



Journal of Social and Political Sciences

Jovani, A., Mukhtar, S., Paulinawati, T., & Salolit, F. (2025). Political Representation of Women in the 2019 Elections in the South Sumatra Regional People's Representative Council. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 8(1), 118-125.

ISSN 2615-3718

DOI: 10.31014/aior.1991.08.01.549

The online version of this article can be found at:

<https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/>

Published by:
The Asian Institute of Research

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Political Representation of Women in the 2019 Elections in the South Sumatra Regional People's Representative Council

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Abstract

The representation of women in politics is an intriguing issue within the realms of politics and democracy. According to the 1945 Constitution, every citizen has equal standing under the law and in governance, and every citizen, including women, must participate and engage in a fair decision-making process. Therefore, the representation of women in parliament is crucial, especially in advocating for women's interests. In the 2019 elections, South Sumatra was one of six provinces where the representation of women increased, making it an interesting subject for research. This study aims to: 1) Explain the political representation of women in the 2019 elections; 2) Provide an overview of the dynamics and political processes that occurred; 3) Explore the theory of social capital and its relation to the electoral success of women in becoming legislative members. This paper utilizes Samuel Huntington's theory of political participation, Hanna Pitkin's theory of representation, the quota policy from Dahlerup, and Robert Putnam's concept of social capital. The research method employed is a critical and in-depth analysis of relevant literature. The findings indicate an increase in the representation of women in the 2019 elections for the South Sumatra Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD); the recruitment conducted by political parties was based on organizational experience, educational background, and skills; and the primary factor for the electoral success of female candidates was social capital, which included support from family (husbands, parents) and relatives, as well as the professions of female candidates as advocates, entrepreneurs, activists, and professionals who are indeed closely engaged with the community.

Keywords: Representation, Women, 2019 Elections, Regional People's of Representatives Council, South Sumatera

1. Introduction

In the history of elections in Indonesia, the representation of women in legislative institutions at the central level (DPR RI) during the 2019 elections reached the highest number, which is 20.5 percent, or a total of 118 individuals. Although this number still falls short of the affirmative policy of a 30 percent quota for women's representation in parliament, the presence of women is a positive development as it increases the number of female candidates

participating in the electoral contest. The representation of women at the central level (DPR RI) varies, with some increasing, some remaining the same, some decreasing, and others having no female representation at all.

The 2019 elections were held in 34 provinces to elect legislative members, but only six provinces saw an increase in women's representation of more than 100 percent. These provinces are South Sumatra, East Java, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), South Sulawesi, North Maluku, and West Papua. Previous research has been conducted by researchers in two provinces: in the NTT Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in 2022 (Sirait & Jovani, 2022) and in the East Java DPRD in 2023 (Jovani, Mendrofa, Mukhtar, Ketaren, & Lawolo, 2023) to examine women's representation in parliament and how the success and victories of female candidates leveraged social and moral capital in the 2019 elections. This study is conducted in South Sumatra, where the number of female representatives increased from five in the 2014 elections to 15 in the 2019 elections. Although this representation does not yet meet the 30 percent quota, it is a positive sign regarding the increase in women's representation in South Sumatra.

Research on women's representation in parliament has been extensively conducted in Indonesia. For instance, Muhammad Rizki et al. found that the representation of women in the legislative membership of the South Sumatra DPRD for the 2019-2024 period has performed well in legislative policymaking. This is further supported by the increasing number of female legislative members, where women hold strategic positions as chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of the South Sumatra DPRD and as heads of commissions. The presence of women in these strategic positions has impacted gender-responsive policies (local regulations) (Rizki, Kariem, & Febriyanti, 2023).

Subsequent research analyzes the reasons for the unmet quota for women's representation in legislative institutions, which stem from issues in political party recruitment, negative political stigma in society, and the absence of clear legal substance and strict sanctions related to laws governing women's representation quotas. The obstacles to achieving a 30 percent quota for women's representation in legislative bodies arise from the still strong patriarchal culture in society, political parties' lack of regard for women's representation, and minimal socialization from both the government and political parties regarding women's representation (Banjarnahor, 2020).

Further research found that the political role of women in the Southeast Sulawesi DPRD is still quantitatively low. This is due to the dominance of patriarchal political culture, which is reflected in regulations with a starting point of 30 percent for women's political representation; there is a zipper system that mandates at least one woman for every three candidates; and while women's roles in public policymaking are quite good, they are not yet maximized. This is because the number of female personnel or their quantity remains a minority, placing men in dominant positions in various public policy decision-making processes in parliament (Kasim, 2022).

