

## **Women and Politics: An Analysis of the Factors Contributing to the Underrepresentation of Women and the Minimal Participation of Women in the Regional Elections of Banjarmasin City**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The lack of representation of women in the Regional Head Election (Pilkada) of Banjarmasin City is an important issue that needs to be studied in depth. This research aims to analyze the factors causing the low number of women politicians endorsed by political parties in the Pilkada contest. This study uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews with women politicians, representatives of political parties, and political observers in Banjarmasin City. The results of the study indicate that the political recruitment process carried out by the parties is not fundamentally gender-discriminatory, but the barriers faced by women are structural, social, cultural, and personal. These obstacles include the lack of party support, logistical limitations, low electability, and the strong influence of social norms that still doubt the leadership capacity of women. In addition, the implementation of the 30 percent quota for women's representation has not been effective. The conclusion of this study indicates that women's representation in regional elections still faces complex challenges that require serious attention from political parties, the government, and society to create more inclusive and gender-equal political participation.*

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**KEYWORDS**

Political Parties; Political Recruitment; Regional Elections; Representation; Women



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### **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia is a democratic country, where gender equality in all aspects of social life is one of the important requirements to realize a participatory, representative democracy and an egalitarian society (where everyone is equal). In the political sphere, the presence of female politicians needs to be a point of attention, as the existence of women in politics is very important. One of the reasons, as explained by Nur Iman Subono (2012), is that the needs or interests of women can only be discussed and understood by women themselves. Moreover, women are more adept at understanding the issues and challenges faced by children and women compared to men. As Hurriyah stated in BBC News Indonesia, "For instance, issues such as staple foods, malnutrition, and children's health transcend party divides. Unlike men, this cannot happen (Kunto, 2021). They do not have the same stance on certain issues. Party egos always surface, which reflects a male-oriented politics" (BBC, 2019). Therefore, the presence of female politicians in Indonesian politics is expected to fill and enhance the gap in resolving issues that are not well understood or prioritized by male politicians (Aspinall et al., 2021; Prajuli et al., 2021; Soetjipto, 2017; Wardani & Subekti, 2021). Given the importance of women's presence in politics, the Indonesian government has currently made accommodations for women in the political realm through affirmative action policies requiring a minimum quota of 30 percent female representation to increase women's participation in Indonesian politics, allowing women to work alongside men in advancing the nation.

The global phenomenon of women's underrepresentation in executive political positions, particularly as regional heads, reflects systemic barriers that transcend national boundaries (Opara, 2025; Wang, 2025). This study focuses on Banjarmasin City as a critical case study where, despite national policies promoting gender equality, women remain severely underrepresented in regional leadership positions (Fiantis et al., 2022; Vikalista et al., 2023). Globally, women's political representation remains a critical challenge. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 2023 data, women hold only 26.5% of parliamentary seats worldwide, with significant regional variations. UN Women reports persistent barriers to women's political participation across both developed and developing nations. The World Bank emphasizes that gender parity in political leadership is essential for inclusive governance and sustainable development (Lopez-Calva et al., 2017; Miro, 2016).

However, unfortunately, cases are still found in several areas, one of which is in the city of Banjarmasin where the 30 percent quota is only seen as a mere formality, as political parties often exploit women merely as a complement to the 30 percent quota of affirmative action policies to advance in the regional election. According to Noorlatifah, who currently serves as the Chair of Commission II of the Banjarmasin Regional House of Representatives, in an interview with Syarifuddin, she explained that in 2014 she participated in the legislative election merely at the request of her leaders, only as a complement to the 30 percent representation of women. Agustin Nur Martina Putri (a women's activist from South Kalimantan) also stated in an interview with the Kumparan media that the process of cadre development conducted by political parties towards their female candidates is insufficient and that women within the political parties are merely considered complementary elements. Agustin also explained that in the elections, female cadres are placed in positions 3 and 4 in order to merely serve as additional votes (Prasetyo et al., 2025; Saha, 2023).

In the city of Banjarmasin, the number of women elected as members of the legislative council (DPRD) for the term of 2004–2009 was only 4, which constitutes 9.7 percent. In 2009, for the term of 2009–2014, the number increased to 13 women elected to the legislative council. By 2014, for the term of 2014–2019, approximately 15 percent of elected council members were women. Then, for the term of 2019–2024, there were 11 women, representing about 24 percent of elected members. For the upcoming term of 2024–2029, the Banjarmasin General Election Commission (KPU) has announced 11 elected members of the DPRD, namely Noorlatifah (PAN), Amalia Handayani (PAN), Erni Yusnita (Nasdem), Syarifah Sakinah (PAN), Mutmainnah (PKS), Rinda Agustina (PAN), Hariya Sisar (Golkar), Sheilla Putri Mahardika (Golkar), Masriyah (Democrat), Istiqamah (PAN), and Hilyah Aulia (PKB).

