

Gender Equality on the Local Political Stage: A Review of Women's Representation in the Lumajang District Peoples's Council, Indonesia

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Abstract: This article investigates the struggle for gender equality in local politics, particularly in the Lumajang District Regional House's Representative Council (DPRD), Indonesia, through a review of regulations and women's representation. Literature study, interviews, and group discussions were employed to gather data. Key findings of this study include an analysis of gender regulations at national and regional levels, women's representation in governmental structures, and challenges faced by women in the political sphere. Despite these regulations showing positive efforts to advocate for gender equality, further evaluation is necessary to account for local power dynamics and the context of colonial history. Furthermore, women's representation in the Regional House of Representative remains low, indicating significant challenges faced by women in politics. Therefore, strengthening gender awareness, increasing women's representation in governmental structures, and investing in women's education and empowerment are crucial. It is hoped that the implementation of these recommendations can bring about positive change in achieving gender equality and justice, as well as building a more inclusive and fair society for all.

Keywords: women's involvement, feminism, local government, politics.

1. Introduction

A. Background

Politics is a phenomenon intertwined with human existence in society. By nature, humans are social beings who continuously evolve and develop. Therefore, politics manifests as a phenomenon of human existence aimed at the process of development. Politics is a network of interactions among humans involving the acquisition, transfer, and utilization of power. Political activities are endeavored to achieve balance in realizing common interests within an organization. When this balance is achieved, individual interests will drive the attainment of common interests [26]. Another perspective, according to Bedjo Sukarno [32], defines politics as the efforts undertaken by citizens to discuss and realize common good. Through political activities, it is hoped that a beneficial goal for common interests can be achieved.

Research on the gender role in politics has been extensively conducted. However, in this article, the author discuss the status

of gender mainstreaming and women's involvement in the Lumajang District Regional House of Representative Council (DPRD), from the perspective of postcolonial feminist theory. This research also aims to identify the positive and negative impacts of women's involvement in politics, particularly in Lumajang District, East Java Province, Indonesia.

Amidst the evolving political dynamics, the role of women in the political arena, especially at the regional level, has garnered increasing attention. From a feminist perspective, there is an understanding that gender inequality is not a result of inherent biological differences, but rather a social construction produced by patriarchal power structures. Feminist theory highlights how gender stereotypes, traditional role divisions, and institutional systems influenced by patriarchal views limit women's participation in politics and society in general. Lumajang District, as part of the local political context in Indonesia, also faces similar challenges in advocating for women's representation in the DPRD. Social, cultural, and structural factors influence the extent to which women can be involved in local politics, both as voters and as members of the DPRD. Feminist theory emphasizes the importance of recognizing and combating patriarchal power structures in politics and society, as well as advocating for the creation of more inclusive and equal spaces for women in decision-making processes. Therefore, an analysis of the challenges and impacts of women's involvement as members of the DPRD in Lumajang District needs to be conducted considering the feminist perspective, to provide a deeper understanding of gender politics and to formulate strategic steps towards more equitable and inclusive gender representation at the local level.

As a country that experienced prolonged colonization, Indonesia is trying to find its identity, including how to provide space for women's groups in social life, politics, and state management. The perspective of Postcolonial Feminism, which specifically discusses the role of women in the hegemony of colonizing states, becomes relevant as the research standpoint. Figures in postcolonial feminism such as Chandra Mohanty, as well as the propositions of her theory, was used as the focal

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point of discussion in this research.

B. Objectives, Benefits, and Issues

The objective of this research is to uncover the status of gender mainstreaming and women's involvement in the Lumajang District, Indonesia, and compare it with the ideal conditions according to postcolonial feminist theory. The detailing of gaps against the ideal conditions is conducted on aspects of challenges, impacts, and potential solutions to enhance women's representation and participation in local politics. This research will also describe the social, cultural, and structural factors influencing women's political participation at the local level, as well as explore the implications of the feminist perspective on gender political dynamics in the context of Lumajang District. Postcolonial feminist theory is predominantly used to explain the phenomenon of women as representatives in democratic state governance.