Previous researchers have conducted studies in NTT that found that the social and moral capital possessed by female candidates is both an asset and a strategy for them to gain votes in elections (Sirait & Jovani, 2022). Similarly, researchers in East Java found that in an egalitarian societal culture, female candidates are more easily accepted and supported (Jovani, Mendrofa, Mukhtar, Ketaren, & Lawolo, 2023).

Therefore, this study explains the strategies employed by four female candidates in achieving victory as representatives of the people. By utilizing the theories of social and moral capital, this research will demonstrate how social capital—through trust, norms, and networks possessed by female candidates—fully encourages and enables their election, along with moral capital—through good character traits (women/mothers: care), professional backgrounds, and family status, which are the main factors contributing to the success of female candidates.

2. Method

To address the main issue mentioned above, which is the strategies employed by female candidates in achieving victory as representatives of the people, this study utilizes a qualitative model. The arguments presented in this paper are built upon literature review and descriptive analysis. The literature review is conducted using a variety of references to analyze the representation of women in parliament and the strategies employed by female

candidates for their success as representatives. The data collected pertains to the social and moral capital of four female candidates and is analyzed using descriptive analysis methods (Creswell, 2014).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Dynamics of Women's Representation in the South Sumatra Regional People's Representative Council in 2019

There are parties that have seen an increase in women's political representation, such as PDIP, Nasdem Party, PKB, Golkar Party, Democratic Party, PAN, and Hanura Party. Meanwhile, PAN and Gerindra Party experienced a decrease in the number of female candidates, and PKS faced stagnation as there was no increase. The increase in women's representation is a positive indication; however, the percentage of female candidates has decreased in parties like PKS, PAN, and PPP due to the rising number of male candidates. This may be because these three parties, which have religious ideologies, are often viewed as barriers to women entering the political arena. Although there is a slight increase in the number of female candidates by 0.42 percent, this is still low considering the total number of candidates increased by 171 and the number of participating parties rose by three.

The number of elected legislative candidates increased by four, or 5.3 percent, from the 2014 elections to the 2019 elections. The trend of women's electability improved in several parties, such as PKB, Golkar Party, and PDIP. PDIP is particularly noteworthy, as the electability of women doubled from three to six individuals. Conversely, there was a decrease in elected candidates from the Gerindra Party, which lost one seat for women in the 2019 elections. Other parties, such as the Democratic Party and Nasdem Party, experienced stagnation in electability.

Out of eleven parties that secured seats in the East Java Provincial DPRD for 2019-2024, five parties had no elected female representation: PKS, PAN, Hanura Party, Perindo Party, and PPP. In contrast, female representation was found in Golkar Party, PDIP, Gerindra Party, Democratic Party, PKB, and Nasdem Party. Among the ten electoral districts, the South Sumatra 2 district in Palembang poses a challenge for women, as it is a district with many political party leaders contesting (RA Anita Noeringhati, a female candidate from Golkar Party). Palembang, the capital of South Sumatra Province, has become a "bloody district" for candidates, both male and female, where all party leaders are running as candidates. This is supported by data showing that the elected members of the South Sumatra Provincial DPRD with the most votes did not come from the Palembang district but from the county district in South Sumatra 4, specifically Ogan Komering Ulu Timur (OKUT).

Research findings by Kellogg et al. (2017) in the United States indicate that women tend to occupy more political positions in cities that are more liberal, while in cities with high levels of religiosity, women tend to hold fewer positions on city councils. Furthermore, research by Reingold and Owen (2012) found that women are more likely to be elected in larger cities, as women in these urban areas tend to have higher education, own businesses, and earn higher incomes. However, this is not the case in the South Sumatra 2 electoral district, where women do not attain political positions despite having the ideal skills and capacities.

This study takes a case study approach focusing on four elected female candidates in the South Sumatra Provincial DPRD for 2019-2024, with one representative each from PDIP, Golkar Party, Democratic Party, and PKB.

In the profiles of the four female legislative members mentioned above, there is a tendency for the open proportional electoral system to influence the recruitment and selection of candidate placement numbers by political parties. The vote acquisition of these four women is generally very significant, as they are placed in the number one position, indicating that they have highly potential for the party to secure seats.