Meanwhile, at the executive level or among regional heads, throughout the history of the Banjarmasin City elections, all elected regional heads have been exclusively male (Indarti et al., 2020; Rohman et al., 2025; Widiastuti & Nurohman, 2019). Furthermore, in the Banjarmasin City elections, there has only been one female candidate for the position of regional head who participated in the local elections, namely Hj. Ananda during the 2020 election. Although Hj. Ananda has been involved in the political arena since 2009 at the age of 25 and has experience in her field, as well as being nominated as a mayoral candidate at a time when gender equality was being actively promoted, this did not result in her winning the contest for the local elections in Banjarmasin in 2020.

Based on the aforementioned phenomenon, this research aims to investigate the factors that are believed to contribute to the underrepresentation of women as candidates for mayor or regional heads in the city of Banjarmasin, and why there are so few women nominated to participate in these regional head elections, despite the widespread advocacy for gender equality in Indonesia.

Previous research that serves as a reference includes several studies directly related to gender inequality in political contexts. First, Cahyani (2019) examined the glass ceiling phenomenon in Indonesian bureaucracy using post-structuralist feminist theory. The study found that patriarchal culture and the double burden on women create significant barriers to career advancement in bureaucratic positions, with women disproportionately placed in lower-level positions. Second, Fitriyah (2020) analyzed political recruitment processes and the formation of political dynasties in regional elections, revealing how internal party mechanisms often disadvantage women candidates. Third, Srivastava and Nalawade (2023) explored the transition from "glass ceiling" to "sticky floor" metaphors in women's leadership, demonstrating how structural barriers operate at multiple levels to constrain women's political advancement. Fourth, Folke and Rickne (2016) provided empirical evidence of the glass ceiling in politics, showing that even when women meet qualification criteria, they face invisible barriers in reaching top political positions.

Wulandari (2017) examined the performance of female politicians in the Banjarmasin Regional House of Representatives from 2014 to 2016. The results indicated that female politicians performed legislative functions effectively, identified community needs accurately, conducted oversight actively, and prepared budgets effectively for programs related to women and children. This finding is particularly significant for the current study as it demonstrates that women's underrepresentation cannot be attributed to performance deficits.

Based on the results of previous research conducted by Yuliastuti Wulandari, it was found that the performance of women in the Banjarmasin Regional Representative Council is classified as good. This raises a question in the researcher's mind that serves as one of the bases for this study regarding why there are still so few women recognized by parties as potential candidates for regional leadership positions. In the city of Banjarmasin, where men still dominate and women are rarely found in such positions, despite the presence of female political actors with adequate political experience and good performance. The previous research findings also indicate similarities between this study and prior studies, where research equally focuses on women and politics. However, there is still a lack of studies that concentrate on the factors hindering the election of women in the city of Banjarmasin as regional heads, and how the recruitment process occurs behind the scenes, resulting in a minimal number of women being nominated by political parties in Banjarmasin to run as regional heads.

The first theory or concept to be used in this research is Political Recruitment, to understand the recruitment process, the screening process, and the finalization process of candidates for regional head who are determined to run in the local election in the City of Banjarmasin by the political party elites in that city. This will help to ascertain the reasons why there are very few women advancing as potential candidates for regional heads in the City of Banjarmasin. The second theory or concept to be utilized in this research is the Glass Ceiling, to identify the factors that hinder the election of women to occupy leadership positions, specifically in this case, the position of Mayor in the City of Banjarmasin.

Based on the description in the background, this research aims to investigate the recruitment process conducted by political parties in the city of Banjarmasin to understand the reasons behind the limited number of female candidates nominated by these parties in the Banjarmasin local elections. What factors impede the election of women to hold the position of regional head in the city of Banjarmasin? This research seeks to analyze the recruitment process carried out by political parties in Banjarmasin to identify the reasons for the scarcity of female candidates in the Banjarmasin local elections. Furthermore, it aims to discover, describe, and analyze the barriers that prevent female political actors in Banjarmasin from successfully obtaining the position of Mayor of Banjarmasin.

## **METHOD**

This research used a qualitative approach with the main type of data in the form of in-depth interviews with key informants. This method was chosen because it allowed the researcher to understand contextually and deeply the political recruitment process carried out by political parties in the city of Banjarmasin, as well as the factors causing the low number of women being nominated as candidates for regional heads and vice heads. Data were collected through direct interviews with political actors involved in the recruitment process, such as female politicians (for example, Hj. Ananda), representatives of political parties, and local political observers. In addition to primary data from interviews, secondary data were also used in the form of documentation, news articles, documentary videos, and social media content to strengthen the analysis.

