

## WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP: AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER EQUALITY IN LEGISLATORS IN SEKADAU

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### ABSTRACT

This article discusses the role and challenges of women in achieving political leadership in Sekadau and Sanggau Regencies, West Kalimantan. The aim of this research is to determine the contribution of women in formal and informal policy making through case studies in two districts. The research method used is qualitative with in-depth interview techniques and direct observation in the field, and also uses literacy study methods from books, journals and previous related articles. This study found that although women's participation in politics is increasing, there are still obstacles for women to achieve political leadership positions, including gender stereotypes and inequality of access. The main motivation for women to participate in politics is the struggle for interests and issues related to women's empowerment and general welfare. this article provides an overview of women's political trends in these two constituencies.

**Keywords:** *Political Leadership, Political Participation, Gender Equality, Gender Stereotypes*

### ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membahas tentang peran dan tantangan perempuan dalam mencapai kepemimpinan politik di Kabupaten Sekadau dan Sanggau, Kalimantan Barat. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kontribusi perempuan dalam pengambilan kebijakan formal dan informal melalui studi kasus di dua kabupaten. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan teknik wawancara mendalam dan observasi langsung di lapangan, dan juga menggunakan metode studi literasi dari buku, jurnal, dan artikel-artikel terkait sebelumnya. Studi ini menemukan bahwa meskipun partisipasi perempuan dalam politik meningkat, masih terdapat hambatan bagi perempuan untuk mencapai posisi kepemimpinan politik, termasuk stereotip gender dan ketimpangan akses. Motivasi utama perempuan untuk berpartisipasi dalam politik adalah perebutan kepentingan dan isu-isu terkait pemberdayaan perempuan dan kesejahteraan umum. Secara keseluruhan, artikel ini memberikan gambaran mengenai tren politik perempuan di kedua daerah pemilihan tersebut.

**Kata Kunci:** *Kepemimpinan Politik, Partisipasi Politik, Kesetaraan Gender, Stereotip Gender*

## **Introduction**

Political Leadership is an important aspect of a democratic system that plays a role in policy-making and decision-making that affects the society at large. Despite this, women still face challenges in achieving gender equality. In this increasingly advanced era, it is important to recognize and appreciate the important role of women's politics in building a more inclusive and just society. Women in political leadership are often faced with gender stereotypes that limit women's ability to advance in political careers, stereotypes that women are not strong or firm enough to become political leaders, Sanggau and Sekadau Regencies are areas of West Kalimantan Province, inseparable from the same challenges, this perception often leads to the assessment that women do not have the leadership they need or the decision-making that they need strong in politics.

But lately, more and more women have managed to break through these limits. Due to a growing awareness of the importance of gender equality in political leadership, this awareness is driven by the persistent women's rights movement and advocacy efforts by various women's groups and community organizations. There is an explanation on a news website that says that the number of female parliamentary candidates in 2024 has increased compared to the previous election (Farisa husna, 2024). This exposure is also supported by an article explaining that the increase in women's political electability, which explains that in the 2024 election, of the 580 elected members of the House of Representatives, 21.9% of them are women. There are a total of 127 female (members) of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia (Rahmawati, 2024).

A comprehensive understanding of the influences and challenges faced by women in political leadership that has a crucial role in promoting gender equality and expanding women's political participation. By gaining in-depth experience, they will be able to overcome obstacles and discrimination experienced by women, building a more inclusive and fair political system. This will provide equal opportunities for women to contribute to political decision-making and create positive change in society. Similar to the assumption that women are not fit to be leaders, the challenges of reform and globalization require a leader to be able to lead and consider the needs of everyone in achieving their goals. Similar to the assumption that women are not fit to be leaders, the challenges of reform and globalization require a leader to be able to lead and consider the needs of everyone in achieving goals (Fitriana & Cenni, 2021).

One of the keys to achieving sustainable progress in public development is the existence of gender equality in political leadership. Gender equality includes equal conditions for men and women, so that they have equal opportunities and rights to participate in various activities

such as political, economic, and socio-cultural activities (Setiawan, 2019). The same thing is also said by (Gusmansyah, 2019) that the progress of a country is based on the existence of gender equality. Therefore, increasing the role of women in gender development is important as part of national development, striving to realize a harmonious and equal partnership between men and women so that gender equality and justice are realized in various countries. activities, especially in the political field. from.