C. Research Stages

The initial stage of the research begins by identifying the gaps in gender mainstreaming in Indonesia from the perspective of feminist theories, especially postcolonialism. The list of gaps is considered as challenges to advance the role of women in social, political, and state governance. By understanding the challenges and obstacles faced by women in achieving equitable representation in the Lumajang District DPRD, this research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of gender politics and make a real contribution to combating gender inequality in local politics. Additionally, social and cultural factors are presented to explain the conditions of gender mainstreaming and the challenges faced. Data collection involves secondary data from internet sources, previous research, and other sources within the scope of Lumajang District. Data collection also involves discussions with various political observers and women's involvement groups.

In the subsequent stage, this research identifies potential solutions and strategic steps that can be taken to enhance women's representation in local politics, considering the postcolonial feminist perspective and promoting a more inclusive and equal political space for all citizens. It is hoped that this article can contribute to promote gender equality in the district political arena. This also complement other research previously, which enrich journal/literature on this topic in Indonesia. The final stage of the research includes data analysis and writing of the research report/journal. Journal reviews are conducted by academic supervisors in the Sociology Doctoral Program at Muhammadiyah University of Malang, as well as doctoral sociology student groups. A peer review was also conducted by an independent expert.

2. Methodology

A. Social Research Approach

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach [29] in exploring the phenomenon of women's involvement in the Lumajang District DPRD from the perspective of postcolonial feminism. The qualitative approach allows researchers to gain in-depth and contextual understanding of the experiences,

perceptions, and views of participants related to the researched topic. Through the descriptive approach, this research aims to provide a clear and comprehensive overview of women's involvement in local politics, as well as related challenges, impacts, and potential solutions.

B. Data Collection Methods

Data for this research are obtained through several methods, including:

- Literature review: Involves collecting and analyzing various related literature sources, including scholarly journals, books, research reports, and other relevant documents to gain a deep understanding of the political and social context of Lumajang District and issues related to women's political participation.
- Group discussions: Conducted with female legislative candidates, political figures, and feminist researcher groups. These group discussions aim to obtain diverse and in-depth perspectives on the experiences, views, and perceptions related to women's involvement in local politics.

C. Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative and interpretative approach. This approach involves in-depth analysis of data obtained from literature reviews and group discussions [29], [12]. Data are analyzed thematically, considering patterns, contradictions, and key findings that emerge from the data. Data interpretation is conducted considering the perspective of postcolonial feminism, focusing on power dynamics, gender, and postcolonialism issues affecting women's political participation in Lumajang District.

The results of data analysis and interpretation are related to social theories, including feminist theories, power theories, and postcolonial feminism. This interpretation allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of women's involvement in local politics in Lumajang District, as well as implications of the feminist perspective on gender political dynamics in this context.

This research pays attention to and follows regulations related to gender mainstreaming at the national and regional levels. Additionally, research results is presented considering rules and norms applicable in international academic publications.

D. Validation Method

The validity of the research is maintained through various methods, including: (i) Data triangulation: Data are obtained from various sources and methods to ensure the validity of findings; and (ii) Suitability examination: Findings and data interpretations are examined by other researchers, including peers and research group members, to ensure consistency and suitability.

3. Literature Review

A. Power and Political Theory

Before discussing women and politics, it's important to

understand the theories of power that form the basis of the discussion. Many theorists of power are referenced by nations in building governance, power, and politics. One of the main references is Gaetano Mosca. Mosca is renowned for his contributions to political thought, especially through his theory of elitism developed in his famous work, "The Ruling Class" (1896). Mosca is also known for Teorica, the idea of creating a middle class consisting of independent owners free from feudal landlord influence. Teorica discusses criticisms of Aristotle's classification of states (tyranny, aristocracy, democracy) and states that all political systems are products of elite power. Mosca applies Teorica to the conditions of parliamentary democracy. His fundamental assertion is clear: the aspiration of democracy for a government by the people for the people is an illusion because power is exercised by the minority over the majority. Mosca argues that "anyone who has ever assisted in an election knows full well that the voters do not choose their representative, but usually the representative chooses himself to be elected by the voters." The electoral system favors the main factor that produces elite power: the superiority of the minority organized by a mass of isolated individuals [23], [19].

