level bureaucrats who directly interacted with the community. As a result, the performance of KPPS members could directly affect citizens' perception and opinions.

This was also reflected in the case of Mrs. Anni, who initially did not know the duties and functions of PPS member but decided to register after hearing from some of her college friends who had previously registered as prospective PPS members in their own villages. Although Mrs. Anni had no prior experience or understanding of her role, she was selected as a PPS member. Through her commitment and active participation in the PPS training process, she gradually understood her responsibilities and tried her best to fulfill her duties as a PPS member.

The third risk is dealing with a political patron-client system at the local level (Kelurahan) which is not only heavily influenced by patriarchal values but also limits opportunities for young people—especially young women—to be involved in the implementation of general elections. This system tends to restrict the participation of young women, not simply because of their lack of interest, but because the available opportunities are not genuinely open or accessible to them. Although technical regulations in the administration of general elections allow for two periods of service, the findings of this study show that the entrenched patron-client political structure at the local

level tended to hinder meaningful involvement of young women.

According to Mrs. Fai, one of the respondents, while she supported the affirmative policies for women and the regulation limiting service to two terms at the PPS (Kelurahan) and PPK (District) levels, the reality was more complex. Regeneration of election organizers should ideally ensue knowledge transfer from incumbents to new members. However, Mrs. Fai explained that it was often difficult to find candidates for the seven-member KPPS teams at the neighborhood (RT) level due to the heavy workload, which discouraged many from participating. As a result, those eventually selected were often individuals with close ties to village officials or community leaders, especially since registration was poorly socialized at the grassroots level and community interest remained low.

The fourth risk faced by female election organizers is the presence of a potentially discriminatory work climate, because of both the dominance of patriarchal cultural norms and the application of the sexual division of labor. Theoretically, such risks are possible in the field. However, this study did not find evidence of a discriminatory work environment, nor signs of negative impacts from the sexual division of labor, or even sexual violence directed toward female election organizers. The election work system, with its strict deadlines and outcome-oriented targets, tended to reduce the space for discriminatory or sexual harassment.

During periods when KPPS members experienced an increased workload leading up to the election, female PPS members often had to stay with male members and village officials, most of whom were men. Despite this, during her time as a PPS member, Mrs. Meg and her friends did not encounter negative behaviors such as sexual harassment or demeaning jokes from their peers. This might have been because most PPS members and village officials were closely connected through kinship or community ties. However, according to Mrs. Meg, it is still possible that in some villages or sub-districts, certain remarks or stereotypes directed at women might have been present. While patriarchal dominant culture allows for jokes that may belittle women, such comments are unlikely to escalate into sexual harassment due to the strong social sanctions that would follow.

DISCUSSION

Based on data and information from the field, this section analyzes and discusses three theoretical dimensions of women's participation in local election institutions, focusing on KPPS in Banyumas Regency, Central Java Province. The study reveals there are three main motivations behind the involvement of young women in the KPPS. The first motivation was rooted in idealism, which was observed among female KPPS members with backgrounds in social activism—such as those active in NU women's organizations, Muhammadiyah, or NGOs. Second is the motivation for self-development, which emerged among women without prior social

activism experience but who sought public sector exposure and learning opportunities. Third is economic motivation, where women participated in KPPS primarily to earn honorariums or salaries provided for their roles as KPPS members.

Referring to the analysis by Levy and Akiva (2019:1039-55), young people's political engagement in the United States is shaped by two key factors: political efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to influence political processes, and political interest. They also highlight demographic factors such as age, gender and ethnicity or race as significant variables. Their quantitative study considers 20 indicators of political involvement, incorporating these various demographic factors.

These two core motivations, political efficacy and political interest, are relevant as comparative perspectives. Female KPPS members with activist backgrounds tend to demonstrate higher levels of both political efficacy and political interest than those without such experience. However, the entrenched patron-client culture at the village level remains a significant barrier for many women. The recruitment process often lacks transparency, leading to appointments based on proximity to the village officials rather than merit. As found in this study, some KPPS members were recruited not for their competence but due to their relationships with the village head or apparatus. This results in capable young women being excluded from the opportunity simply because they never received the necessary information to register. As a

consequence, capable female KPPS members often end up bearing extra responsibility to compensate for the inadequacies of less competent members—particularly in areas requiring digital literacy and technical skills essential for vote tabulation.

In contrast to the motivations that encourage young women to become KPPS members, several risk factors and challenges arise from external circumstances. The first is the risk of a heavier workload, as often the selected KPPS members do not have adequate capacity, and the capable female members are left to bear the burden. Some informants in this study have backgrounds as social activists and are used to conducting public outreach and socialization activities. However, those selected through patron-client processes often do not have the same level of understanding or ability, especially in computer technology and public communication. Consequently, the workload that should be distributed equally among KPPS members becomes unbalanced. Since the election stages follow a strict and scheduled timeline, delays in one stage can significantly impact the next. However, this study did not find extreme impacts such as illness or death caused by workload. The current 30% women's affirmation policy only sets a quota and has not explicitly determined performance indicators or requirements for prospective KPPS members, thus still allowing recruitment based on proximity and patronage.