According to the author, this can help create more public political policies and strengthen the foundation of inclusive democracy, but based on the author's research, there are several regions that do not appreciate women's involvement in political elections. For example, during the Mentawai Islands Government Elections in 2019, female parliamentary candidates were not successful at all, thus contributing to low participation women in the political process in parliament. (Dayanti & Fitriyah, 2019). As women's efforts to take on the role of political leadership in the region are not easy. Many factors affect women's ability to occupy leadership positions. Therefore, in order to take on a leadership role, it is important and appropriate to consider how women shape the political communication process (El Adawiyah et al., 2019).

Politics is very interesting to study, especially in women's politics because of their increasingly important role in determining public policy, in fighting for gender equality, and influencing positive social change. Through in-depth research, it can be revealed the great potential that women's politics has in creating more inclusive change and building a more just society for all.

This research is different from previous research because it raises the issue of cultural perspectives in women's political leadership. As for some of the results of previous research focused on the discussion of the role of women in national politics, in this article the author discusses women's participation in the political arena, so the author focuses this study on the role and limitations of women in the political world. (Kiftiyah, 2019). As in a similar article that discusses women's representation in political parties, according to (Ramadhany & Rahmawati, 2020) which explains the capital owned by female candidates in the midst of patriarchal political habitus in the 2019 election field in Sleman Regency, this article focuses more on patriarchal culture in elections.

For this reason, the author considers that this study aims to determine the influence of women's participation in political leadership, dismantle issues related to gender stereotypes and discrimination, and describe the obstacles that hinder women from achieving the political equality they should be. Thus, this research has significant relevance in the context of inclusive

and equitable democratic development, as well as women's empowerment. Through a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by women in political leadership, the country will be able to move towards a more just and gender-equal society.

### **Research Methods**

This article uses a qualitative research design, a qualitative method is a research method used with final results in the form of descriptive or explanations obtained by the researcher through a fairly long process. And also using literacy methods supported by books, journals, previous articles. By describing various political behaviors related to women. This statement cites how the concept of women in the political world is related to gender and the phenomena of women's representation in the political space (Darmansyah & Sartika, 2021).

In this study, the researcher used a descriptive research method with qualitative data analysis. The data collection technique is through observation, observation is a method of data collection that is carried out directly in the field by determining what is embraced and recording everything related to the research. Here the author tries to observe various phenomena of women's involvement in the world of politics, by looking at how women's involvement in the political world is. The author conducted in-depth interviews with informants, namely, women who passed to run as legislative candidates and passed the election, informants from women who registered as legislative candidates but did not pass the election, as well as information sourced from women who had high positions but did not register as legislative candidates. As for what they wanted to ask the informants related to how they were involved, the process in its influence on the political leadership, then how the issues related to gender stereotypes and discrimination and the obstacles they encountered during the process of women's participation in the legislature.

The researcher used comparative analysis to involve comparisons between regions or regions and their legislatures, to understand differences in women's participation and representation in politics. Then the analysis that the author uses aims to identify the factors that affect gender equality in politics. Practice and learn in an effort to increase women's participation in politics.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **The Role of Women in Political Leadership in Sanggau**

In recent decades, women's participation in political leadership has become an increasingly relevant and attention-grabbing topic. Although women have made significant progress in many areas, women's presence in politics remains relatively low, especially in

political leadership positions. The role of women in politics is key to achieving equality and justice. Representing the voices of the marginalized, championing women's issues, and bringing a different perspective in decision-making. Women's involvement in politics empowers them and inspires positive change. With more inclusive representation, politics becomes very strong, so it is more diverse, and more representative of the entire society.

Women leaders in Sanggau and Sekadau play an extraordinary and impactful role, both through formal positions in political institutions and through informal roles in community empowerment. In formal roles, they lead with intelligence, courage, and perseverance in legislative councils, executives, and other political organizations. Representing marginalized women's voices, championing gender equality issues, and ensuring women's interests are heard and accommodated in public policy.