Mosca's theory of elitism [5] creates a basis for understanding the social and political structure in society. One of his most significant works is "The Ruling Class," where he develops key concepts that shape his theory. The main propositions of Mosca's Elitism Theory are [31], [4]:

1. Ruling Class: Mosca introduces the idea that every society has a ruling class or elite group that holds political power. These elites, according to him, are a small group consistently in control of political and administrative decisions.
2. Political Cycle: Mosca suggests a pattern of political cycles where one elite group will be replaced by another elite group over time. Although the personnel composition may change, the continuity of power by a small group is considered constant.
3. Personal and Political Interests: Mosca argues that the main motivation of political elites is their own personal and political interests. The maintenance and expansion of power are their main goals.
4. Oligarchy and the Iron Law of Oligarchy: The concept of oligarchy refers to governance by a small number of people who hold power. Mosca also introduces the idea of the "iron law of oligarchy," stating that in any complex society, an oligarchy forms as an inevitable rule.

The phenomenon of regional elections in Indonesia can be explained by Gaetano Mosca's power elite theory. According to Mosca, in every society, there are two types of elite groups constantly competing to obtain and maintain power. These elite groups consist of the ruling elite and the opposition elite. In the context of regional elections in Indonesia, the ruling elite usually consists of political party leaders who dominate regional government, while the opposition elite consists of candidate competitors in the regional head elections. The ruling elite have greater political power and resources to win regional elections, such as political party support, financial capital, and

access to mass media [34].

Although Mosca's works are more famous for their contributions to elitist theory, especially with his renowned work "The Ruling Class" (1896), his theory does not explicitly address the role of women in power with significant detail. In his works, the focus is on power structures, elite formation, and mechanisms that allow these small groups to maintain their dominance over the majority [4], [19]. Gender roles are not specifically emphasized in Mosca's works. However, some analysts have later applied concepts from this elitist theory to understand the role of women in power [12]. For example, in patriarchal societies, women may have limited access to formal power, but they can still play significant roles in maintaining existing power structures through informal social, economic, or political influence. In the Encyclopedia of Government and Politics [33], writes that early elite theorists like Mosca, Pareto, and Michels argue that all societies are dominated by small minorities (including women), a theory most clearly expressed in Michels' "iron law of oligarchy." Regardless of the regime type, they assert the continuity of elite in politics, stating that this is an empirically verifiable fact. This contrasts with the more traditional pluralist governance vision. Newer elite theories are dominated by attempts to integrate elitism and pluralism, resulting in the term "democratic elitism."

B. Postcolonial Feminism

Discussing women's involvement in local government politics requires a theoretical foundation. Postcolonial Feminist Theory is chosen as the basis for discussing the phenomenon of women's involvement in legislative councils at the local level. Moreover, Indonesia, being a postcolonial nation, is a strong reason for utilizing postcolonial feminist theory in this research.

1) Postcolonial Feminist Movement

The feminist movement in the post-colonial era has had a significant impact on women's involvement in politics by raising awareness of their political rights. Through educational and advocacy campaigns, the third-wave feminist movement [7] has successfully changed societal paradigms about women's roles and contributions in political spheres. They highlight the importance of active female participation in political decision-making as a step towards broader gender equality [10]. Thus, many women who were previously unaware of their political rights have begun to engage in the political process, both as voters [25] and candidates.

Moreover, the influence of feminism in the post-colonial era is also reflected in legal and policy changes supporting women's political involvement. The feminist movement has advocated for legal reforms to provide women with equal rights in terms of voting and candidacy. These steps are often followed by the adoption of affirmative policies facilitating women's participation in political institutions [6]. For example, several countries have mandated gender quotas in their political systems to ensure greater female representation. Thus, feminism has played a key role in shaping a more inclusive and equitable political environment for women.

Lastly, the influence of feminism on women's political involvement is also manifested in efforts towards broader

women's empowerment. The feminist movement has provided support in the form of leadership training, social networks, and access to financial resources to assist women in entering and sustaining themselves in a political world often dominated by men ([10] and [12]). In this way, feminism in the post-colonial era not only advocates for formal political equality but also empowers women to actively participate in the political process and change existing power structures.

