



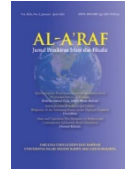
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## WOMEN POLITICIANS BASED ON PESANTREN IN NATIONALIST BASED VOTERS IN INDONESIA

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### *Abstrak*

#### **Kata Kunci:**

Politisi  
perempuan;  
Pesantren;  
Pemilih  
Nasionalis

*Studi ini mendiskusikan aktivisme politisi perempuan berbasis pesantren, dalam mendayagunakan jaringan pesantren di daerah pemilihan dengan mayoritas konstituen berafiliasi ke partai bercorak nasionalis. Salah satunya adalah di daerah Soloraya. Potret daerah pemilihan pasca reformasi yang afiliasi politiknya cukup kuat ke partai berhaluan nasionalis. Dalam konteks tersebut, tulisan ini hendak mencermati aktivisme politik politisi perempuan berbasis pesantren dalam ajang politik elektoral. Pengumpulan data studi ini dilakukan dengan observasi dan wawancara mendalam. Argumen studi ini adalah soliditas basis konstituen santri dan pesantren, perluasan basis pemilih non santri, dukungan elit pesantren, dan performa kandidat politisi perempuan berbasis pesantren menjadi kunci keberhasilan transformasi modal sosial menjadi modal politik untuk memenangkan politik elektoral di daerah pemilihan yang bukan berbasis pesantren. Kebaruan temuan studi ini adalah politisi perempuan berhasil memenangkan politik elektoral dalam Pemilu 2019 dengan memobilisasi kekecewaan politik, militansi dan soliditas dukungan jaringan pesantren. Terutama kalangan perempuan dan modal sosial yang melekat pada individu politisi. Studi ini memperkaya kajian politik elektoral dan hubungannya dengan aktivisme politisi perempuan berbasis pesantren.*

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**Abstract**
**Keywords:**

Women  
politician;  
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Nationalist  
Voters

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This study discusses the political activism of pesantren-based female politicians in utilizing the pesantren network in electoral districts where most of the constituents affiliate with nationalist-style parties. One of which is in Soloraya, a portrait of post-reform electoral district with solid political affiliations to nationalist parties. In this context, this study intends to examine the political activism of women politicians based on pesantren in electoral politics. The data in this study were collected through observation and in-depth interviews. This study argues that the solidity of the santri and pesantren, the expansion of the non-student voter base, the support of the pesantren elite, and the performance of female political candidates based on pesantren are the keys to the success of transforming social capital into political capital to win electoral politics in electoral districts that are not pesantren based. The novelty of the findings of this study is that female politicians can win electoral politics in the 2019 Elections by mobilizing political disillusionment, militancy, and solidity in support of the pesantren network, especially among women and the social capital attached to individual politicians. This study enriches the study of electoral politics and its relationship to the activism of women politicians based on pesantren.

## Introduction

The involvement of women in the politics of representations and elections is full of challenges. Women politicians face challenges in the form of the notion that male politicians are more appropriate as representatives of society<sup>1</sup> and other challenges in the form of economic capital and money politics in electoral political activities.<sup>2</sup> This article wants to discuss how women pesantren-based politicians challenge politicians in areas that are not based on pesantren.

The study of women's involvement in the candidacy and representation is an issue that has generated quite a lot of attention. Lee's study shows that there is a relationship between the

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<sup>1</sup> Ella S. Prihatini, "Indonesian Young Voters: Political Knowledge and Electing Women into Parliament," *Women's Studies International Forum* Vol. 70, September–October (2018): 46–52, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2018.07.015>.

<sup>2</sup> Ella S. Prihatini, "Women Who Win in Indonesia: The Impact of Age, Experience, and List Position," *Women's Studies International Forum* 72, January (2019): 40–46, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2018.10.003>.

superiority of women candidates and women's political involvement in the Korean context. Even though women have more significant socio-economic resources, better education, and higher income levels, gender disparities in political engagement persist. On the other hand, there are external factors that limit women's interest in politics and prevent them from participating fully.<sup>3</sup>

Considering the context of Indonesia which is predominantly Muslim, this study discusses the process of the candidacy of women politicians based on pesantren in electoral areas, which have been known as the basis of nationalist parties, such as Soloraya, an area in Central Java, which includes the cities of Surakarta, Klaten, Boyolali, Sukoharjo, Wonogiri, Karanganyar, and Sragen. In terms of national electoral politics, there are two electoral districts; electoral district IV, which includes Sragen, Karanganyar, and Wonogiri; and constituency V that consists of the cities of Surakarta, Boyolali, Klaten, and Sukoharjo. In the post-reform era, Soloraya is a political constituent identified as the basis for an electoral district dominated by nationalist parties, particularly the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP).