As a female leader, she not only carries out the responsibility of carrying out formal political duties, but also acts as an agent of change in the community. Through informal roles, networking, gathering support, and empowering women at the local level. Organize community groups, hold meetings, and facilitate dialogue to fight for issues relevant to society. Communities become stronger, more organized, and better able to face the challenges they face.

The women leaders in Sanggau and Sekadau are also role models for other women. Her success in politics and community empowerment inspired other women to take an active role in politics and society. Help break down stereotypes and prejudices that limit women's participation in political leadership. By sharing their experiences and skills, they empower each other to pursue ambitions, make positive changes, and take an active role in building a better future.

Overall, the formal and informal roles of women leaders in Sanggau and Sekadau have a significant impact in promoting gender equality, championing women's issues, and building a more inclusive society. Be a force that drives positive change, creates a more equitable and equitable environment, and opens the door to wider women's participation in politics and leadership.

### **The Main Motivation of Women to Get Involved in Politics in Sanggau and Sekadau**

Women in Sanggau and Sekadau have various motivations that encourage them to get involved in politics. They want to ensure that their voices are heard and their interests are fairly represented in the political decision-making process. Then they want to be part of the decision-making that affects the lives of the community as a whole. The existence of political

participation gives women the opportunity to fight for empowerment and gender equality. They want to overcome the inequality that still exists in the political and social structures. By getting involved in politics, women can fight for women's rights and other gender issues, as well as build a more inclusive and equitable environment for all

In their involvement, women in Sanggau and Sekadau have a special concern for local issues and the needs of their communities. They want to ensure better access to education, health, infrastructure, employment, and environmental services. Getting involved in politics gives them a platform to fight for these issues and ensure that the interests of their communities come first. According to (Muslimat, 2020) there is still low and limited motivation for women to improve themselves to advance, therefore women involved in politics in Sanggau and Sekadau have the motivation to improve the quality of life of the community as a whole. They want to create better social change, address social inequality, and fight for justice in various aspects of life. Political participation is a means for them to overcome the problems faced by society and create positive change.

So that women in Sanggau and Sekadau are also inspired by the successes and contributions of other women in politics. They see these women as role models and want to follow in their footsteps. The success of these other women provides motivation for young women to take part in politics and contribute to society in the same way. Overall, the motivation for women to be involved in politics in Sanggau and Sekadau involves the desire to have a voice and interests represented, fight for gender empowerment and equality, fight for local issues and community needs, improve the quality of life of the community, and be inspired by the success of other women in politics.

### **Challenges and Obstacles for Women in Achieving Political Leadership Positions**

On the way to political leadership, women are faced with various challenges that hinder their participation. One of the main challenges is the gender stereotypes that are still inherent in society. Women are often considered less suitable for political roles because they are expected to play traditional roles as mothers and householders. This attitude creates a negative perspective and casts doubt on women's leadership abilities, thus reducing the support and opportunities available to them.

In addition to gender stereotypes, inequality of access and opportunities is also a significant challenge for women in achieving political leadership. Women often face difficulties in obtaining adequate political funding, access to powerful political networks, and opportunities to occupy influential political positions. The male-dominated patronage system also limits

women's opportunities to advance in politics. This inequality creates a gap that is difficult to bridge, as women often have to work twice as hard to prove their skills and toughness in political competition.

The patriarchal culture that still often occurs among the community is also an obstacle in achieving political leadership for women. Women's opportunities to become politicians are limited. This is due to the perception of society that places the role of women only in household affairs, thus limiting their role in the public sphere. This culture places men in a dominant position in decision-making and leadership (Antik Bintari, 2020), while women are often ignored or faced with discrimination and harassment. Social norms that prioritize the role of men in politics create an environment that is not conducive to women's participation.

But during the independence struggle, the need for more fighters, both men and women, opened up more opportunities for women to work outside the home. The community accepts and appreciates the contribution of women as warriors, both in the fields of war, education, medicine, and logistics management. To overcome these barriers, greater efforts are needed to change people's views and build awareness of the importance of women's inclusion in the political decision-making process (Umagapi, 2020).

