



Between Tradition and Transformation: Voting Behavior of Women Candidates in the South Sulawesi Legislative Assembly in Electoral District 3 of South Sulawesi Province

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Abstract. This study will explore the significant changes in people's voting behavior in selecting legislative candidates in the South Sulawesi Provincial Legislative Council, particularly in the electoral districts of Gowa and Takalar. Female candidates have outperformed their male counterparts in terms of votes, marking an important shift in traditional political power dynamics. The main focus of the study was to analyze the factors supporting this shift and its impact on the power structure of male dominance. Using qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews with voters, and data analysis of election results. The results show that voters now prioritize the quality of individuals and policies over gender. Women's involvement in social issues that resonate with voters' daily lives, as well as the use of effective and empathetic campaign strategies, has changed the dynamics of elections. The study also documents a decline in stigma against women in politics and increased support for women's leadership as symptoms of broader social transformation. These findings open up new insights into potential strategies that can promote gender equality in politics. As such, this study not only contributes to the academic literature but also offers practical recommendations for political parties, policymakers and activists seeking to strengthen women's representation in politics.

Keywords: Female Candidates, Voting Behavior, Social Change, South Sulawesi Legislative Assembly

1 Introduction

Women's political participation is an important indicator in measuring a country's social progress and democratization. Globally, the presence of women in politics not only increases representation, but also contributes to decision-making that is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all levels of society. While there has been a significant increase in the number of women in political positions, both at the national and local levels, the challenges remain great. Gender inequality, social stereotypes and structural barriers still prevent many women from actively engaging in politics.[3]. At the national level, women's participation in politics has a direct impact on public policy. Research shows that when

women are involved in decision-making, issues related to family welfare, education, health, and women's rights become more visible and accommodated [4], [5]. [4], [5]. This is important for creating an enabling environment for sustainable development and improving people's overall quality of life. In addition, the presence of women in politics can also influence voter behavior, where voters tend to pay more attention to candidates who have a commitment to gender equality and social justice.

Affirmative action is a strategy designed to increase the representation of marginalized groups in various fields, including politics. One form of affirmative policy that is widely implemented in various countries is gender quotas, which set a certain percentage for women in legislative candidacies. [6], [7], [8]. In Indonesia, for example, there is a provision that requires at least 30% of legislative candidates to be women. This policy aims to open the door for more women to participate in the political and decision-making process. Although there have been efforts to increase women's representation, such as the implementation of the 30% quota in the legislature, the challenges faced are still enormous. The deeply rooted patriarchal culture in society is often a major barrier for women to engage in politics. [9][10]

Bugis-Makassar customs in South Sulawesi have a significant influence on gender roles in politics, creating a complex dynamic between traditional norms and the demands of modernity. In Bugis society, the concept of "pakkalu" emphasizes the role of men as leaders and decision-makers. [11]while women are often expected to manage domestic affairs. Despite this, Bugis women have a long history of political engagement, particularly in social and economic contexts, which is often overlooked. In recent decades, there has been a shift in the perception of women's roles. Women have begun to play a more active role in politics, both as voters and as candidates, as seen by the increasing number of women involved in political organizations and government institutions. However, the influence of custom is still strong, and many women face challenges in breaking through the boundaries set by traditional norms. The processes of modernization and education have also contributed to this change, encouraging women to be more vocal and participate in politics. Despite progress, realizing gender equality in politics in South Sulawesi still requires sustained efforts to overhaul stereotypes and support women's wider participation.

South Sulawesi, with its rich Bugis-Makassar culture, has a strict system of social hierarchy, where gender roles are traditionally defined. Within this structure, women are often relegated to the domestic sphere, responsible for household management and the education of children. These gender stereotypes are supported by social norms that prioritize men's roles as leaders and decision-makers, creating boundaries for women to participate in politics and public life. However, despite the strong influence of restrictive customs, the history of Bugis-Makassar society also records the emergence of strong female leaders, such as Andi Depu and Ratu Sima. They not only played an important role in territorial management, but also became symbols of strength and courage. The existence of these women leaders demonstrates the potential and opportunity in a seemingly conservative society.

The contradiction between tradition and modern opportunities became more apparent with the rise of education and gender awareness among women. With better access to

education, Bugis-Makassar women began to speak out and engage in political activities. This change showed that women were not only able to contribute in the domestic sector, but also had the capacity to lead and influence public policy. From the perspective of modernity, opportunities for women to engage in politics are increasingly open. However, challenges remain, especially in overhauling the traditional view that considers women as subjects who only deserve to play a role in the domestic sphere. Therefore, to achieve true gender equality, there needs to be a sustained effort in educating the public about the importance of women's roles in all aspects of life, including politics and leadership. In this context, it is important to delve deeper into the history and contributions of women in Bugis-Makassar culture, and encourage more inclusive social change, so that women's potential can be fully utilized and have a positive impact on society as a whole.

