

Modernization of Women in Politics in Semarang City

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore women's political interactions in the modern era. The development of 4.0 industrial society which is characterized by the digitalization in people's daily life also has an influence on women in politics. Changes in the participation of women in politics develop and take various forms that are influenced by advances in technology. This study used qualitative analytical descriptive approach with female informants. They were divided into groups of women who used their right to vote and women who had the right to vote. Huntington's theory of political modernization is used as the instrument to analyze the data in this research, a research with a feminist perspective. The results showed that; 1) women have made progress in politics, seen from; their political participation, political socialization, political education, and the increasing women's empowerment in politics and government, 2) women's political modernization was in line with the increasingly strong demands for gender equality from global and national feminists, the rule of law that still affirms women, and this modernization had an impact on women's participation. Based on these results, a recommendation could be given, that is the need for government intervention and political parties in directing women in facing change for the better.

Keywords: *women, modernization, politics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Modernization, a condition which cannot be rejected by all mankind over time as a planned social change [1], pinned on it the adaptive nature of individuals and societies to the development of technology and science, a more rational way of thinking, and the improvement of life due to industrialization process [2]. Modernization is often connoted with the word development. S.N Eisentand (1964) identified the main structural characters of modernization following the path suggested by Weber and Persons [3]. He associated modernization with a political structure with a high degree of difference and the distribution of political power and authority throughout the society. Lerner's modernization theory, known since 1983, has proven that all countries would experience modernization and it is impossible for a country to direct its goals to be more traditional and backward. Furthermore, to become modern citizens, they only need to compete in the ideas and actions brought by Western nations who have previously left behind the backward traditions towards a more modern world [4].

Modernization, in fact, does not only affect the social life of people, but also affects their political life. The development of 4.0 industry which is characterized

by digitalization in people's daily lives also has an influence on the political practices of a country. Marlon J. Levy, Jr. (1966) [5] and Samuel P. Huntington (1965 and 1968) emphasized on stability in facing the rapid social and economic changes that accompanied modernization. Modernization initiates industrialization, economic growth, increasing social mobility and political participation [5]. Therefore, one of the components that occur is political development in society.

Hungtinton and Dominguez explained the concept of political development which has geographic, derivative, theological and functional connotations. Political development in geographical connotation means that there is a process of political change in developing countries using concepts and methods that have been used by developed countries, such as the concept of political socialization, political communication and so on. Political development in the derivative meaning means that political development is the political aspect and consequence of a comprehensive process of change, namely modernization which has consequences for economic growth, urbanization, increase in education, mass media, changes in social status and other aspects. Besides, political development in the theological sense

is intended as a process of change towards one or more goals of the political system. These objectives, for example, are about the political stability, political integration, democracy, participation, mobilization and so on. It also includes the development goals of a nation which include high economic growth, equity, democracy, stability and national autonomy. Meanwhile, political development in a functional sense is defined as a movement of change towards an ideal political system that a country wants to develop, for example Indonesia wants to develop a constitutional democratic political system or be more procedural.

In this process of political development, community participation has grown in various forms, such as political socialization has become wider, and community political empowerment has also become more open. Among the groups of people who face the change, whether it is social, economic, cultural or political sectors are women. So far, women have always been the first to be affected in all situations relating to social change, including modernization. They are a vulnerable group that is most affected by the changes that occur [6], because of the dual role they play which places them as objects, not subjects. Astuti (2000) emphasized this in the case of migrant women in her study in Grobogan [7] and changes that were the impact of modernization through the process of industrialization and advances in information technology affect women, especially in their roles in the family and in public spaces [8].

In the phase of political reform, Indonesia campaigns for gender equality in rhetoric, which literally only serve to fulfill the obligations of fulfilling 30% of women in politics. In fact, many women are not ready to fight in the elections. Women in politics have been the marginalized party in society, which is very much influenced by the patriarchal culture that exists in society [9]. Women in the culture of society in the world are always placed as second citizens after placing men in the top hierarchy. In some socio-cultural arrangements, this reality exists so that women are led into marginalized ranks. This construction is socialized from generation to generation which even blends in culture, which according to EB. Taylor [10], this would be found in the beliefs, knowledge, arts, morals, laws, customs, and other abilities that a person gets as a member of a society. The reflection of a patriarchal culture was also described by previous research, placing women as *kanca wingking* or the second person [11]; live in the shadow of men [12]; limiting their roles only in cleaning the house, serving their husbands' biological need (sex), and preparing the food (or in Indonesian it is known as *sumur, kasur, dapur*) or in domestic roles [13], increasingly marginalizing women in various accesses including politics [14]. Like other countries, during the

last decade, equality of women's rights and gender issues has become an important part of democracy [15].