While challenges and barriers to achieving political leadership for women remain, it is important to continue to fight for gender equality and build an inclusive environment. With sustained efforts and cooperation between governments, civil society, and international institutions (Sulastri, 2020), women can overcome these challenges and bring about significant changes in the political world.

Through continuous efforts, women can overcome existing challenges and achieve decent and equal political leadership positions. It is important to continue to build public awareness of the importance of women's inclusion in politics and change views that are still related to gender stereotypes. Increasing women's access to adequate political funding, building strong political networks, and equitable opportunities to occupy influential political positions are also important steps in achieving gender equality in political leadership.

In addition, there is a need for training and mentorship programs that specifically strengthen women's leadership skills, build confidence, and develop a solid network. Support from governments, international institutions, and civil society is also critical in creating inclusive policies and removing barriers that hinder women's participation in politics. Women who have successfully achieved political leadership positions should be role models and play

an active role in encouraging and supporting the younger generation of women to pursue their political careers.

In the long run, achieving gender equality in political leadership is not only about providing equal opportunities for women, but also about recognizing the value added by women's perspectives and experiences in the political decision-making process. With diverse and inclusive political leadership, we can create a more equitable, gender-equitable, and responsive society to the needs and aspirations of all its citizens.

### **Persepsi Masyarakat Terhadap Partisipasi dan Kontribusi Perempuan Dalam Politik**

There are still some people who think that women's involvement in politics is abnormal or out of nature. The prevailing opinion today is that politics is a male-dominated field, so women's presence is often questioned or rejected. Public perception of women's leadership is a process of analysis and evaluation of women's leadership management (Alaslan, 2021). This perception reflects the existence of a patriarchal culture that still persists in some societies.

On the other hand, there is also an opinion that increasingly accepts and appreciates women's contributions in politics. The community is beginning to realize that women have unique skills and perspectives that enrich decision-making and development processes at the local level. Women's participation aims to facilitate the implementation of policies and programs that are more responsive to the needs and interests of women and society as a whole.

In addition, women's performance and achievements in the political field began to be socially recognized. They are believed to be able to make significant contributions both in terms of policy development, infrastructure development, improvement of public services, and efforts to advance the public interest. So that in this case it will further strengthen the positive perception of the public towards women's political participation and role. When going to the field, there were informants who supported women to participate in politics

*"In my opinion, women who are in politics are very good, I strongly support women who are in politics because they will be able to cause equality in politics, especially now that freedom of opinion is very much put forward so I think it is very good for the progress of a region and equality between genders in the world, especially in politics,"* she said in an interview.

However, there are still challenges, especially related to social acceptance of women in leadership positions. According to Deddy in (Malihah, 2020). This negative attitude towards women is also heavily influenced by the media which usually views women differently from men. Gender stereotypes and biases still persist, limiting women's opportunities to occupy strategic positions in government structures. Although her track record has been proven, women's leadership abilities are sometimes still questioned by society.

Overall, public perception of women's political participation and contribution in Sanggau and Sekadau Regencies shows positive changes, but there are still obstacles and challenges that need to be faced. Achieving better equality and representation requires ongoing efforts to raise awareness, eliminate stereotypes, and strengthen women's roles and leadership in politics.

### **Society's View of Women's Abilities and Qualifications**

However, there is still a perception in some people that women's ability and qualifications to occupy strategic political positions are still questionable. Stereotypes about women's traditional roles as housewives and family managers continue to influence views of women's abilities in the political arena. According to (Alfiyani, 2022), women are considered incapable or violate social norms and will if they behave deviating from the norm by entering the political realm. So there is a perception that women are less experienced, less assertive, and less skilled than men in handling complex political issues.

Talking about people's views on whether they are interested in politics as Nanda said when interviewed.