Significant social changes such as increased urbanization, access to education, and the influence of social media have had a major impact on the way people in South Sulawesi view the role of women in politics. This transformation can be seen in people's voting behavior, which has begun to show openness to women's leadership and involvement in the political process. Urbanization has resulted in a shift in traditional values in South Sulawesi society, including in terms of gender roles. In urban areas, with greater exposure to modern ideas, views of women as leaders are evolving. People living in urban areas tend to be more progressive and open to women's involvement in politics, compared to rural communities that are more bound by traditional norms. This change is reflected in the increasing number of women participating in political organizations and even running for elections. Access to education has also played an important role in this transformation. More and more South Sulawesi women are obtaining higher education, which not only increases their ability to compete in politics, but also gives them an awareness of their political rights and leadership potential. Education broadens horizons and reinforces the belief that women have an important role to play in politics, both as critical voters and as potential leaders.

Electoral District (Dapil) 3 of South Sulawesi Province, which consists of Gowa Regency and Takalar Regency, is one of the interesting areas to be analyzed in the context of voter behavior, especially because of the tendency of voters in this electoral district to choose more female legislative candidates than male. The female legislative candidates in question are: Fadilah Fahriana, Andi Tenri Indah, Siti Husniah Talenrang and Rismawati Kadir Nyampa. The heterogeneous characteristics of voters, who come from various social and political backgrounds, create unique dynamics and make them a relevant unit of analysis to understand this phenomenon. Social diversity in Dapil 3 shows greater openness towards female legislative candidates, reflecting positive changes in gender perceptions and awareness of the importance of women's representation in politics. This phenomenon may be influenced by increased access to education and awareness of women's political rights, which invites people to consider the capacity and competence of candidates, not just based on gender. The effective campaign strategies of women legislative candidates in Dapil 3 also play an important role in attracting support from voters. Female candidates who are able to articulate local issues, such as education, health, and women's empowerment, often get more attention from voters. Women's involvement in politics, especially in legislative

positions, not only increases women's voice in decision-making, but also enriches the perspectives brought into the legislative space.

Thus, Dapil 3 South Sulawesi reflects a positive trend in women's political participation, with voters preferring female candidates as a form of support for gender equality and better representation.[13], [14]. Research on voter behavior in this electoral district will provide valuable insights into how social, economic, and cultural factors influence political preferences, and how political actors can adjust their strategies to respond to the needs and aspirations of diverse voters. This research seeks to fill the gap in the existing literature regarding the interaction between tradition and social transformation in shaping voter behavior, particularly in the context of the election of female legislative candidates in electoral districts with strong cultural backgrounds such as South Sulawesi. In the study of politics in Indonesia, many studies have been conducted on voter behavior, but few have specifically focused on how traditional and modern elements interact to influence voters' choice of female legislative candidates.

Although various studies have discussed the factors that influence women's election to politics, there is limited research that specifically analyzes changes in voting behavior in areas with strong patriarchal political traditions such as South Sulawesi. Most existing studies focus on urban areas or areas with higher levels of education and access to information.[15], [16]. Therefore, there is a need to delve deeper into the local dynamics that influence people's voting behavior in rural and semi-urban electoral districts such as Gowa Regency and Takalar Regency. South Sulawesi culture, with its deep-seated values and norms, provides a unique context for understanding how tradition can be a determining factor in voting behavior. Societies with strong social hierarchies and customary influences can face challenges when adapting to the demands of modernity, such as increased gender awareness and women's political aspirations. This research will explore how voters navigate between traditional norms that often place women in domestic roles and new realities that encourage women's involvement in politics. By focusing on the interaction between tradition and social transformation, this research will not only add to the body of knowledge in the study of voter behavior, but also contribute to the broader discourse on gender equality in politics.

2 Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to understand women's political participation in the context of Bugis-Makassar culture in South Sulawesi, specifically in Electoral District (Dapil) 3 which covers Gowa Regency and Takalar Regency. This approach was chosen because of its focus on an in-depth exploration of the influence of local traditions and modernization on women's political engagement and voter preferences. The research subjects consisted of: Women legislators from Dapil 3, Bugis-Makassar community and traditional leaders, female and male voters from various social and economic backgrounds.