Using a qualitative approach, this study examines the benefits and effectiveness of the pesantren network in supporting women's candidacy and competition in the 2019 legislative elections in political areas that are not based on pesantren. Another aspect examined is the activities of pesantren-based women politicians in utilizing the pesantren network to support their candidacy process and competition in the general election. In addition, this study also

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<sup>3</sup> Jongkon Lee, "The Virtuous Circle of Participation: Female Candidates and Women's Engagement in Korean Politics," *Women's Studies International Forum* Vol. 92, May-June (2022), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277539522000176>, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2022.102576>. Also see. Ella S. Prihatini, "Women and Social Media During Legislative Elections in Indonesia," *Women's Studies International Forum* 83, no. November-Desember (2020): 1-9, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2020.102417>.

explores the factors that make the pesantren network as political capital can work well and lead women political candidates based on pesantren to become members of the legislature at the national level.

So far, studies on politics and pesantren are more concerned with the roles of *kyai* (an honorific title to Muslim clergy) in political activity as conducted by Jatmika,<sup>4</sup> Pribadi,<sup>5</sup> Patoni,<sup>6</sup> and Abdul Ghaffar Karim.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the study of the pesantren network also discusses aspects of social and economic networks, such as those conducted by Salehuddin<sup>8</sup> and Isbah.<sup>9</sup> At the regional level, for example, in Yogyakarta, there was pesantren's involvement in the 2009 General Election.<sup>10</sup> Based on the previous studies, a study on the use of pesantren networks by women politicians based on pesantren has not been widely carried out by scholars. The study conducted by Ernas and Siregar<sup>11</sup> also shows examples of studies on non-political party instruments in electoral politics at the regional level. In other words, the involvement of non-party mechanism in electoral politics in Indonesia does not only occur at

<sup>4</sup> Sidik Jatmika, "Kiai Dan Politik Lokal: Studi Kasus Reposisi Politik Kiai NU Kebumen, Jawa Tengah Memanfaatkan Peluang Keterbukaan Partisipasi Di Era Reformasi" (Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Yanwar Pribadi, "Religious Network in Madura: Pesantren, Nahdlatul Ulama and Kiai as the Core of Santri Culture," *Al-Jamiah* 51, no. 1 (2013): 2–32.

<sup>6</sup> A. Patoni, *Peran Kiai Pesantren Dalam Partai Politik* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Abdul Gaffar Karim, "Pesantren' in Power: Religious Institutions and Political Recruitment in Sumenep, Madura," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 42, no. 1 (2008): 157–184 <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/ielapa.181422962164124>. See also. Abdul Gaffar Karim, "The Pesantren-Based Ruling Elite in Sumenep in the Post-New Order Indonesia," *Journal Of Indonesian Islam* 3, no. 1 (2009): 97–121.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmad Salehuddin, "Konstruksi Jaringan Sosial Pesantren: Strategi Eksis Di Tengah Perubahan," *Jurnal Religi* 10, no. 2 (2014): 204–216.

<sup>9</sup> M. Falikul Isbah, "How Is Social Capital Converted to Be Economic Capital? A Case Study from Pesantren's Socio-Economic Project," *Al-Izzah: Jurnal Hasil-Hasil Penelitian* 14, no. 1 (2019): 18–35.

<sup>10</sup> Ferry Muhamadsyah Siregar Saidin Ernas, "Dampak Keterlibatan Pesantren dalam Politik: Studi Kasus Pesantren di Yogyakarta," *Kontekstualita* 25, no. 2 (2010): 195–224.

<sup>11</sup> Ferry Muhamadsyah Siregar Saidin Ernas, "Dampak Keterlibatan Pesantren dalam Politik: Studi Kasus Pesantren di Yogyakarta."

the national level but also the regional level.