*"As a native of Sekadau and at the same time highly educated, I personally have no interest in politics. Because in Sekadau Regency itself, in my opinion, especially young women who are involved in politics are not looked down upon or usually underestimated. Therefore, I undo the intention to do politics, freedom in politics and opinion is very limited so that that makes the intention to do politics for most of the young women in Sekadau Regency lacking."*

Meanwhile, on the other hand, more and more people are open and appreciate the skills and qualifications of women in politics. They understand that women have the same ability, expertise, and integrity as men. Some of the women elected to political office at the local and national levels have demonstrated real performance and challenged negative assumptions about women's abilities. Society is beginning to realize that a person's ability is determined by his experience, knowledge, and skills, not his gender.

This change in opinion is also due to the increasing awareness of gender equality and the importance of women's representation in the political decision-making process. People are beginning to understand that women's involvement in politics can provide different perspectives and solutions, thus enriching policy-making and development processes that are more responsive to the needs of society as a whole. This can facilitate the acceptance of women's skills and qualifications to occupy political positions at both the local and national levels.

### **Women's Experiences in Facing Gender Discrimination**

For general experience, there is an assumption that politics is a suitable domain for men. Some female politicians reveal that they are often overlooked and disrespected by their male colleagues, especially in political meetings and forums. They may be perceived as less assertive, less stubborn, and do not have the strong leadership spirit of men.

In addition, women also have to face the views of society that still adheres to traditional stereotypes about women's roles and responsibilities. There is an assumption that women's main role is to take care of the home and family, so that when they enter the world of politics, women's decisions are often questioned or considered less focused. Female politicians also often receive comments and innuendo that demean their abilities just because they are women. In some cases, female politicians are subjected to more degrading forms of discriminatory treatment, including sexual harassment, intimidation, and even physical and verbal violence. This means that they have to work extra hard to prove their skills and integrity and face greater pressure than men.

However, several female politicians in Sekadau have shown their prowess in achieving good results. Gradually they gained recognition and support in the community. While this represents a positive change in society's perspective, there is still much work to be done to achieve true gender equality in politics. According to (Sidik, n.d.). The aim of these measures is to eliminate negative discrimination against women in practical politics.

Although the Indonesian women's movement actively participates in the political arena, there are still gaps in women's representation and participation in formal political institutions. Women's political representation is essential if we are to achieve a gender-friendly democracy. The situation in Sanggau is not much different from that in Sekadau in terms of women's political experience. We must also overcome various forms of sexism and stereotypes related to women's roles and abilities in the political field.

One of her biggest challenges is the perception that politics is a male-friendly domain. Several female politicians in Sanggau revealed that they often received insulting treatment from their male counterparts in local politics. They feel that their opinions and ideas are undervalued or even ignored in political meetings and debates. As quoted in the article (Wicaksana, 2022). Indonesian women sought to end discrimination at home through political channels, by establishing local and national women's organizations, educational networks, and the media.

In addition, women also have to face stereotypes of traditional society that view women's roles only as household and family affairs. There is a perception that when women enter the world of politics, their initial responsibilities as housewives are neglected. This

perspective gives us reason to doubt the effectiveness and involvement of women in politics. However, despite facing diverse challenges, several female politicians in Sanggau have shown good performance and integrity. Gradually they gained recognition and support in the community. Although this represents a positive change in the perspective of the community, there is still much to be done to achieve gender equality in Sanggau Sekadau politics.

## **Conclusion**

Women in Sangau and Sekadau Regencies are involved in formal and informal political leadership. Several women have been formally elected to parliament and contributed to policy-making at the local level. However, women's political participation and representation still face various obstacles. Gender stereotypes, access and opportunity gaps, and patriarchal culture that are still deeply rooted in society are often barriers for women to participate in politics. Therefore, more efforts are needed to raise awareness of the importance of equal representation of women in politics.

The main motivation of women to participate in politics in these two regions is the desire to fight for interests and problems related to the welfare of women and society as a whole. By engaging in the political decision-making process, we can fight for women's rights and gender equality and represent minority voices. In addition, political participation provides opportunities to participate in community development at the village and district levels.

The study shows that despite progress in women's political participation in Sanggau and Sekadau, they still face various obstacles. Therefore, steps are needed to address gender stereotypes, access inequality, and the patriarchal culture that drives inequality. There is also an urgent need to raise awareness of the importance of gender inclusion in politics. The goal is to create a future political climate that is more conducive to women's participation and progress.

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