The unit of analysis in this research was individuals involved in the local political process, both as actors and observers, including representatives from the PKS, PAN, Gerindra, and PKB parties. The selection of informants was carried out through purposive sampling based on their relevance and direct involvement in the phenomenon being studied. This research employed the model from Miles and Huberman, which included three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was conducted by sorting important information from interviews and secondary data, which was then presented in the form of thematic tabulation. From there, interpretation was performed to systematically address the research questions. Data validation was conducted using the source triangulation technique, which involved comparing information from several different informants to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Recruitment Process of the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)**

From the interview with PKS representative Mr. Hendra, who currently serves as a member of the Regional House of Representatives of Banjarmasin City, it was found that in the political recruitment process conducted by PKS to select politicians to be supported in the regional elections, there are several stages. Firstly, Mr. Hendra explained that PKS Banjarmasin is committed to involving and providing support for female politicians, as reflected in PKS's political recruitment process. During the certification stage, PKS conducts an open political recruitment for both women and men (however, PKS prioritizes candidates from its own cadres first, and only if there are no suitable candidates will it consider those from other parties). For female politicians who register, PKS provides training that prioritizes female

politicians to ensure they receive the same preparation as their male counterparts. Only after that, a screening process is conducted based on the fundamental criteria that have been previously established by the PKS party of Banjarmasin City. The basic criteria used by PKS in selecting and filtering candidates for the regional election focus on popularity, profitability, and the electability level of the candidates. PKS also screens candidates by examining survey results to determine which candidates are of high quality and suitable to be endorsed by PKS. In this screening process, PKS involves all officials of the Regional Leadership Council (DPTD), which consists of the Chairman of the DPD, the Chairman of the Sharia Council, and the Chairman of the Advisory Assembly, in making decisions that will subsequently be submitted to the Central Leadership Council (DPP) as central consideration for determining the final candidate. In addition, PKS also involves what is called the Pilkada team, which includes parties from the Election Winning Field in the Pilkada (BAPILU).

Additionally, Mr. Hendra explained that there are specific criteria used by the PKS party in selecting politicians who wish to receive support from PKS to advance in the regional elections. The first criterion is the identity index or personal capacity of the candidate, assessed based on their level of membership in PKS (whether their membership level is young cadre, intermediate, mature, or senior) without regard to gender differences, whether it be female or male. The second criterion pertains to capacity in terms of age, where the PKS party considers whether the candidate is relatively young or old, prioritizing younger cadres. The third criterion involves evaluating the organizational experience of the politicians who wish to run in the regional elections. Fourth, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) assesses the attendance record of these politicians, evaluating whether they are diligent in participating and contributing to the Member Development Unit (UPA), where PKS can determine their level of commitment, their charitable contributions, and whether they can fulfill the responsibilities and tasks assigned to them. Additionally, PKS examines the financial capacity of these politicians, assessing whether they have sufficient financial resources, as this will play a crucial role in the victory process during the regional elections. If they lack adequate resources, their chances of winning the regional elections, when faced with competitors supported by party funds as well as personal finances, will be diminished if they only rely on party resources.

In addition, Mr. Hendra also explained that for female politicians who register to run for local elections on their own, there are additional considerations that the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) considers. These include whether the female politician is married or not, and whether she has children who are still young or already adults. This is seen as one of the disadvantages of women compared to men. If the family of this woman does not have issues with the time and resources that will be used while she holds office, then PKS has no objections to supporting women in the local election. However, Mr. Hendra stated that indeed, family matters, the distribution of time between their roles at home and their careers, as well as funding issues, are often considerations for female politicians. This often results in them not registering or not continuing the selection process to run for regional elections. This is what leads to a lack of women candidates supported by parties for regional elections. Additionally, during the selection stage, PKS also evaluates these politicians' leadership abilities, their communication skills (whether they can embrace all parties or not), and their capacity to manage resources. Regarding this resource, Mr. Hendra explained the importance of this factor for the party in selecting the candidates they will support. In this case, the politicians they choose to advance

in the upcoming Regional Head Election must be able to sustain the vision and mission (which means that the vision and mission aligned among the candidates running for the Regional Head Election with the supporting party must be consistent), as well as the party programs that support these politicians.

“Please refer to the policies that we have previously overlooked, such as the reduction of plastic bags. This idea originated from the PKS, which proposed the notion of a waste-minimized Banjarmasin. Eventually, it was established as a government policy that retail stores like Indomaret and Alfamart are not allowed to provide plastic bags. This is a policy that can be regarded as one that the mayor is able to implement, and we encourage its application. Ultimately, for the common good, this can be said to be one of the successful programs of the PKS, which has been integrated into the governance of Banjarmasin” (Interview with Mr. Hendra from the PKS Party, July 25, 2024)

Then, in the nomination stage, Mr. Hendra explained that the documents and results of the screening conducted by the selection team from the PKS of Banjarmasin City will subsequently be submitted to the Central Leadership Council (DPP) of the PKS party to appoint which candidate will be endorsed by PKS in the Banjarmasin City elections (final decision). Regarding PKS's view on the importance of women's representation, Mr. Hendra elaborated that this is considered an important matter for PKS. Mr. Hendra explained that within PKS, they have a special division called the Women's and Family Resilience Division (BPKK). The PKS of Banjarmasin City also conducts regular periodic training involving the participation of female cadres called the Member Development Unit (UPPA). Additionally, PKS holds monthly meetings with female cadres. Specifically, PKS pays attention to the issues faced by female politicians.