In the recent years, scholars have also studied women's political activism in various regions of Indonesia. There is a study on the role of power in women's elections in electoral politics in South Sulawesi<sup>12</sup> and the involvement of Minangkabau women's role in politics.<sup>13</sup> Another aspect that is no less interesting is the political communication experience of Muslim women politicians in Sunda,<sup>14</sup> to the opinions of voters in Pati and Demak, Central Java, on gender representation in the political world.<sup>15</sup> There is also a study on the support of Islamic parties to represent women politicians in electoral politics.<sup>16</sup>

Studies on women politicians and pesantren have also begun. Mahsun, Elizabeth, and Mufrikah<sup>17</sup> examined the success of women legislative candidates from Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in the 2019 Election. In contrast to this study, this paper is different because it emphasizes on the politics of disappointment and the

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<sup>12</sup> Abdul Kadir La Husen Zuada, Rekho Adriadi, "Women's Power and Electability in Southeast Sulawesi: A Case Study for Provincial and National Legislative Candidate," *Jurnal Politik Indonesia: Indonesian Political Science Review* 5, no. 1 (2020): 156–171.

<sup>13</sup> Sri Zul Chairiyah, "Political Identity and Citizenship Participation (Representatives) in Politics by Minangkabau Women in Post-2019 Election," *Jurnal Politik Indonesia: Indonesian Political Science Review* 5, no. 1 (2020): 139–155.

<sup>14</sup> Alina Shalisa Evie Ariadne, Shinta Dewi, "Political Communication Experiences of Sundanese Muslim Women Politicians," *Jurnal Politik Indonesia: Indonesian Political Science Review* 5, no. 1 (2020): 121–138.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas R. Seitz George Towar Ikkal Tawakkal, Alifulahtin Utaminingsih, Fadillah Putra, Andrew D. Garner, Wike Wike, "Similarity Amidst Diversity: Lessons about Women Representation from Pati and Demak," *Jurnal Politik Indonesia: Indonesian Political Science Review* 6, no. 1 (2021): 51–70.

<sup>16</sup> Ella S. Prihatini, "Indonesian Young Voters: Political Knowledge and Electing Women into Parliament," *Women's Studies International Forum* 70 (2018): 46–52, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2018.07.015>; Mouliza KD Sweinstani, "Partai Islam, Tafsir Agama, Dan Representasi Perempuan Dalam Partai Persatuan Pembangunan," *Politika: Jurnal Ilmu Politik* 10, no. 2 (2019): 179–198; Ella S. Prihatini, "Women's Views and Experiences of Accessing National Parliament: Evidence from Indonesia," *Women's Studies International Forum* 74 (2019): 84–90, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2019.03.001>.

<sup>17</sup> Solkhah Mufrikah Muhammad Mahsun, Misbah Zulfa Elizabeth, "Female Candidates, Islamic Women's Organisations, and Clientelism in the 2019 Indonesian Elections," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 40, no. 1 (2021): 73–92.

transformation of social capital into political capital.

This study explores how non-party institutions, such as pesantren, contribute to the candidacy process for women pesantren-based politicians who compete in electoral politics. It is interesting to study, at least for three aspects. First, pesantren becomes a political agency supporting candidates' political activism, especially women politicians. Formerly, the political face of pesantren has been dominated by men. So, the emergence of women political candidates shows that pesantren politics are not always identical to men. Secondly, pesantren becomes the political capital for the candidates. As the political capital, it is interesting to observe how the pesantren network plays a role in winning candidates in electoral politics with a nationalist electorate landscape. The question is, what factors make this political capital works effectively in winning the women politician candidate. The third is the transformation of social capital into political capital. In the context above, there is a transformation of the function of the pesantren from being social capital to political capital under certain conditions.

To understand the above phenomenon, this article uses the theoretical framework of social capital, resource mobilization, and representative democracy. Referring to Chambers and Conway,<sup>18</sup> there are two meanings of assets, tangible and intangible assets. Tangible assets are resources owned by a person to guarantee his survival, such as natural resource, financial, and physical. In the political context, this capital can be seen from how much money a politician has or physical capital that can support him in electoral politics. Meanwhile, intangible assets are beneficial capital that are

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<sup>18</sup> Gordon R. Conway Robert Chambers, *Ustainable Rural Livelihoods: Practical Concepts for the 21st Century* (U.K., 1991), <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/775/Dp296.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

not within one's control, such as human, social, and political capital.

In this study, networks, trust, and mutual trust in human resources are social capital for someone who is in the process of conducting political socialization. This socialization is carried out to participate in and win the electoral political event. An important capital to observe is the post-reform pesantren network, which has begun to be studied and taken into account by political scholars in Indonesia.