Furthermore, the experiences of these four women entering politics, their motivations, professions, backgrounds in politics, and the support they receive from their husbands, parents (fathers), and extended families are examined. Additionally, it explores how these four women leverage their social capital to advance and be elected as members of the South Sumatra Provincial DPRD for the 2019-2024 term. The focus on social capital emphasizes trust, as defined by Putnam, and is supported by moral capital from Derichs, Fleschenberg, and Hustebeck.

R.A. Anita Noeringhati, a candidate from the Golkar Party in the South Sumatra 1 electoral district of Palembang with the number one position, received 16,801 votes. Her profession as a lawyer, her role as the Chair of the Golkar Faction in the South Sumatra DPRD, her active involvement in the Golkar Party Women's Unity/*Kesatuan Perempuan Partai Golkar* (KPPG) women's organization, and her participation in the Indonesian Advocate Association/*Ikatan Advokat Indonesia* (IKADIN) organization are her main assets for entering the elections. Additionally, her extensive political network with Golkar Party elites, including the Governor of South Sumatra from 2008 to 2018, who also served as the Chair of the Golkar DPD in South Sumatra, further supports her candidacy. R.A. Anita Noeringhati comes from a Javanese family, descended from the Mangkunegaran Palace in Solo. Her husband, a former Head of the Forestry Department of South Sumatra Province, often brings her into contact with the community and various organizations in South Sumatra. Furthermore, during her childhood, she had a stepfather who was a member of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI), which gave her some insight into politics related to society, including gender issues. After being elected as a legislative member, she faced challenges such as: women still being seen as merely fulfilling the 30 percent quota; internal party competition; and a patriarchal culture. She further stated that the biggest challenge faced by women in carrying out their duties in parliament is the rigid and strict political interests of the factions; even female legislative members do not show solidarity due to differing political interests in advocating for women's and children's rights in various development programs.

Ike Mayasari, a candidate from PDIP in the South Sumatra 3 electoral district of Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI) and Ogan Ilir with the number one position, received 30,831 votes. Initially, she was a housewife with three children and the daughter of a senior politician and member of the South Sumatra Provincial DPRD. She then joined PDIP and became the Vice Chair of the PDIP DPD in South Sumatra, and from 2019 to the present, she has served as the Chair of Indonesian Young Entrepreneur Association/*Himpunan Pengusaha Muda Indonesia* (HIPMI) in OKI. Ike Mayasari stated that her initial entry into politics was to continue her father's political legacy, as he already had constituents. Therefore, her father, a senior PDIP politician, registered her as a party cadre to participate in the 2014 elections for the South Sumatra Provincial DPRD, aiming to fulfill the 30 percent quota for women's representation from the Ogan Ilir and OKI electoral districts, where she received the number nine position. Although she was not elected, in the 2019 elections, she was elected as a legislative member by leveraging her father's prominent name and following in his political footsteps. The issues she campaigned on included education, welfare, health, and combating drug abuse in the community. She is the youngest candidate with the most votes, and as a mother, she faces challenges within her family, such as reduced time with her children, as there are no fixed working hours in politics, and sometimes emergency calls require her to leave her children.

Linda Wati Syaropi, a candidate from the Golkar Party in the South Sumatra 4 electoral district of Ogan Komering Ulu Timur with the number one position, received 23,484 votes. Her profession is that of an entrepreneur, and she is the daughter of a senior politician and member of the South Sumatra Provincial DPRD. In the Golkar Party, she served as the Deputy Treasurer of the Golkar Party in Palembang from 2009 to 2013, as a member of the South Sumatra Provincial Golkar management from 2016 to the present, and as a member of Golkar Party Women's Unity/*Kesatuan Perempuan Partai Golkar* (KPPG) in South Sumatra from 2016 to 2021. Her interest in politics is influenced by her father, H. Syaropi RM, who has been involved in politics since his youth and has consistently been a politician in the Golkar Party, where she was socialized about political science, society, and welfare. She has been a legislative member for three terms and was re-elected in the 2019 elections. The challenges she faces are not much different from those of the two previous female legislative members; however, with her knowledge and experience working in the community as a legislative member, she is able to overcome them.