Regarding what women should do if they want to succeed in breaking the stereotypes placed upon them in the political arena, Mr. Hendra explained that women must first change their mindset or way of thinking about politics, set clear goals, and clarify their intentions. In addition, women should possess a broad political knowledge, courage in decision-making, and the bravery and hard work to leverage their abilities to assist the community.

### **The Recruitment Process of the Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN)**

Meanwhile, based on interviews with the Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), it was found that during the certification stage of PAN's political recruitment process, PAN Banjarmasin first conducted consultations involving party members and elites at the regional level. Only then, at the nomination stage, were the results of those consultations submitted to the PAN Central Leadership Council (DPP PAN) as the final decision-maker. In this regard, PAN Banjarmasin communicated to the DPP PAN regarding the relationship between the regional PAN and other parties in the Banjarmasin area (whether their visions and missions during the previous council meeting were aligned or not). Subsequently, PAN Banjarmasin awaited guidance or instructions from the DPP PAN regarding who would be the candidates to be endorsed or supported by PAN for the upcoming regional elections, considering the inter-party relationships.

Regarding the 2020 local elections and the upcoming 2024 elections, the National Mandate Party (PAN) has explained that it cannot independently nominate candidates for regional heads due to the insufficient number of seats held by PAN in the Banjarmasin City

Regional House of Representatives (DPRD). Therefore, PAN must form a coalition with other parties to select candidates for regional head and deputy regional head whom they aim to support. In this regard, representatives of PAN have emphasized that the primary consideration (basic criteria) for choosing the candidates for regional head and deputy regional head that they will support is to assess whether those candidates from the coalition party have a good relationship with PAN and whether their visions and missions align.

“So there are indeed no specific criteria, but the relationship between parties in that area is very interconnected. This is just an example, for instance, if we in the council are always in conflict with one party, and it turns out that candidate A from that party invites us to form a coalition, it would be somewhat difficult for us to find a way forward” (Interview with a Representative from the PAN Party, July 25, 2024)

A representative from the PAN party stated that this will eventually influence the decision on which candidate will be supported by the PAN party (in connection with the PAN party's position which has not been able to nominate its own candidate). In addition to the party from which the candidate originates, PAN also emphasized that the alignment of coalition relationships in the province and regions is also important. Considering that in 2020 and 2024, the elections for regional heads in provinces and cities are held simultaneously, the alignment of party coalitions in the province and regions becomes one of the main factors in filtering which candidate PAN will support in the Banjarmasin City Pilkada. According to PAN Banjarmasin, although the misalignment of party coalitions at the provincial and city levels is not prohibited and not regulated by law, it will make the path more difficult and tend to create an impression of defection from the decisions made at the provincial level. Therefore, in addition to maintaining good relations among the parties from the supported candidates, the alignment of coalitions at both the provincial and city levels also become a primary consideration for PAN in determining which party's candidate they will assist and support for victory in the regional elections.

“So almost all parties will align with the coalition above them, the coalition of their governor. For instance, in the provincial gubernatorial election, coalition parties A, B, and C face off against coalition parties F, G, and H. If in the Banjarmasin city election, parties A and F form a coalition, then this will not be in line with what is happening at the provincial level and will pose a problem, because when the governor supports this candidate, then in the city, they would actually deviate from the decisions made at the provincial level. This would indeed be an important consideration” (Interview with a Representative from the PAN Party, July 25, 2024)

The PAN party stated that they do not discriminate against candidates for the regional elections based on gender factors. PAN emphasized that they do not hold stereotypes or specific views regarding any gender, if the candidate's vision and mission are aligned, the party has a good relationship with PAN, possesses good communication skills, and is competent in fulfilling their role. This statement is reinforced by PAN's support for the first female regional head candidate (Hj Ananda) in the 2020 Banjarmasin City elections. The PAN party remarked that although they could nominate their own candidate in 2020, at that time the regional PAN had not found a potential candidate that met the criteria to challenge the incumbent (Ibn Sina). Therefore, considering this, the DPP PAN immediately instructed PAN Banjarmasin City to support Hj Ananda as the regional head candidate and Mushaffa Zakir as her deputy. The

decision was made considering that Hj Ananda is viewed as an experienced politician with good performance (at that time serving as the chairman of Golkar and the chairman of the Banjarmasin City DPRD), and the relationship between the PAN party and the Golkar and PKS parties, which at that time supported Hj Ananda (Golkar) and Mushaffa Zakir (PKS), was satisfactory. The PAN party explained that in selecting the candidates to be supported, they do not focus on gender but rather on party relations, personal characteristics, abilities, and the performance history of the prospective candidates.