If we analyze intensely, one of the exciting aspects of post-reformation is the emergence of pesantren, both as social and political institution. As a social institution, pesantren has substantial social capital; people trust in pesantren caregivers, a network of students and alumni to strong social ties.<sup>19</sup> As a political institution, pesantren plays a role in electoral politics.<sup>20</sup> What is seen most frequently is the political activity carried out by *kiai* as the leader of pesantren.

Pesantren is unique. There is a strong and attached relationship between *kiai* or *nyai* (female) and santri. It can be seen from the strong relationship between the two, even after santri are no longer living in pesantren. The theory about these assets will be used to see how women legislators take advantage of social capital, such as friendship networks with santri alumni organizations. Another interesting factor to investigate is the use of social capital as political capital, which benefits politicians in electoral politics.

Pesantren in Reformation Era had different situations and conditions. Especially when compared to that during New Order

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<sup>19</sup> Alejandro Portes, "Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, no. 1 (1998): 1–24. and Heidi Wittmer Birner, Regina, "Converting Social Capital into Political Capital. How Do Local Communities Gain Political Influence? A Theoretical Approach and Empirical Evidence Frin Thailand and Columbia," in *The 8th Biennal Conference of the International Association for the Study of Common Property (IASCP)*, 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Saidin Ernas, "Dampak Keterlibatan Pesantren Dalam Politik: Studi Kasus Pesantren Di Yogyakarta."

Era. During Reformation Era, political freedom was experienced by almost all groups, including pesantren. Pesantren offers at least two important roles. First, it becomes the basis for obtaining votes for political candidates involved in electoral politics at both the executive and legislative levels. Secondly, pesantren becomes human resources that allows them to fill the positions at the executive and legislative levels.<sup>21</sup>

Politically, the position of pesantren and the network surrounding it will experience a function change of interest groups, where pesantren as an entity and part of the community element has certain interests and goals. Pesantren becomes a pressure group that works collectively to encourage the community to follow the political choices of pesantren and their networks.

With the ability to influence people, actors or agents in pesantren, such as caregivers and alumni of pesantren, have become a force for electoral politics. Referring to Isaak in Effendy,<sup>22</sup> power is the ability to influence the behavior of others, control other people and ask them to make a request. In the domain of electoral politics, the community's compliance with the demands of pesantren caregivers, for example, in the general election, shows the power owned by the caregivers of pesantren. This is the basic foundation for the function of pesantren network as a political force.

As a political force, pesantren has a strong interconnected social base and strong ties. It has become a strong social capital to transform into a significant political force because the bonds between santri and pesantren are relatively well maintained and sustainable. The continuity of the relationship between santri,

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<sup>21</sup> Masdar Hilmy, "Towards a 'Wider Mandate' of Pesantren: In Search for A New Nomenclature of Political Role of Pesantren in an Era of Democracy." (n.d.).

<sup>22</sup> Bachtiar Effendy, *Teologi Baru Politik Islam: Pertautan Agama, Negara Dan Demokrasi* (Yogyakarta: Galangpress, 2001).



pesantren, and their caregivers can be seen during Eid al-Fitr momentum, a reunion of santri-alumni and the event commemorating the founder's death of pesantren. In this way, the network of pesantren, santri, and alumni of pesantren is formed into a calculated political society. This is because pesantren rests on a common identity, obedience, and trust.<sup>23</sup> These elements will facilitate the work of pesantren network in carrying out political activities.

This political context is none other than the political events of the 2019 General Election. This political event is a political opportunity for women politicians to socialize and attract support which in the end appears to be the willingness of constituents in the electoral district to elect these politicians. To investigate and analyze the utilization of the pesantren network, this study uses the framework of the opportunity structure approach in politics.

This study also utilizes a resource mobilization theory approach. This is where resource mobilization is seen as a form of collective action that has organized reasonable and measurable goals.<sup>24</sup> This theory is used to see how women political candidates deal with the disappointments of the constituents, santri and pesantren in Soloraya, which have been under-represented at the central level (DPR RI, House of Representatives), especially from women's groups. Uniquely, this disappointment is not expressed negatively but instead becomes a motivation to move legally and constitutionally through the electoral political arena where competition is openly conducted. The presence of female women from pesantren who participate in the election competition seem to give a new hope to women representatives from Pesantren in Soloraya. This disappointment is organized in a network platform

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<sup>23</sup> Effendy.