Second is the risk posed by the dominance of patriarchal cultural values in society. Even though this study did not find physical sexual

harassment, there were instances of verbal abuse. Referring to the study of Collier, Cheryl N. and Raney, Tracey (2019:1-25), based on comparative studies in three countries—Australia, the United Kingdom and Canada—it is shown that the roots of sexism and sexual harassment among parliamentarians stem from two main causes: the privilege enjoyed by men due to their dominant numbers in political institutions, and institutional norms that support sexist behaviors.

The results of this study show that women's participation and involvement in KPPS institutions at the local level are also influenced by these two factors. With the 30% affirmation policy, the majority of KPPS members are still men, making women a minority. Therefore, female KPPS members are often exposed to verbal harassment by male KPPS members who perceive sexism as normal. The patriarchal culture reinforces male dominance, which in this study was reflected in jokes that demean women.

Third, environmental support from the community, especially the nuclear and extended families, also becomes a significant risk factor and challenge for female KPPS members. In general, most respondents of this study did not face challenges related to lack of support from their environment or families. Female KPPS members with activist backgrounds tend to receive strong support due to their established social reputation. Meanwhile, even those without prior social activism experience also received considerable support, particularly because their roles provide financial incentives, such as monthly

honorariums, which contribute to family income—something they may not have had access to previously.

CONCLUSION

Three important learnings emerged based on the analysis of data and information from this study. First, the role of female KPPS members is very important not only in the context of the 40% affirmation but also in increasing women's participation and involvement in politics at the local level. Second, the emphasis on young women as a prerequisite has not yet become a recruitment criterion for KPPS members, so most of those elected are elderly. In fact, the involvement of young women in KPPS institutions can significantly improve the performance and efficiency in handling the workload within KPPS. Third, the expertise and capacity of KPPS members in the field of public outreach and information or computer technology are crucial for enabling KPPS members to work effectively, because all stages of the election rely on a technology-based system and adequate mastery.

This study draws at least three important conclusions based on field data. First, patriarchal cultural bias—which places women in roles focused only on the 'private space'—is one of the main barriers to women's participation in general election institutions. In the concept of patriarchal cultural system, which is deeply rooted in Javanese culture, politics is a realm of 'public space' and therefore the domain of men rather than women. Although election laws and regulations offer

equal opportunities for women and men, in practice, women are expected to play two roles simultaneously—managing responsibilities in both the ‘private space’ (household) and the ‘public space’. This dual burden contributes to the low level of women’s participation in election institutions at the village level.

Second, the motivation and commitment of women to become election organizers at the village level are also influenced by their experiences in organizations and/or institutions outside the ‘private space’. The results of this study show that activists of community organizations (NGOs or CSOs) and those who work in village or sub-district governments tend to have more motivation and access to information than women who are not active in the ‘public spaces’. Their experience of organizing or working in the local government becomes valuable capital to gain information more quickly and even to receive priority in recruitment as election organizers, as village or sub-district officials are already familiar with them. This gives them a greater chance of being elected compared to women who have not previously been active in the ‘public space’.

Third, the risk faced by women in carrying out their role as election officers at the village or sub-district level are minimal, as this study did not identify any serious or exceptional cases. In fact, the greatest risk stems from the demand for women to simultaneously fulfill their roles in the ‘private space’ as wives or mothers, while also handling the time-consuming workload associated with the ‘public space’ as election organizers.

Regulations related to the general election system have provided adequate protection and guarantees, so that women involved as election organizers can exercise their rights. However, it is this dual role between the ‘private space’ and the ‘public space’ that increases the pressure and risk for women because face higher demands in managing both responsibilities at the same time.

Based on the results of the research, the following recommendations can be made. First, the Central Government is encouraged to establish regulations that increase the quota for women’s representation from the current level to more than 30%. In addition, the Central Government also needs to create a framework for the recruitment mechanism at the Regency or City, Sub-district, and Village levels by providing affirmative action for women activists, namely those from PKK, Dasawisma, Youth Organization, and other community organizations in Indonesia, especially Aisyiyah (Muhammadiyah), Fatayat (NU), and other religious organizations. With this affirmative policy, organizational activists will gain the opportunity to participate in organizing general elections. The expertise and capacity they already possess through their involvement in these organizations will also enhance the quality of human resources participating in the recruitment process for election organizers at the Village level.

Second, at the Regional Government level (Province, Regency or City, and District), training and capacity building should be provided for female election organizers at the Village

level who have been elected. Through this training, they will acquire the necessary knowledge and skills—both for preparation and especially for implementing their duties and functions as election organizers.

The third recommendation is to provide a quota in the recruitment process for incumbent candidates, with a composition that reflects field needs. This will enable former Village level election organizers who

have served in the elections to share their insights and knowledge with new election organizers. If it is not possible to reappoint them, these former election organizers can still be involved as trainers to share their experiences and lessons with newly appointed members.

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SJ is inspired by the need to put into visibility the Indonesian and South East Asian women to ensure a dissemination of knowledge to a wider general audience.

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