2) *Women in Politics*

Feminism offers diverse perspectives on the phenomenon of women becoming legislative candidates at both the local and central levels in Indonesia. On one hand, feminism encourages increasing women's political participation as a step towards gender equality and better representation in political decision-making [8]. In the context of Indonesia, the growing number of women running as legislators can be seen as a positive step towards forming a more inclusive and representative political structure.

However, on the other hand, feminist views also highlight that women often face various unique obstacles and challenges in achieving political positions, including gender stereotypes, discrimination, and unequal access to political resources [30]. Despite the increasing number of women running as legislators in Indonesia, they still encounter various challenges hindering their political progress, including party support, campaign financing, and access to strong political networks [18].

Therefore, while the phenomenon of women becoming legislative candidates in Indonesia shows progress in a positive direction, feminist perspectives indicate that much work still needs to be done to achieve gender equality in politics. This includes the need for adopting policies supporting women's involvement, eliminating structural barriers, and promoting inclusive political culture. Additionally, it's crucial to continue advocating for awareness of women's political rights and strengthening networks and support for women who want to participate in politics, so they can overcome the challenges they face and realize their full potential as political leaders [30].

3) *Chandra Talpade Mohanty*

There are several prominent figures in the postcolonial feminist movement, one of whom is Chandra Talpade Mohanty. Mohanty is an academic and activist known for her work integrating feminist theory with postcolonial analysis. Chandra Talpade Mohanty was born in 1955 in Mumbai, India. She is known for her contributions to women's studies, feminism, and postcolonial theory. Mohanty has become a leading figure in the postcolonial feminist movement and has made significant contributions to critical thinking about feminism, race, social class, and globalization.

Mohanty obtained a bachelor's degree in physics from the University of Mumbai before continuing her studies in the United States. She earned a master's degree in women's studies from Syracuse University and a doctoral degree in comparative women's studies from the University of Illinois. One of Mohanty's most famous works is her essay titled "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," published in 1986. The essay critiques the Western feminist framework that overlooks the diversity of women's experiences

in the non-Western world. Her work has made a significant contribution to our understanding of feminism, colonial power, and intersectionality.

The propositions of postcolonial feminist theory proposed by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, along with other figures, can be summarized as follows:

- **Critique of Feminist Universalism:** Chandra Mohanty and other theorists highlight that the Western feminist framework often places the experiences of Western women as a universal standard, overlooking the complexity and diversity of women's experiences worldwide (e.g., non-Western feminist). They emphasize the importance of considering postcolonial and local contexts in analyzing women and gender disparities.
- **Intersectionality:** Postcolonial feminist theory emphasizes the importance of considering the intersection of race, social class, sexual orientation, and other identity factors in analyzing gender disparities (e.g., education, economic status, etc.). They recognize that women's experiences cannot be separated from the broader social, political, and economic contexts.
- **Decolonization of Thought and Practice:** Mohanty and others call for the decolonization of thought and practice in feminism. They challenge the dominance of Western thought in the feminist movement and advocate for the voices of marginalized and overlooked women, especially in formerly colonized regions.
- **Women's Empowerment:** Postcolonial feminist theory promotes women's empowerment through the recognition of their strengths and agency, as well as efforts to address discriminatory and oppressive power structures (due to colonialism influences).

4. Results and Discussions

The presentation of research results includes an analysis of regulations related to gender mainstreaming at the national and regional levels and descriptive analysis using a postcolonial feminism approach. Then, the socio-cultural aspects of Lumajang society are presented as a background to explain the conditions and implementation of gender mainstreaming. Understanding of regulations and socio-cultural aspects directs attention to the conditions and facts of women's involvement in the government and Regional Representatives Council (DPRD) of Lumajang District. Power analysis using Mosca's theory and also the connection with the concept of postcolonial feminism are presented descriptively. Finally, conclusions and recommendations are provided to improve the performance of gender mainstreaming implementation in Lumajang District, Indonesia.

