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WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE VILLAGE

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Abstract

Women in Kabobona Village are still trapped in a patriarchal culture during the rapid development of rural culture toward modern culture. As a result, they still feel gender inequality. Patriarchal culture places men as superior, both in the household and the public sector. Women are considered as parties who have to work hard in the household and in the public sector, but their efforts are not appreciated, even though their existence is seen as a compliment. Women are the main actor inside and outside the house, but their nature is to serve the family (servant). This study aims to identify the role of women in the household and the public sector viewed from their participation in politics. This descriptive study used a qualitative design. The data search used observation, in-depth interviews, secondary data searches, and literature studies.

Keywords: Women, Gender, Patriarchy, Political Participation

Introduction

The reformation era in Indonesia has run for approximately 22 years since the fall of President Soeharto's government on May 21, 1998. However, women's political participation does not seem to have changed much. Their presence in political life is still seen as marginal (Hillman, 2018; Morgan, 2017; Schaner & Das, 2016). Indeed, many studies have focused on this issue in Central Sulawesi Province, especially Sigi District. However, based on a cursory observation, the presence of women in political life, more specifically in the form of political participation, is limited.

The same with other rural communities in general, women in Kabobona Village work as housewives, namely doing household chores and also working outside to help men (farming, gardening, raising livestock, and others). The women in this village are generally not interested in the world of politics with all the dynamics in it. This is evidenced by the absence of women in the

Village Consultative Body (BPD), village officials, and party administrators. Based on observation results, women in this village participate in various elections (legislative, President and Vice President, Governor/Vice Governor, Regent/Deputy Regent), but their participation is largely determined by their patron, namely their husband. The same case also occurs in some other countries (Chigbu, 2019; Homola, 2019). Furthermore, the husbands are directed by strong people of certain political affiliation groups outside the village. Thus, women's political participation in this village is not autonomous yet. Political participation is a manifestation of individual conscience which then moves them to act voluntarily in the political and other fields of national and state life. In this context, Budiardjo (2008) argues that political participation is the activity of a person or group of people to participate actively in political life, for example, by choosing leaders and directly or indirectly influencing public policy. The

definition is in line with the opinions of many experts (Ardèvol-Abreu et al., 2020; Weeks et al., 2017).

The number of women in Kabobona Village, which is relatively higher than the number of men, should be a real asset to participate in determining political activities and other development in the village and a wider area. However, women remain under the political control of men and various other political groups in the village which are generally controlled by men. As a result, issues concerning women's political participation in this village are largely determined by men. For example, women's political choices in determining national and regional leaders through elections (President/Vice President, Governor/Vice Governor, and Regent/Deputy Regent), are determined by men including husbands, parents, and other forces dominated by men.

Similarly, decisions regarding the implementation of development in this village are determined by men. The absence of women as members of the Village Consultative Body (BPD) so that all decisions regarding the development of Kabobona Village are made by men. This is in line with most of the respondents' statements during the study.

In the context of gender theory, what happened to women in Kabobona Village could be categorized as gender injustice or discrimination (Anggadwita & Dwanto, 2016; Cholil, 2017; Sohn, 2015). This is evidenced by the existence of systems and social structures that are unfair to women. In the sense that the prevailing social systems and structures are less favorable to women. As a result, the role and position of women are always seen as marginal. This places women weak and lacks access to participate in politics and other fields (Bouka et al., 2019; Pape, 2020).

The term gender can be interpreted as the difference in roles, functions, status, and responsibilities of men and women as a result of socio-cultural construction embedded through the socialization process from one generation to the next (Kim et al., 2019; Tonsing & Tonsing, 2019). As a social construction, the notion of gender can differ from its understanding between one society and another (Chan et al., 2019; Sagala et al., 2019; Yarnell et al., 2019). This means that the concept of gender should be constructed in such a way as to produce a division of roles in the social relations of men and women that is more equitable and empowers one another.

The emergence of gender inequality cannot be separated from the deep-rooted concept of patriarchy in Indonesian culture (Subono, 2003), especially in Kabobona Village. In a patriarchal culture, women are the most disadvantaged. They are placed as if they were second-class "creatures" whose only place is at home, working to take care of their husbands, children, or families. While working in the public sector is men's affairs. The same applies to decision-making, both at home and outside, which is dominated by men.