According to the PAN party, they view the representation of women in the political environment of Banjarmasin City as something important. PAN explains that this is evidenced by their commitment to fulfill the requirement of a 30 percent quota for women's representation in the Banjarmasin City legislature. PAN further states that in 2024, they will consistently encourage women's representation by providing opportunities for women to advance in the Legislative Elections (Pileg) of Banjarmasin City. Additionally, PAN indicates that they are proposing 70 to 80 percent female politicians for the Pileg in Banjarmasin City in 2024. Of the 70 to 80 percent female politicians proposed, in North Banjarmasin two female politicians have been successfully elected, in West Banjarmasin one seat has been won by a woman, and in South Banjarmasin two seats have been won by PAN, one of which is occupied by a woman.

“Thus, for 2024, we have seven seats in the legislature, four of which are filled by women. In the 2019 legislative elections held in 2020, five women were elected from PAN, compared to four men. Therefore, PAN remains consistent in providing opportunities for women in politics. In the matter of regional elections, we also demonstrated our support for Ananda in 2020, so there is no issue. As for the 2024 regional elections, whether the candidates will be women or men is still dynamic” (Interview with a Representative from the PAN Party, July 25, 2024)

In the context of political recruitment for regional elections, the National Mandate Party (PAN) asserts that the selection process conducted does not contain elements of gender-based discrimination. Nevertheless, the obstacles faced by women politicians in candidacy often do not originate from within the party, but rather from the social environment outside the party. These obstacles include limited logistical support, time constraints and dedication, as well as social pressure from the family setting. One of the main challenges identified is the issue of permission from a husband for women politicians who are married, which is influenced by social constructs and cultural norms that have traditionally assigned the roles of women as mothers and wives who must prioritize domestic affairs. Therefore, according to PAN, the opportunities for female politicians to be nominated in regional elections will be significantly enhanced if they have strong family support, adequate logistical resources, relevant political experience, good communication skills, and the ability to build cross-party networks. With these factors in place, the likelihood of female politicians being recruited and winning the regional election contests in Banjarmasin City, whether as candidates for regional heads or deputy regional heads, will increase.

### **The Recruitment Process of the Gerindra Party**

Based on an interview with Mrs. Henny Yulia, as a representative of the Gerindra Party, the recruitment process for prospective regional heads is conducted through eight stages, namely: candidate selection, administrative selection, fit and proper test, electoral survey,

interviews, verification of recommendations from the District Leadership Council (DPC) by the Provincial Leadership Council (DPD), establishment by the Central Leadership Council (DPP), and the announcement and confirmation of candidates. This process demonstrates a phased and structured selection mechanism in determining the candidates to be endorsed by the party. In addition to the rigorous selection stages, according to Mrs. Henny Yulia, the Gerindra Party of Banjarmasin City also has several basic criteria in selecting prospective regional heads. These criteria include the alignment of the candidate's vision and mission with the party, commitment and loyalty to the party, optimal health condition, level of popularity and electability, educational background and leadership experience, good managerial skills, as well as extensive political networks and relations.

In relation to the certification stage within the concept of political recruitment according to Pamungkas and Parlindungan, the Gerindra Party of Banjarmasin City initiates the process by openly selecting candidates, both from internal and external party members. In addition to self-registration, the recruitment is also conducted proactively through recommendations and results from electability surveys. After the registration documents are collected, the party carries out an administrative selection to ensure the completeness of the documents and compliance with the regulatory provisions. Candidates who pass the administrative selection then participate in a fit and proper test to assess their leadership capacity, alignment of vision and mission with the party, as well as their understanding of local issues in Banjarmasin City. Furthermore, an electability survey was conducted to measure the level of public support for the candidates, as well as in-depth interviews to assess their commitment, loyalty, political networking, and communication skills. All these stages reflect a rigorous and structured certification process as outlined in the theory of political recruitment.

After the certification stage is completed, the process proceeds to the nomination stage. At this stage, the Gerindra Party of Banjarmasin City filters the candidates based on previous selection results, considering the dynamics of supply and demand from the party structure at the Branch Executive Council (DPC), Regional Executive Council (DPD), and Central Executive Council (DPP) levels. Recommendations for candidates deemed most potential by the DPC of Banjarmasin City are submitted to the DPD and subsequently forwarded to the DPP. The final determination of candidates is made by the DPP led by the chairman, based on a comprehensive evaluation of all selection stages, including the results of electability surveys, fit and proper tests, interviews, and recommendations from the DPD and DPC. Thus, the nomination stage is a strategic phase that determines which candidates will officially be supported by the party in the Banjarmasin City Pilkada contest.

The political recruitment process carried out by the Gerindra Party in Banjarmasin demonstrates the implementation of an inclusive recruitment pattern. Nominations for the regional elections are openly available to anyone, whether from the ranks of the party's internal cadres or external parties. The selection process is also conducted collectively, involving various levels of the party structure, ensuring that decisions are not made unilaterally by the general chairman or party elites. Conversely, the determination of candidates considers the results of fit and proper tests, electability surveys, as well as input from members and party administrators at various levels.