A. *National Regulations Related to Gender*

Postcolonial feminism theory combines feminism theory and postcolonialism theory. This theory highlights how women's experiences in the context of colonialism and how colonialism

specifically affects women. Postcolonial feminism emphasizes the importance of understanding how colonialism and imperialism have influenced women's lives, both directly and indirectly. This theory also highlights how women from various ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds experience different forms of oppression and discrimination in the postcolonial context.

The main goal of postcolonial feminism is to advocate for justice, equality, and liberation for women from postcolonial backgrounds. This theory aims to recognize and address various forms of oppression, discrimination, and inequality experienced by women in the postcolonial context, as well as to advocate for women's rights in societies dominated by colonial and post-colonial power dynamics.

The ideal condition that postcolonial feminism aims to achieve is the creation of a fair, inclusive, and equal society for all women, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, religious, or social backgrounds. This theory also aims to recognize and appreciate the diversity of postcolonial women's experiences, as well as to build solidarity among women from various backgrounds in advocating for their rights. Additionally, postcolonial feminism seeks to create new spaces to articulate the experiences of postcolonial women and to strengthen women's voices in influencing social, political, and cultural changes. This theory also strives to challenge power structures that oppress and discriminate against women, as well as to build more inclusive and fair alternatives for all women.

The government of the Republic of Indonesia has integrated gender perspectives into its legal regulations, as explained in the table 1.

The regulatory conditions at the national level are highly

relevant to Chandra Mohanty's propositions regarding postcolonial feminism. Mohanty highlights how gender issues are often utilized as legitimizing tools by Western nations to justify their interventions in Global South regions, without considering the local complexities and existing power dynamics. In the context of national regulations related to gender mainstreaming, governmental efforts to address gender inequality often reflect attempts to meet global standards set by Western nations, which may not always take into account the local context and the influence of colonial history.

The postcolonial feminist approach, as emphasized by Mohanty, underscores the importance of understanding how power relations and colonial influences shape gender constructions and policy implementation. Despite positive steps such as incorporating gender perspectives into development planning and regulating the implementation of gender mainstreaming at the regional level, there needs to be an awareness of local power dynamics that may still impact the implementation of these policies. Thus, analyzing these regulations through a postcolonial feminist lens directly connects political, historical, and power contexts in understanding gender issues and policy implementation.

B. Gender Regulation at the District Level

At the regional level of Lumajang District, there are also several local regulations related to gender mainstreaming, as summarized in the table 2.

Using a postcolonial feminist approach, especially within the framework of Chandra Mohanty's thinking, reveals a critical perspective on gender mainstreaming efforts. Although regulations such as Lumajang District Regulation No. 3/2023

Table 1
National (Indonesia) regulations on gender

No.	National Regulation	Gender Content
1	Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Governments	Contains provisions regarding the obligation of Regional Governments related to women's empowerment
2	Presidential Reg. No. 59 of 2017: Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal Achievement	The attachment to this Presidential Regulation outlines the National framework, including achieving gender equality and empowering women.
3	Presidential Regulation No. 2 of 2015 concerning National Medium-Term Development Plan	(i) Gender Mainstreaming as a cross-sectoral approach in development; (ii) setting targets and performance indicators; and (iii) Gender as one of the main streams of development.
4	Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 concerning Gender Mainstreaming in National Development	Instructions to Governors, Regents/Mayors to implement Gender Mainstreaming in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of development policies and programs.
5	Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 67 of 2011 concerning General Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming in Regions	There is a need for improvement in gender integration through strengthening institutions, planning, formulation, implementation, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation of gender-responsive policies, programs, and activities
6	Joint Circular Letter of Four Ministers: National Development Planning, Finance, Home Affairs, and Women's Empowerment and Child Protection on the National Strategy for Accelerating Gender Mainstreaming	Acceleration Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming Implementation through Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting (PPRG).