In-depth interviews were used as the main method to obtain data from key informants, including women legislators, community leaders, and voters. Interviews were conducted in

a semi-structured manner to gain a rich perspective on women's participation in politics. Subsequently, the data was analyzed using thematic analysis. After transcribing the interviews and FGDs, the data was coded based on key themes such as the influence of adat, gender stereotypes, and modernization. These themes were then grouped to generate a comprehensive understanding of the interaction between culture and women's political participation. This research ensures data validity through triangulation of methods, by comparing results from interviews, FGDs and observations. Member checks were conducted by giving informants the opportunity to review data interpretations. Peer debriefing was used to increase reliability through discussions with fellow researchers.

3 Results and Discussion

The tendency of voters to choose female candidates over male candidates in Indonesia shows interesting dynamics in the context of politics and gender. Research shows that voters, especially the younger generation, are increasingly open to female legislative candidates, who are considered capable of bringing perspectives and policies that are more inclusive and responsive to the issues of women and society in general. [12]. To understand the transformation of voting behavior in this research, it is important to first know the background of the elected and unelected female candidates who have the highest number of votes from other male candidates. Selected women who become elected legislators are those who also have close access to power networks through kinship. They are not pioneers but extensions of male patrons who already have prior power. The following is the number of votes of female candidates who were the object of research.

Table 1. Number of Votes for Female Candidates

No.	Female Candidates	Number of Votes	Political Party
1	Fadilah Fahriana	28.408	ESC
2	Andi Tenri Indah	63.142	Gerindra
3	Siti Husniah Talenrang	44.072	PAN
4	Rismawati Kadir Nyampa	25.428	Democrats

Source: KPU Sul-Sel Province 2024

3.1 Social Capital and Family Networks

Support from family and social networks is a key factor in strengthening the position of women candidates in legislative elections. In a political context dominated by patriarchal norms, this support serves not only as a resource, but also as legitimization for women candidates to enter the political arena, which is often considered a male domain. Family support, especially from husbands and other family members, provides greater access to female candidates to build the networks and relationships needed in political campaigns. In

general, of the four objects of female legislative members studied, the fact is that they still have relationships with patrons from their electoral districts.

Female candidates with the highest number of votes

No.	Female Candidates	Patron	Patron Position
1	Fadilah Fahriana	Hengky Yasin, S.Sos., M.M.	Member of Commission B, Deputy Chairman II of the National Awakening Party faction in the 2019 Prov.SulSel DPRD.
2	Andi Tenri Indah	Darmawangsyah Muin	Vice Chairman of the Prov. South Sulawesi, Member of the Gerindra Party faction.
3	Siti Husniah Talenrang	Commissioner General of Police Dr. H. Mohammad Fadil Imran, M.Si.	Head of POLRI's Security Maintenance Agency, Former Metro Jaya Police Chief
4	Rismawati Kadir Nyampa	Kadir Nyampa	Mining entrepreneurs and contractors

One important aspect of family support is shaping the image and reputation of female candidates. When families, especially male figures with influence in the community, support female candidates, it can increase voter trust. People tend to trust female candidates who have strong support from family members who are known and respected. For example, in the case of Fadilah Fahriana, the support of her husband who is a member of the Provincial DPRD provided additional legitimacy and expanded her social network. The presence of this support not only creates a sense of security for female candidates, but also validates their presence in the political arena.

In addition, the social networks built by women candidates through family support are an important means of reaching voters. These networks include various elements of society, including community leaders, local leaders and community groups. When female candidates are able to tap into these social networks, they can be more effective in delivering campaign messages and programs. Involvement in social activities, such as health programs, education, or economic activities, also allows female candidates to build closer relationships with voters. Through these activities, they not only demonstrate their commitment to the community, but also build emotional bonds that can increase voter loyalty.

Support from family and social networks not only influences voters' perceptions of female candidates, but also creates social norms that support women's involvement in politics. When people see that family members, especially men, support female candidates, this can change their views on the role of women in politics. For example, women's active

involvement in politics, especially in the context of legislative elections, may be perceived as positive and worthy of emulation. Conversely, a lack of support may hinder the achievements of female candidates, as people may perceive that women's involvement in politics is not supported by their immediate environment. Social support also plays a role in facilitating the delivery of information about women candidates to voters. A strong social network can assist in disseminating information about female candidates' programs, vision and mission, and activities. With this support, female candidates can reach more voters and create greater awareness of their presence in society.

From the perspective of the voters themselves, family support, especially husbands and other family members, plays an important role in influencing voters' decisions. When family members support the choice to vote for female candidates, voters feel more comfortable and confident to follow that choice. A supportive social environment, including friends and community, also contributes to changes in voter behavior. Positive social networks can strengthen the legitimacy of female candidates, making voters feel that their choices are supported by those closest to them, thus increasing the likelihood of voting for female candidates.