Marginalization of women in various areas of life is certainly not easy to change (Dwi Edi, n.d.) as it involves a paradigm shift that has been believed to be true by society, including women. In general, people are happy with the situation. It may also be enjoyed by women considering that patriarchal culture has been going on for generations (Pranowo, 2013). However, it is time for a patriarchal culture that produces gender inequality or injustice to end to support the development progress (Yuwono, 2018). Indeed, the government has carried out this effort. The results are starting to appear in several places, although they are still far from the maximum (L. Rahman et al., 2005). In some places such as in Kabobona Village, the community including women still uphold

the patriarchal culture. To end this, various activities are needed, including education with an empowering curriculum to realize the bad consequences of patriarchy. Besides, a well-planned and programmed socialization program regarding the importance of gender justice carried out by community organizations and the government can be a solution.

Gender equality or justice concerns the access, participation, control, and benefits felt by women concerning the life of the nation and state, including the implementation of development (Puspitawati, 2012). Thus, gender equality and justice do not seem to just exist but must be pursued by all parties, especially the state/government (Yuwono, 2018). In this case, the state/government facilitates the emergence of a conducive climate for the sustainability of political education that educates all parties (A. Rahman & Suharno, 2020). It is expected that this will provide knowledge and understanding to all parties regarding the importance of gender equality and justice which in the end will open up women's political participation widely in politics and other fields of life.

Based on the descriptions above, it would be interesting to question the political participation of women in Kabobona Village in the framework of gender equality and justice.

Method

This study used a qualitative design (Semiawan, n.d.) with a descriptive approach (Lexy J. Moleong, 1988). It used both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from observation and in-depth interviews with some informants consisting of the Village Head, the Head of the Village Consultative Body, 3 community leaders, and 4 female figures. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained by conducting searches on various agencies/ Institutions that prepare data related to women's political participation, library studies, and document studies. Data were analyzed based on Miles and Huberman's analysis covering collecting data, displaying data, reducing data, analyzing data, making conclusions, and verifying data (Gunawan, n.d.).

Results and Discussion

1. Women's Access and Participation

Access relates to the openness of opportunity for women to participate in activities concerning the life of the nation and state including the economic, social, political, and development sectors. Based on the summary of observations and opinions of the informants, it can be stated women's access in the economic field, involved, especially in helping household economic activities. However, all decisions regarding this matter were determined by men. So, women were limited to helping increase the household's economic income. For example, when the government provides fund assistance to the family, it was the man (as the head of the family) who makes decisions and takes care of everything, including determining the type of business that receive the fund assistance from the government, while women were not or less involved. Thus, it can be argued that in the economic sector, access is enjoyed by men more than women.

Women had more access to the social sector. If a wedding party was held in the village, for example, women were busier than men. Women prepared everything. They were dominant in the planning of party activities. However, according to women, they were limited to preparing all the necessities for the party, working hard

as they can for that purpose. However, when the party took place, the men enjoyed the pleasure of the party the most. Women continue to be "servants" in the middle of a party, which traditionally puts men first in terms of being served. Likewise, if there was grief due to disaster, the women were the most grieving while preparing everything needed in the mourning event. Again, the men were the ones being served. It seems that the patriarchal culture was so closely related to the people of this village that this situation is accepted with great respect by all parties. The women, with all their sacrifices, did not feel that this condition had marginalized them. Their existence to serve men is accepted as something that must be carried out. Rejection of culture is a taboo subject and is considered to be in defiance of habits that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Furthermore, in the political sector, for example in direct elections (all types of elections), women could certainly participate in men's elections. Political discussions rarely involved women. Such activities were considered the domain of men. So that on the D day of the election, the choice of women was largely determined by men. Likewise, with other forms of political activity, women only had access as a compliment, even though the laws and regulations placed men and women having the same obligations.