Table 2
District regulation on gender

No.	District	Gender Content
1	District Reg. No. 3/2023: Regional Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2024	The guideline for local government agencies in implementing gender mainstreaming strategies to achieve gender equality.
2	District Reg. No. 63/2020: Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming	Explains the Guidelines for Implementing Gender Mainstreaming with the principle of respect for human dignity and dignity.
3	District Regulation No. 3 of 2021 concerning Gender Mainstreaming	As a form of implementing national regulations related to gender mainstreaming.
4	Decree No. 188.45/406/427.12/2017: Gender Mainstreaming Working Group	Through this Decree, it was followed by a letter from the Lumajang Regency Secretary to all OPDs (local government agencies) to establish a Gender Focal Point in each OPD and initial coordination of the Gender Mainstreaming Driver Team.

and Regional Regulation No. 3 of 2021 demonstrate awareness of the importance of gender equality, it is important to consider how concepts such as "focused, effective, efficient, systematic, measurable, and sustainable" are reflected in the views and interests of local governments, which may be influenced by dynamics of local power and colonial history. Meanwhile, Lumajang District Regulation No. 63/2020 emphasizes the principle of respect for human dignity and dignity, but it is important to trace how this principle is implemented in a local context that may differ from perspectives dominated by Western states. In addressing these regulations, postcolonial analysis questions the extent to which the approaches used are able to address the complexity of power relations and the influence of colonialism on understanding gender and human rights at the local level.

C. *Social Cultural Aspects of Lumajang Society*

The population in Lumajang Regency is dominated by the Javanese and Madurese ethnic groups, and the majority religion practiced by its people is Islam. However, in the Tengger Mountains, Senduro District, there is a Tenggerese community that has its own local language and follows Hinduism. The population of Lumajang Regency as of June 2016 has reached 1,104,759 people. Of this population, the total land use in Lumajang Regency is very diverse, ranging from technical rice fields, simple rice fields, settlements, plantations, communal forests, state forests, and pond land.

Lumajang, Indonesia, has rich and diverse socio-cultural characteristics. Cultural diversity is reflected in the ethnic composition consisting of the majority Javanese ethnic group, with additions of minorities such as the Madurese and Osing ethnic groups from Banyuwangi. Local traditions and culture are at the core of Lumajang society's life. They have a rich heritage of traditional performing arts, such as Ludruk, Jaranan, and Reog Ponorogo, which are often performed at various local events, binding them into a strong cultural identity. Religious aspects also play a significant role in daily life, with the majority of the population practicing Islam, but there are also followers of other religions such as Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism, making Lumajang a diverse religiously diverse place. Religious traditions, such as celebrating Islamic holidays and traditional religious rituals, are still practiced with deep devotion. Local wisdom is reflected in practices of mutual cooperation and deliberation for consensus, which form the foundation for social solidarity and harmony in society.

The rich and diverse socio-cultural aspects of Lumajang society have a significant influence on its gender mainstreaming conditions. Firstly, strong local traditions and culture can shape perceptions and expectations of gender roles. If these traditions tend to uphold patriarchal values, women may face barriers in accessing education, employment, or participating in decision-making. Secondly, local wisdom in Lumajang society, such as the practice of mutual cooperation and deliberation for consensus, can strengthen women's positions in social and economic life. By strengthening women's roles in household decision-making and communal activities, local wisdom can help reduce gender disparities.

Thirdly, local arts and culture also play a significant role in shaping identity and social norms. Promoting arts that appreciate the creative contributions of women and men equally can help change societal perceptions and expectations of gender roles. Fourthly, the influence of religion in Lumajang society can also impact gender mainstreaming. Interpretations of religion that reinforce traditional women's roles as household caretakers or caretaking-related jobs can hinder progress in gender equality.

D. *Women in the Government Structure*

Lumajang Regency has a Gender Development Index of 88.39 (in 2020), while the Gender Development Index (GDI) of East Java Province is 91.67, and the national GDI is 91.27. From these GDI figures, Lumajang Regency is still below the provincial GDI average [9]. GDI is calculated from the comparison of the Human Development Index (HDI) between males and females. HDI consists of three basic dimensions: (i) longevity and healthy life, (ii) knowledge, and (iii) decent standard of living.