“DPC, DPD, the party selection team, DPP, and the Party Chairman. All these parties collaborate within a structured framework to ensure that the selection process is transparent,

fair, and produces the best candidates to be endorsed in the Banjarmasin regional elections” (Interview with Ms. Henny Yulia from the Gerindra Party, July 22, 2024)

According to Mrs. Henny Yulia, the Gerindra Party in Banjarmasin City is committed to promoting women's representation in the political recruitment process, particularly in the nomination of regional heads and deputy regional heads. Gerindra actively involves female politicians in the selection stages as a form of support for women's political participation. However, to date, the party has never nominated a female candidate in local elections. This is not due to gender discrimination, but rather the results of objective selection, where male candidates generally perform better in fit and proper tests and have higher electability levels compared to female candidates. Thus, the inability of female candidates to progress to the final stage is more a result of internal competition dynamics and the party's qualitative assessment, rather than institutional gender bias.

### **The Political Recruitment Process of the Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB)**

Based on an interview with Mr. Rusdi Marbawi, the representative of the Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB), it was revealed that the political recruitment process conducted by PKB in Banjarmasin City begins with an open certification stage announced through print and electronic media. This recruitment is not limited to internal PKB cadres only but is also open to politicians from outside the party. Candidates who apply will be selected based on the criteria and requirements set by PKB. Those who pass the initial selection will then undergo a fit and proper test and an interview conducted by a selection team from the DPC PKB Banjarmasin City. Furthermore, the results of the selection are submitted to the Regional Leadership Council (DPW) for verification before being sent to the Central Leadership Council (DPP) of PKB in Jakarta for the finalization process. In the selection process, PKB establishes a number of fundamental criteria, particularly emphasizing the loyalty, integrity, and dedication of candidates to the party as the main considerations in determining political support in the Regional Election.

At the nomination stage, candidates who have passed the interview phase will be reselected through an internal party plenary meeting agenda. The final decision is made by the Team 5 of PKB, which consists of the Chair and Secretary of the Syuro Council, as well as the Chair, Deputy Chair, and Secretary of the Tanfidz Council. This team has full authority in determining the candidates to be endorsed in the local elections. The appointment of candidates is based on the results of previous selections, including interviews and electability surveys, while also considering the level of acceptance of candidates within the Banjarmasin community. Thus, the nomination process in PKB is collective and collegial but remains centralized within the strategic internal authority of the party. Although the National Awakening Party (PKB) is principled in its openness to all genders and does not discriminate in the registration and selection processes, to date, the party has never endorsed or supported female politicians in local election contests. This is not due to gender preferences, but rather because there is currently no female candidates deemed superior compared to male candidates based on the results of the party's internal selection. The PKB also notes that one of the main obstacles often faced by female candidates is limited funding, which hinders them from competing competitively in the selection process.

According to Mr. Rusdi Marbawi, the National Awakening Party (PKB) views gender equality and the representation of women as important principles within the party. The issue suggesting that women are only recruited as a formality to meet administrative requirements has been refuted by PKB, which considers such views to be a classic issue that is irrelevant. PKB emphasizes its commitment to the substantive involvement of women in the party's structure. This is evidenced by the selection of a female politician as the chair of the Banjarmasin City Branch Leadership Council (DPC) of PKB, who is also currently serving as a legislative member in the Banjarmasin City Regional House of Representatives. Since the declaration of PKB in 1999, the representation of women has been considered quite dominant within the party structure. For PKB, as long as a female politician possesses capacity, integrity, and can demonstrate good performance within the organization, there are no obstacles for them to occupy leadership positions or to advance in the Regional Head Election contest.

Based on the analysis of interviews with representatives of political parties, it was found that the political recruitment processes implemented by the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), the Greater Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra), and the National Awakening Party (PKB) are open and inclusive, where registration is open for both internal and external party cadres. The recruitment model used by these three parties tends to apply a bottom-up approach, with active involvement of the party structure at the regional level in disseminating recruitment information through mass media, electronic media, and proactive strategies towards potential candidates. At the certification stage, the party conducts document selection and invites selected candidates to participate in a fit and proper test to assess their eligibility and suitability. Next, the candidates who qualify will undergo an interview stage, aimed at assessing the alignment of vision and mission, commitment, as well as the loyalty of the candidates to the party. Although each party has its own preferences and characteristics in the selection process, there are similarities in the establishment of basic criteria, particularly concerning the level of electability as well as ideological commitment and candidate loyalty to the party as the main factors in determining the nominees in the Banjarmasin City Regional Elections. After the certification phase is completed, the political recruitment process continues to the nomination stage, where the party's local selection team submits all evaluation results of the candidates to the higher party structure. The data sent includes the results of the fit and proper test, interview results, administrative documents, and candidate recommendations from the local selection team.