In terms of the practice of money politics, which usually occurs, especially in the Legislative and Regional Head Elections, women were among the most vulnerable to being involved in money politics. According to informants, the successful team in the General Election and regional head election did not only targets men but also reached women, especially housewives. "Housewives are the ones who are approached by the successful team and they were seen as capable of influencing children and other family members, even though they may have difficulty influencing their husband, who in this case is the head of the household," said an informant. Observations in the last 2020 Regional Head Election showed that women, especially housewives, felt that at every election or regional head election, they could feel the "generosity" of politicians. These women do not realize that by receiving such money they are closing themselves off from obtaining good candidates for leaders who will later be able to initiate and implement policies that focus on people's welfare. They didn't realize it. Not even realizing, "selling votes" actually sinks democracy which ultimately kills their political participation. Therefore, women need political education that gives them knowledge and understanding of politics, especially knowledge and understanding of democracy.

Women in this village were completely unaware that in the context of their political participation, they would determine the elected both national and regional leaders. The number of women is balanced with the number of men. However, this has not been utilized to place women as the determining party in political life, including in determining leaders.

The same case happened in the implementation of the development. Development activities that involve women are activities that build household resilience, for example, regarding family nutrition, the use of yard land for family medicinal plants, prevention of juvenile delinquency, child immunization, Posyandu, and others. Meanwhile, development activities concerning the development of villages did not attract women's interest, even though access to such activities was widely opened by the government. According to the informant, women were less willing to take advantage of such open access. They felt that matters

outside the household were men's business. Patriarchal culture is attached to women. Concerning access and participation, women in Kabobona Village had not utilized their rights and obligations. So that access to and participation in all aspects, including in the field of national and state life, is controlled by men.

2. Control

Control concerns the extent to which every citizen can express their opinions and actions for improving the lives of the nation and state. Every citizen has to be able to provide constructive opinions and criticisms to improve the nation. Based on this point of view, the women of Kabobona Village, according to the informants, were less interested in these things. Their lack of interest is because they don't care or don't know about the life of the nation and state. They felt that sharing ideas or criticizing the improvement of village development is not their business. That's the responsibility of village leaders. Therefore, no woman becomes the village official and a member of the Village Consultative Body (BPD) in this village. According to an informant, positions as village officials and as members of the BPD were offered to women as mandated in the law, but women were less or not interested. As a result, it was men who occupy all these positions.

Regarding control in the context of the nation and state, it is not only women who are reluctant. Men are also reluctant to do so as villagers are not interested in controlling. They consider it government affairs. People just carry out their roles and just do what the government ordered. Patriarchal culture still dominates the thinking of the villagers (Kantaprawira, 1983). It also nourishes and supports the continued growth amidst growing demands for gender equality, especially in urban areas. Regarding control over the life of the nation and state, women also do not take advantage of it. Ironically, men also tend to be less concerned or apathetic.

3. Impacts/Benefits

The implementation of development and activities in the life of the nation and state-provided more benefits for women as expressed by female participants. The development can certainly be enjoyed by the community, both men and women. The concept of development implemented by the government is indeed aimed at all citizens so that all women feel grateful. Their children can enjoy the results of educational development. Children in the Kabobona Village, both girls, and boys, can enjoy free education up to junior high school. Meanwhile, education at the high school level began to falter, due to a lack of funds. Besides, children who have finished junior high school have been directed by their parents to work to help their parents for improving the family economy. Therefore, teenagers generally only have junior high school levels. Some dropped out after completing junior high school level and some of them managed to finish their education. The others managed to continue to higher education level, but the number was not more than 10 people. To present, only 5 people have bachelor's degrees and have worked in government and private institutions. However, they live in Palu City.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the women of Kabobona Village are still trapped in a patriarchal culture that is believed to be hereditary. As a result, in terms of political participation in the life of the nation and state, gender inequality still occurs in daily life. Women in this village lack access and participation as well as control in various activities of national and state life, including in activities. Indeed,

they receive the benefits in the form of the results of development, as obtained by men.

To help the local communities to get out of the patriarchal culture, the government and various parties need to make planned and programmed efforts, including in the form of political education that can provide useful insight, knowledge, and experience, especially regarding political participation, flexibility in the public sector for both men and women. These various activities should also involve men so that their insight, knowledge, and experience of men can also increase which results in changes in their thinking about more involving women in political life. Most of the limitations experienced by women come from men, especially in their presence as the head of the household.

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