Kartika Sandra Desi, a candidate from the Gerindra Party in the South Sumatra 9 electoral district of Musi Banyuasin (Muba) with the number one position, received 16,337 votes. She is a private sector employee, the Chair of the Gerindra DPD in South Sumatra, actively involved in organizations such as Indonesian Red Cross/*Palang Merah Indonesia* (PMI) and National Committee of Indonesian Youth/*Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia* (KNPI) in Muba and was elected as the Vice Chair of the South Sumatra DPRD for the 2019-2024 term. As a party cadre, despite failing in the 2009 elections, she is committed to realizing her aspirations and helping to advocate for the rights of the community in Muba, particularly regarding land issues and the expansion of the

Muba Timur district. She noted that many land issues remain unresolved, including community settlements in forest areas. Furthermore, she stated that the goal of land liberation is to enable the community to utilize and obtain legal clarity for their residences. This is her motivation for entering politics: to advocate for the interests of the community in her area. In addition to the community, her family is an important factor that encourages her to enter politics. Her extended family, especially her father, advised her to help many people, and to do so effectively, she needed to enter politics to create policies that would assist many, especially the underprivileged. In 2024, she was appointed by the Chairman of the Gerindra Party, Prabowo Subianto, as the Chair of the Golkar DPD in South Sumatra, to strengthen the party in the region. Like the other three female legislative members, she also faces challenges in parliament, particularly in relation to other parties; however, due to her commitment to the community, she perseveres and fights, which has resulted in her position as the Vice Chair of the South Sumatra Provincial DPRD for the 2019-2024 term.

3.2. Recruitment of Female Candidates by Political Parties

The Golkar Party prioritizes party cadres, especially from the KPPG women's organization, in the recruitment of female candidates to meet the 30 percent quota for women's representation. The focus is on women's and youth issues, as women are accepted by the South Sumatra community due to their commitment to society. Women are deemed suitable because they possess strategies trained in the party's political school, have good public communication skills, and the determination of candidate numbers is based on internal party weighting, with the selection of electoral districts left to the female candidates based on their bases.

In contrast, PDIP prioritizes female party cadres in its political recruitment, focusing on fulfilling the 30 percent quota for women's representation. Women are increasingly accepted by the South Sumatra community due to gender balance and openness. Female candidates have good communication skills, and the determination of candidate numbers is also based on internal party weighting. Female candidates are given the freedom to choose their electoral districts, which are usually their home regions or those of their husbands or extended families.

On the other hand, the process of recruiting female candidates in electoral contests tends to be pragmatic, involving two stages that female candidates must face: family support and electoral potential. Family support is key to the success of female candidates in elections, where women must seek permission from their families to enter the public sphere. Furthermore, electoral potential is crucial; female candidates who possess political, social, and moral capital are better positioned to become candidates. Women with a background of having a mass base are prioritized, as this is key to increasing party votes and the party's electability. Women with social capital become targets for political parties to nominate as candidates in elections.

3.3. Strategies and Utilization of Social Capital by Female Candidates in the 2019 Elections

The elected female candidates in the 2019 elections from PDIP, such as Rita Suryani and Susi Imelda, who have backgrounds as Chairpersons of the Family Welfare and Empowerment Organization/*Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* (PKK) (wives of district heads), leverage their husbands' prominent names to gain votes from the community by visiting and listening to community aspirations in their electoral districts. In their roles as the number one woman in their districts, they form communities focusing on health issues, the economy, especially the creative industry through Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises/*Usaha Mikro, Kecil, Menengah* (UMKM). Additionally, with the good reputation of their husbands, they also utilize their personal names as the wives of regional heads in their campaigns. This aligns with Campbell's (1989) assertion that "the personal is political," as they bring issues close to women to attract attention and votes from the community. The issues raised include health, education, the economy, women's empowerment, and domestic violence.

In the 2019 elections, 15 women were elected, dominated by PDIP with five, Golkar Party with three, PKB with two, Gerindra Party with two, Democratic Party with two, and Nasdem Party with one. Social capital is the key to the success of these 15 female candidates in becoming legislative members. Tina Malinda from PDIP has served in the county DPRD for three terms and was elected again for the provincial DPRD. Ike Mayasari comes from a

political background. Susy Imelda and Rita Suryani, also from PDIP, were Chairpersons of the PKK and wives of regional heads (politicians) before being elected to the South Sumatra Provincial DPRD.

From the Golkar Party, there are three female candidates: R.A. Anita Noeringhati, who has served two terms in the provincial DPRD; Linda Wati Syaropi; and Nadia Basyir, who are incumbents and children of senior party politicians. This research found that the success of female candidates from the Golkar Party is significantly influenced by the role of the KPPG women's organization in affirming women's involvement in politics by becoming candidates.