The documents are then forwarded to the Regional Leadership Council (DPD) and the Branch Leadership Council (DPC) for further review, before ultimately being submitted to the Central Leadership Council (DPP). The finalization of the candidates to be endorsed in the regional elections as pairs of head of region and deputy head of region is determined by the DPP, led by the chairman. This final decision considers various factors, including the results of electability surveys, candidate feasibility, ideological commitments, and recommendations from the party structure at the local level. Unlike other parties, research indicates that the National Mandate Party (PAN) implements a recruitment model that is exclusive and closed, with a top-down flow pattern from the central level to the regional level. In contrast to Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), Gerindra, and National Awakening Party (PKB), which open recruitment inclusively through a bottom-up approach, PAN relies more on decisions from party elites at the Central Leadership Council (DPP). This approach is influenced by the

position of PAN, which does not yet have enough legislative seats to independently nominate a pair of candidates in the regional elections. As a result, it can only play a supportive role within a coalition. Therefore, the candidate selection criteria within PAN tend to be more specific, prioritizing candidates with high capabilities in political lobbying to establish coalitions with other parties. Generally, PAN at the regional level awaits decisions and directions from the DPP regarding the candidates that will be supported.

Based on interviews with various political parties in Banjarmasin City, it has been found that the minimal representation of women as candidates for regional heads and deputy regional heads in the regional elections is influenced by a strong societal perception that tends to be skeptical of female leadership. All parties stated that internally they do not reject the nomination of female politicians, but still consider voter preferences, as the primary goal of nominating candidates is to win the electoral contest. In the socio-religious context of Banjarmasin City, there are still conservative views that regard men as more suitable leaders compared to women. In addition, stereotypes regarding women's roles as wives and mothers further strengthen the resistance to female leadership in the public sphere. As a result, political parties tend to hesitate to nominate women unless the candidates possess strong political capital, such as high electability, logistical support, and competent communication and networking skills. This aligns with the example provided by Mr. Rusdi Marbawi (PKB), who referred to Hj. Ananda as a prominent female figure due to her charisma, solid political experience, and good communication skills, thus deemed worthy to be a regional leadership candidate despite coming from a minority gender group in local leadership.

“The exception for Hj Ananda is due to her charisma and electability. She is active on social media, communicating with the public, keeping up with current trends, and has extensive experience. Ultimately, the party boldly decided to promote her despite the stereotypes present in society. Moreover, she has the necessary capital” (Interview with Mr. Rusdi Marbawi from the PKB Party, August 1, 2024)

### **Factors Contributing to the Scarcity of Female Politicians in Regional Head Elections and the Underrepresentation of Women in These Elections**

Based on the results of research and observations in the city of Banjarmasin, as well as statements from representatives of local political parties, it has been found that the level of participation of female politicians in the Banjarmasin city elections is still very low. This is not only due to the scarcity of female politicians running for office but also because of the political parties' lack of courage to endorse female candidates. Several factors influencing this situation include the individual characteristics of female candidates who have not successfully passed the selection stages and the presence of male candidates who are perceived to be more competitive. In addition, socio-cultural barriers also play a role, especially in the community of Banjarmasin City, which has a strong religious climate. Stereotypes regarding the division of roles between men and women remain dominant, resulting in women being positioned primarily in the domestic sphere and deemed less suitable for holding public leadership positions. This situation causes political parties to be cautious and rarely take risks in promoting female candidates for regional leadership, even though there are no internal party regulations that explicitly discriminate based on gender.

**Table 1. List of Regional Heads and Deputy Regional Heads of Banjarmasin City from 1945 to 2024 (Current)**

No.	Mayor	Gender	Deputy Mayor	Gender	Term of Office
1.	Mansur	Male	-	-	1945-1950
2.	Aidan Sinaga	Male	-	-	1950-1958
3.	H. Horman	Male	-	-	1960-1965
	O.H. Adenan	Male	-	-	1965-1965
4.	M. Hanafiah	Male	-	-	1965-1970
5.	Riduan Iman	Male	-	-	1971-1973
	Drs. Asful Anwar	Male	-	-	1973-1974
6.	Siddik Susanto	Male	-	-	1974-1978
7.	Kol. Komaruddin	Male			1978-1984
8.	Effendi Ritonga	Male			1984-1989
9.	Sadjoko	Male			1989-1999
10.	Sofyan Arpan	Male			1999-2003
11.	Midfai Yabani	Male			2003-2004
	Iskandar	Male			2004-2005
12.	Yudhi Wahyuni	Male	Alwi Sahlan	Male	2005-2010
13.	Muhidin	Male	Irwan Anshari	Male	2010-2015
	M. Thamrin	Male			2015-2016
14.	Ibnu Sina	Male	Hermansyah	Male	2016-2021
15.	Ibnu Sina	Male	Arifin Noor	Male	2021-2024

Source: Head of the Banjarmasin City Government, Processed by Researchers

According to data collected and processed by researchers, it is known that since the establishment of the City of Banjarmasin until now, there has never been a female politician who has successfully occupied the position of regional head or deputy regional head. Nevertheless, there is an interesting phenomenon that reflects changes in local political dynamics, namely the candidacy of Hj. Ananda as a female candidate in the 2020 Banjarmasin City Election. Hj. Ananda's presence in this contest is regarded as a breakthrough against the socio-cultural barriers that have historically limited women's involvement in electoral politics. Her courage to run for office has also encouraged several political parties to take progressive steps by supporting female candidates, something that was previously very rare. Although Hj. Ananda has not succeeded in winning the regional election due to losing to the incumbent and unresolved issues regarding alleged vote-buying, her candidacy remains an important precedent in the context of women's representation. This phenomenon indicates that opportunities for female politicians to compete in local politics are beginning to open up, although they still face significant challenges, both structurally and in terms of the political culture of the local community.