1) *Women in Legislative Positions*

In the 2019 elections, according to data from the Indonesian General Election Commission (KPU), out of a total of 7,968 legislative candidates fielded by 16 political parties, only 3,262 candidates or approximately 40.95% were women. Of this number, only about 20% of women were elected as legislators, indicating that many women lost in the elections [14]. In Lumajang District, there were 12 seats in the District DPRD contested, and 3 political parties succeeded in winning seats, namely PDI-P, PKB, and Gerindra. Out of a total of 131 legislative candidates fielded by these three parties, only about 30% were women.

Nevertheless, the presence of female legislative candidates in Lumajang District or in other areas is an important step in increasing women's representation in politics and regional development. The involvement of women in the Lumajang District DPRD is evident in several factions. These factions include the PKB Faction, Gerindra Faction, Democratic Faction, and PKS Faction (Prosperous Justice Party). In the PKB Faction (National Awakening Party), there are 2 female legislators. In the Gerindra, Democratic, and PKS factions, there is only one female legislator each.

2) *Perspective of Gaetano Mosca's Theory of Power*

Mosca's theory of power, known as the theory of elites, suggests that society will always be dominated by a small group of individuals who hold dominant political, economic, and social power. This group is referred to as the "political elite" [23]. Regarding the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in Lumajang Regency, from the perspective of Mosca's Theory of Power, it can be explained as follows:

Political Power: The representation of women in the Lumajang District DPRD and at the national level (including in elections and in DPRD membership) appears low. This reflects a distribution of political power that tends to be centralized among a small number of individuals or groups dominating the political process [16]. Although there are efforts to increase women's representation in politics, their numbers are still

significantly fewer compared to men.

- **Economic Power:** Although not explicitly mentioned, it can be assumed that the trend of economic power distribution is also similar to the distribution of political power, namely, centralized among a small number of individuals or groups dominating the regional economy [33]. This can be reflected in the low participation of women in economic development.
- **Political Class:** Research results also indicate the existence of factions in the Lumajang Regency DPRD owned by certain political parties. This reflects a political class structure where power and influence are centralized in several dominant political parties [27]. Furthermore, the difference in the number of women in each faction can illustrate the relative level of power and influence among them.
- **Role of Political Elites:** Although the number of women in politics is still low, their presence in the DPRD and factions therein shows efforts from some political elites to advocate for women's representation in the political process and regional development. However, this also indicates that the power to influence policy and decision-making is still predominantly held by dominant political elite groups [27], [31].

E. Women Legislator

1) Women's Role in the Politics

Female legislators in Lumajang District occupy three commissions. These commissions are Commission A, B, and D. Commission A handles Governance, Law, and Security. There are two female legislators spread across this commission, from the two political parties of Gerindra (LGER) and PKS Party (LPKS) factions, respectively.

One of the tasks of Commission A is evident in the case of the dismissal of the Village Chief in Rowokangkung in 2020. This was reinforced by news on the Lumajang District DPRD website portal. A female legislator (LGER) emphasized, *"The dismissal of the Village Chief requires deep expertise and maturity. We need to check the data first for its accuracy. If proven guilty, then dismissal is necessary."*

The presentation above indicates that women are capable of taking responsibility and making decisions. This is supported by the following interview result.

"In my opinion, women should be able and capable to participate in politics. Don't just confine yourself at home and be ashamed to voice your aspirations. We are all equal, women and men alike" (interview with LPKS representative on December 14, 2022).

Furthermore, Commission D of Lumajang District also participated and collaborated in the Quran Recitation Festival event in Lumajang District. In Commission D, there is one female legislator (LPKB). From the explanation provided, it can be said that the tasks in the commissions in the Lumajang District DPRD are varied and the role of women in each commission is essential. Female legislators in Lumajang District play a significant role and bring spirit to the political

world.

Alongside the struggle to obtain political rights, women also strive for the right to lead in various fields [12], including politics, business, academia, and social spheres. However, despite the increase in women's representation in these fields, women often still experience discrimination [20] and difficulties in obtaining leadership positions equal to men. Some factors influencing this include gender stereotypes [2], wage disparities, lack of access to funding and support, and difficulty balancing family responsibilities with a career.