The Golkar Party, PDIP, PKB, Nasdem Party, Gerindra Party, and the Democratic Party assigned the number one position to female candidates, as these political parties have developed an awareness of gender equality. Political parties also provide opportunities for incumbent female candidates to run in the 2019 elections, and these female candidates were re-elected. The assignment of candidate numbers is a decision made by party leadership, considering the positions held by female candidates, their experience as party cadres, and their loyalty to the party. This can be seen from the performance and implementation of programs created by the political parties.

When looking at organizational experience, female candidates in South Sumatra hold important positions such as party administrators, party cadres, organization leaders, wives of district heads, religious leaders, community leaders, activists, academics, professionals, and even housewives with backgrounds in political families. This political experience is undoubtedly an individual asset for female candidates that correlates with their electability. Their victory in the elections stems from social capital through trust, norms, and networks that female candidates possess in their respective electoral districts.

In addition to social capital, the personal capabilities of the four female candidates as political actors play an important role, as they are "close" to the community through their professions as lawyers, entrepreneurs, professionals, and even housewives. This leads the community to consciously and voluntarily support them. These four female candidates build emotional and social bonds, thus gaining support from the community as their constituents. Regarding the utilization of social capital, which includes relationships or social networks as valuable resources in determining an individual's standing in their electoral district, these social organizations can be formed through social interactions (both formal and informal), which serve as the starting point for the social networks of the four female candidates.

Below is a diagram that illustrates the social capital of female candidates:

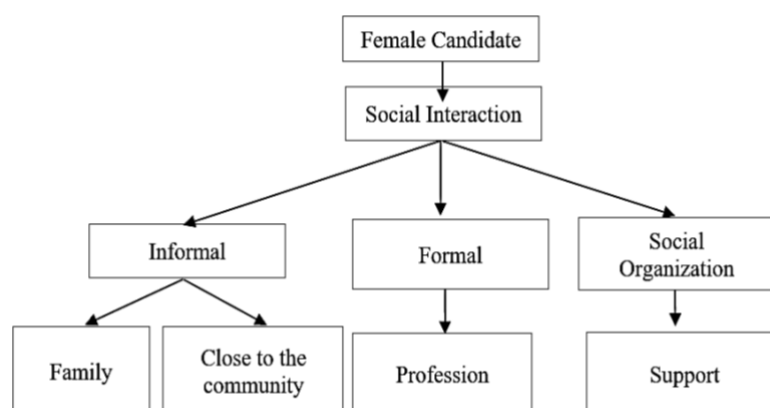


Figure 1: Social Capital of Four Female Candidates

The victory of female candidates in electoral contests is indeed difficult to achieve without the strength of social capital. Based on field findings, there are at least four factors that influence the success of these four female candidates:

1. Individual Abilities: This includes personality, public communication, leadership, and focus on political

issues. The personalities of the four female candidates are reflected in their professions, which directly influence their public communication with their respective constituents. Additionally, their leadership experience in professions or organizations prior to entering politics plays a significant role.

2. **Social and Humanitarian Values:** This emphasizes issues related to community welfare, health, education, infrastructure, drug abuse, and gender equality (access and benefits received by the community, especially women and children).
3. **Family Support:** This includes support from husbands, parents, extended family, social organizations, and the community.
4. **Political Experience:** This encompasses experience as party cadres, commitment to their electoral districts, popularity, mass support, and involvement in community organizations.

The reality of women's representation in the South Sumatra DPRD is still below the 30 percent quota (underrepresentation); however, there has been a significant increase from five women in the 2014 elections to 15 women in the 2019 elections. Affirmative efforts through regulations have been issued to encourage women's representation in parliament, starting from Election Law No. 12 of 2003, Election Law No. 10 of 2008, Election Law No. 8 of 2012, and PKPU No. 7 of 2013, yet it still remains below 30 percent.

To address this issue, the General Election Commission/Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU) as the election organizer plays a crucial role in "requiring" political parties to conduct serious recruitment and encourage female candidates, as well as to engage in political education with various parties to build political awareness about the importance of women's presence in politics. Similarly, political parties must take the lead in recruiting female candidates, considering organizational experience, educational background, and the importance of cadre training or organizational skills.

Author Contributions: All authors contributed to this research.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Informed Consent Statement/Ethics approval: Not applicable.

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