According to political observer Mr. Rahim Audah, the low electability of women in the Banjarmasin City regional elections is attributed to strong social barriers, particularly conservative religious views within the community. The predominantly Muslim population still perceives the political realm as a masculine domain that is not suitable for women. Politics is regarded as requiring strong leadership and significant decision-making, which is culturally and religiously still more associated with men. This perspective causes political parties to be reluctant to endorse female candidates due to concerns about insufficient electoral support. The religious climate in Banjarmasin also influences party decisions, leading to only a few daring

to nominate women in the regional elections. The high position of regional leaders and public scrutiny make parties inclined to choose male candidates who are considered more acceptable to the community.

The religious climate in the city of Banjarmasin not only influences the electability of women in regional elections, but also results in a scarcity of female politicians considered by political parties for nomination. Additionally, according to Mr. Rahim Audah, there are also internal structural barriers within the political parties themselves. Although most parties publicly open the recruitment process, in practice they tend to prioritize internal candidates. Candidates from outside the party are generally only considered if there are no internal candidates deemed competent. In many cases, outside candidates, including women, must bear the costs of their campaigns, which poses a significant obstacle for female politicians. Mr. Rahim also emphasizes that political parties often only provide half-hearted support for women, without full backing, making women's efforts to compete in regional and legislative elections not optimal and ultimately leading to defeat.

Based on the results of interviews and field observations, several factors were found that influence the minimal representation and election of women in the Banjarmasin City Regional Election. The first factor is societal barriers, which are influenced by a strong religious climate and patriarchal culture. Conservative religious views in society, particularly those that consider female leadership inconsistent with Islamic teachings, make political parties reluctant to promote female candidates as they are perceived to lack significant electoral prospects. The second factor is internal structural barriers within political parties. Although many parties claim to open recruitment inclusively, in practice, they still prioritize male internal cadres and provide minimal support to women. A concrete example can be seen in the case of Hj. Ananda during the 2020 regional elections, where despite being a highly electable cadre of the Golkar Party, her own party did not provide full support and even some cadres supported her political opponent.

The third factor is the obstacles from the government side (governmental barriers). Although there has been a policy of 30% representation of women, its implementation remains weak. This quota is often treated as an administrative formality without proper evaluations or strict sanctions against parties that do not adhere to it substantively. As a result, many female politicians have to fight on their own in the field without structural support from either their parties or the state. The fourth factor is the individual characteristics of women themselves. According to Mr. Rahim Audah's observations, only a few female politicians demonstrate outstanding performance, initiative, and political ideas. Many merely play their roles passively, attending without making significant contributions in formal forums such as the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD).

Nevertheless, the experience of Hj. Ananda demonstrates that these obstacles can be overcome. Through seriousness, the courage to speak out, consistency in advocating ideas, and closeness to the community, Hj. Ananda succeeded in building public trust and changing society's perception of female politicians. Although Hj. Ananda has not yet succeeded in winning the regional election, her participation serves as an important precedent in the political history of Banjarmasin City. Furthermore, it was found that the openness of several parties towards female politicians is not entirely rooted in the drive for gender equality, but is also influenced by the dynamics of oligarchic politics. In an interview with one party cadre

(anonymous), it was mentioned that political decisions in South Kalimantan are heavily influenced by powerful actors referred to as 'mountain bosses,' namely wealthy individuals who hold sway over the direction of party policies. Support for women in regional elections, in some cases, is more of a political strategy to respond to power pressures than a substantive form of support for women's leadership. Therefore, women's representation in the regional elections of Banjarmasin City still faces multidimensional challenges, from social, structural, governmental, individual, and elite political dynamics. Serious efforts from various parties are required so that women's involvement in politics is not merely symbolic, but genuinely substantive and transformative.

## CONCLUSION

The research found that political recruitment in Banjarmasin City primarily focused on candidates' performance and capabilities, rather than explicit gender discrimination. However, women's minimal representation in regional elections results from multiple barriers, including limited logistics, lower electability, and less experience and communication skills compared to men. The prevailing conservative socio-religious climate perpetuates stereotypes that women are unsuitable for public leadership, influencing parties to favor male candidates for electoral success. Internal party dynamics also hinder female candidates, as demonstrated by Hj. Ananda's experience in the 2020 Regional Election, where she lacked full party support. Moreover, government policies mandating a 30% quota for women's representation have been ineffective, often acting as formalities without enforcement. These combined individual, social, and structural challenges, alongside weak affirmative action, impede women's political equality. Future research could explore effective mechanisms to strengthen policy enforcement and examine strategies to enhance party support for women candidates in conservative contexts like Banjarmasin.

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