This is also experienced by female legislators in the Lumajang District DPRD. For example, family factors are significant, as supported by the following interview result.

"Some of my family support me to engage in politics. However, there are some people (family members) who were still doubtful when I first wanted to run as a legislative candidate. Maybe they thought, 'why should a woman work so hard to serve the people?' something like that roughly. But what else can I do, because my heart was called, I explained it to them" (LPKS, interview on December 14, 2022).

Gender stereotypes exist in many cultures worldwide, including in Indonesia. In Indonesian society, there are specific expectations and norms about how men and women should behave and what roles they should fulfill. Some common gender stereotypes in Indonesia include the belief that women should prioritize their family and domestic tasks over pursuing a career, while men should be the breadwinners and provide for their families. There is also a general belief that women should be polite, gentle, and obedient, while men should be strong and assertive [8].

The gender stereotypes [10] experienced by female legislators in the Lumajang District DPRD are similar to those experienced by most women. This can be seen in the following interview result.

"As a woman, there's no need to feel discouraged. Don't mind the society's comments. Many doubt the performance of women, especially in politics. Women are considered incapable and incompetent in leading. But not all women are like that. Some genuinely aspire to be leaders from the bottom of their hearts, they are capable, but it's the society's acceptance that's lacking" (interview with LGER representative on December 5, 2022).

From the statement of (LGER), the interest of women in politics arises from the heart. Nevertheless, many women also enter the political arena because of circumstances [8]. This can be seen from the statement of (LDEM) below.

"At first, I wasn't interested in politics. But when I saw the aspirations of the people that hadn't been addressed, inadequate infrastructure, and so on. Eventually, I felt 'where was the government all this time? Even this trivial matter was left unattended'. So, I decided to run for office" (interview with LDEM representative on December 5, 2022).

From the various interview results above, it can be depicted that women's rights are not fully respected. There are still many negative assumptions in society about women involved in politics.

2) Chandra Mohanty's Feminist Perspective

Using Chandra Mohanty's postcolonial feminist perspective,

the role of women in the Lumajang District DPRD can be explained as follows:

- **Role and Agency of Women:** The data presented in the Discussion Chapter highlights the active role of female legislators in the Lumajang District DPRD in various commissions, including involvement in crucial decision-making [24] such as the case of the dismissal of the Village Chief. This reflects the agency of women in politics and their ability to influence policies and actions [19].
- **Achievements and Challenges:** Although women have obtained significant positions in politics and various other fields, the research results also illustrate the challenges faced [19], including gender stereotypes, resistance from family members, and experiences of discrimination. This aligns with a feminist approach that emphasizes efforts to overcome the barriers faced by women in achieving equality and justice [24].
- **Diversity of Women's Experiences:** The research results reflect the diversity of experiences and motivations of women in engaging in politics, from those driven by community aspirations to those feeling compelled by dissatisfaction with the existing conditions [13]. This indicates that there is no single narrative about the motivations or experiences of women in politics, but rather diverse factors influencing their participation.
- **Challenges of Gender Stereotypes:** Statements from female legislators in this research highlight the gender stereotypes still prevalent in society, including the belief that women are less capable or unfit to lead in politics. This underscores the importance of challenging gender stereotypes and advocating for gender equality in various fields [2].

By analyzing the research results through the lens of Chandra Mohanty's feminism, we can see how women in the Lumajang District DPRD face challenges and advocate for their rights in politics, while continuing to fight against gender stereotypes and discrimination that still exist in society.

5. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that gender-related regulations at the national and regional levels reflect positive efforts to promote gender equality and justice, but further evaluation is needed to consider the dynamics of local power and the context of colonial history. Nevertheless, the representation of women in governmental structures, especially in regional legislative councils (DPRD), remains low, indicating significant challenges faced by women in politics. Recommendations include strengthening gender awareness through education and training, increasing the representation of women in governmental structures by reinforcing affirmative policies, and providing greater support for women involved in politics. Additionally, investment in the economic and social empowerment of women is necessary to overcome barriers hindering their participation in the political process and

development.

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