Semarang City, as one of the provincial capitals, provides an overview of the political modernization that occurs in women. As in the case of women in Saudi Arabia who face the process of becoming modern with its various challenges [16], such process of political progress also experienced by women in Semarang City. Huntington's theory of political modernization was used as the instrument to analyze the data in this research, a research with the perspective of feminism, to see in depth: women's political modernization, the pictures of the forms of women's political modernization and women's empowerment in politics and government so far, what matters have significantly influenced political modernization for women, the changes in political interaction, political participation, women's political education and its impact on gender equality in Semarang City.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a qualitative research with a descriptive analytical approach. It was carried out by exploring data from female informants who were divided into several groups. Those were women who used their right to vote and women who have the right to vote. The data was obtained through documents, literature, mass media and social media analysis. In-depth interviews and documents analysis became the data collection techniques. The documents used in this research were some literature, articles, scientific journals, the internet and research results related to women's participation in politics. Huntington's theory of political modernization is used as a tool of analysis in this research, a research with a feminist perspective. Analysis and interpretation of the data in this study would be analyzed by transcribing and categorizing the data based on themes, then they were described and interpreted, so that the meaning of the data which was directly related to the problem to be answered, namely women's political modernization which focuses on women's political participation, empowerment, women's politics, and the changes experienced by women could be collected.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Various efforts and strong commitments from various parties in the realization of gender equality continue to encourage the involvement of women in politics. Moreover, it is supported by the development of technology during the last decade experienced by the community, including Semarang city. Researches carried out previously have obtained results on the progress of women in politics in Semarang City which was in line with the increasingly strong demands of gender equality from global and national feminists. Furthermore, the present research results are explained as follows.

First, women have made progress in politics, which can be seen from the variety of access to education and political socialization, as well as the forms of their political participation. It cannot be denied that advances in communication technology have a very significant effect for the growth of women's political participation. The number of female voters in Semarang City was recorded at 604,802 people in the 2019 legislative elections and the 2020 regional head elections, higher than male voters. This higher number is sufficient to determine the current political nuances in Semarang city.

In those two elections, women experienced a shift in political participation compared to the previous period. This change in women's participation in politics was found in; channels of women's participation and the growth of new forms of women's participation in politics in Semarang City. In the last five years, women's organizations have emerged which are active in carrying out their activities in the social and political sectors. These women's organizations are recorded as; political party wing organizations; a part of the winning team of the mayoral candidate; and as a response to the current issues such as women's empowerment and other political issues. In addition to the newly emerging women's organizations, existing organizations also show their activities although some are only obvious in the elite or the board level. Some organizations originally indeed aimed to guard the political interests of certain candidates or parties, such as "Srikandi SeTIA Hendi" which appeared in the community before the regional head elections at the end of 2020. The emergence of women's organizations was formed by the winning team of Hendi-Ita mayoral candidate which politically aimed to guard this candidate.

The research revealed the women's political participation from two groups of women, women's political elite group and ordinary voter women. The first group consisted of women who were active in political organizations, the officials of political parties at the city to sub-district level, wives or families of the candidates, and activists in other social organizations. The

participation of women's political elites could be seen in their participation in informal discussions. They talked, through the forums held, about strategic programs that could be carried out for certain political goals. Some of the women in this group actively became spokespersons in the political party campaigns, run for political candidates (both as legislators and regional heads), election organizers, witnesses in elections, and several other activities leading up to the election process. After the election, women's political elites participated again as organizers of political parties and organizations. The number of these groups is increasing, along with the push for affirmative action that gives women at least 30% of space in politics, as outlined in every law and decision of the General Election Commission of the Republic of Indonesia regarding the obligation of political parties to delegate women legislative candidates in each electoral district since 2014.

The second group was voter women. They used their voting rights during the elections but they were not directly active in the political practices. The participation of this group is more diverse today than in the pre-era of the use of social media for political purposes. Today, social media is an important part of many women in Semarang City to access national and local political information. The results of interviews with the informants showed that most of them not only read news, opinions, status on Facebook – Instagram - Twitter, but they also wrote, and had their opinion on social media. Women are free to express their opinion in the social media. As Rowland in Daniel Miller [17] emphasized about modernization which is interpreted as a representation of giving freedom to everyone to access everything that is important and identical to the contemporary. The development of social media does not appear to limit women's political participation. The patriarchal reality that has been accused of being the main cause of the increasing marginalization of women in various political accesses is unable to shackle women's access to social media. Lots of accounts on behalf of women actively provided input; asked questions; and responded to comments on the status of public officials.