3.2 Change in Political Paradigm

The changing political paradigm in society shows that women are now considered competent and capable candidates. This has been triggered by the success of several female candidates in utilizing political platforms and demonstrating their ability to manage community issues. People who previously may have been more inclined to vote for male candidates are now starting to recognize that women also have the same potential and ability. This change has created a climate that is more open to female legislative candidates, which in turn increases their chances of being elected.

There is a shift in norms and values in society that recognizes the role of women in leadership. Women's involvement in politics reflects a shift to more egalitarian social values, where individual ability and competence are prioritized over gender. This change can be seen as part of broader social reforms, where feminism and gender equality movements have contributed to changing society's perception of women's role in politics. The success of female candidates demonstrates women's growing agency in the political context. They are not only participants, but also play an active role in formulating policies that are relevant to community issues. Successful female candidates often have strong networks and support from various women's organizations and communities. This shows the importance of collaboration and solidarity in fighting for women's representation.

People who initially tend to vote for male candidates may experience a change in perception due to the success of female candidates. Campaigns and successes demonstrated by women in leadership can help reduce negative stereotypes and increase recognition of their potential. People increasingly realize that women's representation in politics is important for creating policies that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all members of society, not just men.

3.3 Involvement in Social Activities

Social engagement is a crucial element in building relationships between candidates and voters. In the context of general elections, activities that involve community participation, such as joint gymnastics, social services, or health seminars, can create a familiar atmosphere and bring candidates closer to voters. Through these activities, candidates can show their presence in the community, making voters feel closer and more connected. When candidates are present in everyday activities, voters feel valued and recognized, which encourages them to be more committed to their political choices. Platform to raise awareness and educate the public on important issues. In every activity, candidates can share information about their programs, policies they want to implement, and their vision and mission in fighting for the interests of the community. This education not only helps voters understand the background of the candidates, but also motivates them to actively participate in the election process. Thus, voters not only vote, but also have a better understanding of the choices they make.

Social activities that involve voters also serve to build trust. Female candidates who actively interact and contribute to social activities show that they care about the needs and aspirations of the community. When voters see their candidates going out of their way to improve the quality of life in their communities, trust will naturally arise. This trust is very important in politics, as voters tend to vote for those who they believe will fight for their interests. By creating an atmosphere of trust, women candidates can strengthen their support base in future elections. Voter involvement in social activities organized by female candidates can also contribute to community empowerment. Through active participation in various programs, voters can feel the direct impact of the efforts made by candidates in improving their quality of life. These activities are not only physical in nature, but also play a role in building solidarity and a sense of community among community members. Thus, candidates are not only political representatives, but also agents of change who are able to empower communities to participate in the improvement of their social environment.

The long-term impact of social engagement is significant. When voters feel connected to a candidate through social activities, they are more likely to support and vote for that candidate in the next election. This positive engagement will create a tradition of active participation in society, where voters are not just recipients of policies, but also actively contribute to the political process. This in turn will improve the quality of democracy, where people's voices are heard and valued. By building strong relationships through social engagement, women candidates can create a solid foundation for their political future and a better community.

4 Conclusion

Women's political participation in South Sulawesi shows significant progress in the development of democracy and social representation. Despite an increase in the number of women in legislative positions, challenges such as gender inequality, patriarchal culture, and social stereotypes remain a barrier. Women's contribution to decision-making at the

national and local levels not only increases the visibility of issues related to public welfare, but also influences the behavior of voters who are now more open to female candidates. This process is important in creating public policies that are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all levels of society.

Affirmative policies, such as gender quotas, have played an important role in encouraging women's participation in politics. While these efforts have shown results, a culture still dominated by traditional norms often impedes further progress. In the context of Bugis-Makassar culture, this challenge is evident in the duality between conservative customary norms and the demands of modernity that promote gender equality. Communities need to continue to support social change that enables women to play a more active role in politics and decision-making, so that their potential can be fully utilized.

Political dynamics in the electoral districts of South Sulawesi, especially in Dapil 3, show a positive trend in voter preference for female legislative candidates. Changes in people's mindsets that increasingly accept women's leadership and shifting gender values are important factors in increasing women's representation in politics. Achieving true gender equality requires continuous education and advocacy on the importance of women's roles in all aspects of life, including politics. Thus, steps taken in support of women's participation will have a positive impact on sustainable development and the quality of life of society as a whole.

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