The existence of social media opens Semarang women's access to today's political socialization. Social media reduces the problems that women face in the public sphere, and enables women to develop their talents and interests in limitless public issues. At anytime and anywhere, women can easily get information about political news, political campaigns, political policies, and political issues through social media. In addition, there is also general phenomenon of most women who like to socialize, share information, and the nature of social media that connects each person indefinitely, opens up participation, openness, conversation, community, and connection so that it provides opportunities for women to channel their

aspirations, ideas and feelings. In Instagram and Facebook, accounts with female identities domiciled in Semarang city are very active in commenting, submitting reports about many things on the homepage of the mayor, deputy mayor, and official government accounts in each department. So far, research has not gone far enough to trace whether the social media accounts are all real women who live in Semarang City or not. However, it is clear that women are engaged in politics through social media, even now they have realized that social media is a strategic media in campaigning themselves in the public sphere.

As emphasized by Maryani and Arifin [18] who believed in the existence of social media which can; a) be means of self-existence, accommodating and releasing thoughts, and building social networks; b) be an effective means for sharing, publication of works, and means of alternative (critical) thoughts education; c) give freedom and release users from the bonds of values and cultural norms; and d) be dialogic and sharpen the way of thinking or make people accustomed to receive criticism, respond to arguments, argue with other users. Mayfield also defined social media as the best understanding of a new type of online media group in today's modern era, which includes characters such as; a). Participation: social media encourages contributions and feedback from everyone who is interested. This blurs the boundaries between the media and the audience; b). Openness: social media services are open to feedback and participation, and encourage making any choice, comment and sharing information. There are rarely any barriers to access and use any content, because content that with password protection is not preferred; c). Conversation: while traditional media still distributes content to audiences, social media is better known for two-way communication; d). Community: social media can build community quickly; e). Connectivity: most social media thrive on linkages to other websites, other sources and other people [18].

The next change for women in Semarang City was an awareness of "clean" politics. In several activities of Al-Quran recitation groups, Neighborhood (RT)/hamlet (RW)'s regular social gathering for purposes of conducting a lottery (Arisan) before the last 2019 legislative elections, the attraction of souvenirs and even money politics which were done by legislative candidates who often attended the event, was not unlike the previous elections. Several women's organizations campaigned about their rejection of money politics in the elections campaign. Women increasingly understand, politically educated by the open access to information.

The second results of the study showed that the progress experienced by women so far is in line with the increasingly strong demands for gender equality from global and national feminists and with the rule of law

that still affirms women. During this time, women in politics have always been marginalized and underestimated in social life. In fact, they are also advancing in political participation, whether they realize it or not. The issue of inequality in access to information and the public that has occurred so far can be minimized along with advances in technology and information that also involve women in it. Women who are not activists can still "speak out", participate in politics even though not directly, but still this is a choice of political action that is beneficial both for themselves as citizens and for society.

In addition, the issue of equality of rights among men has been aggressively voiced to support the affirmations made through law. The issue of gender mainstreaming for more than two decades has been used to describe the differences between men and women from a socio-cultural perspective [19]. The patriarchal culture, which is often the "main suspect" when it comes to the question of why women do not take part in various activities, is eroded by the ease of women exist in their society. Religious and cultural factors that are often used to determine the level of representation of women [20] also have not become a central issue that easily influences public not to vote for women. In fact, it seems clear that the percentage of women's representation in Semarang City Legislative Election has reached 40.6 percent of the total registrants. The interest of women running for the election is quite high and even exceeds the minimum limit of the predetermined quota.

Just as Huntington predicted that modernization increases social mobility and political participation, this is also the case for women in Semarang City. The concept of political development occurs and a comprehensive process of change happens, namely modernization which brings consequences on economic growth, urbanization, increasing the education, mass media, changes in social status and other aspects or what Huntington interpreted as derivative political development. Political modernization that occurs in women in Semarang City has become a movement for change towards an ideal political system that wants to be developed, in which equality between men and women can be realized.

4. CONCLUSION

The political life of women in Semarang City provides an overview of women in facing the modernization which has an impact on participation, political education and political socialization. Women's adaptive attitudes and behaviors towards technological advances make it easier for them to access any information about politics and on the other hand provide

an open space for women to participate either directly or indirectly. Women experience a shift in political participation from the previous period. This change in women's participation in politics is found in; channels of women's participation and the growth of new forms of women's participation in politics in Semarang City, in women's organizations that have an identity as a wing of a political party organization; be part of the winning team of the mayor and deputy mayor candidates; and as a response to current issues such as women's empowerment and other political issues. Women are progressing in line with increasingly strong demands for gender equality from global and national feminists, the rule of law that still affirms women. Even though in reality, the success of women to the finish point is still not achieved in the number of women's representation in political institutions.

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