<sup>24</sup> Noorhaidi Hasan, *Islam Politik Di Dunia Kontemporer: Konsep, Genealogi, Dan Teori* (Yogyakarta: Suka-Press, 2012).

to win women politician candidates.

The candidacy of women politicians from pesantren backgrounds in electoral politics is the practice of representational democracy, in which the candidate for representatives of the people acts as a candidate for a representative agent who will later represent the constituent base in parliamentary institutions. The discussion of representation has three aspects.<sup>25</sup>

*First* is the represented community, i.e., a group of people bound together in a direct and concrete container based on voices, requests, and petitions, and in an indirect and abstract container, for example, based on the area, traditions, or good things (common good). In this study, the main group that is claimed to be represented by women politicians is the constituents who have ties to pesantren. However, the constituent with non-pesantren group backgrounds also become an important part that supports the main constituent groups. *Secondly*, the representative, the person who bridges (the mediator) and safeguards the interests of the person being represented. This representative also plays a role in fighting for the interests of the people represented at various institutional levels. In this study, the representatives in question are pesantren-based women politicians participating in the 2019 General Election. *Thirdly*, the locus is the area that is the jurisdiction of the representation practice. In this study, the selected research area is Soloraya, which is politically known as the basis of the nationalist party. It is not easy for religion-based parties to compete in Soloraya, which has been known to be the voters of nationalist parties.

This study employed a qualitative method, with document review techniques, news, and in-depth interviews. Document and

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<sup>25</sup> Adrian Gurza Lavalle Peter P. Houtzager, "The Paradox of Civil Society Representation: Constructing New Forms of Democratic Legitimacy in Brazil," in *Rethinking Popular Representation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 39–58.

news reviews were used to find information about women politicians' activities. In-depth interviews were used to confirm the findings of the document review and deepen the informants' views on the pesantren network. Soloraya, in this study, is divided into two electoral districts (dapil); the 4th Central Java electoral district (Dapil 4) covers Karanganyar, Sragen, and Wonogiri regencies. Another area is Dapil 5, covering the cities of Surakarta, Klaten, Sukoharjo and Boyolali.

The choice of Soloraya is to examine the effectiveness of the pesantren network in the political landscape, where the majority of political preferences are for nationalist parties. This claim can be understood by looking at the electoral political map of the legislature, where the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) is the winning party in all areas in Soloraya. The majority of PDI-P's constituents are in the cities of Surakarta, Boyolali, and Wonogiri. Meanwhile, PDI-P faces stiff competition from fellow nationalist parties in other regions, such as Golkar or Nasdem, and parties with an Islamic background, such as the National Awakening Party (PKB) and Prosperous Justice Party (PKS).

### **Soloraya as the Basis of PDI-P**

Geopolitically, Soloraya is an area dominated by voters from nationalist parties, especially PDI-Perjuangan. PDI-Perjuangan is the dominant party in power in the local parliamentary and executive seats. The latest evidence is the 2019 Election and the 2020 Regional Head Election in December 2020.<sup>26z</sup>

The recent case when Gibran ran for the Mayoral Election shows that it is difficult to match the pair proposed by PDI-Perjuangan. The party or community of citizens must think if they want to advance to the arena of the executive or legislative elections.

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<sup>26</sup> Abdul Alim Muhamad, "Kandang Banteng Patok Menang Di 6 Daerah Soloraya," *Gatra.Com*.

In this situation, geopolitically, Soloraya becomes a unique and challenging political area for candidates from parties other than PDI-Perjuangan. It has become a kind of challenge to accumulate voices of a disappointment for constituents outside PDI-Perjuangan. The informant of this research conveyed the issue of disappointment as a starting point for consolidating constituents outside PDI-Perjuangan. Among the constituencies that have the potential to be mobilized are santri and pesantren.<sup>27</sup> In Soloraya area, this niche and santri base are not represented in the central parliamentary chamber. The lack of consolidation and the absence of options that are considered to represent "make the basis of pesantren, especially NU, becomes a political minority."<sup>28</sup>

In other words, Soloraya has become an area that challenges pesantren-based politicians to carry out electoral political activism, makes targeted political investments, and tests the solidity of pesantren's constituent base. Not to mention, fighting the temptation of money politics ahead of the General Election, which is often a scourge for all politicians. Even though the General Election was held in 2019, the initial political steps started one or two years earlier. It is based on the stories from informants who said that the initial political endeavor was to choose electoral districts (*Dapils*). The choice of this electoral district involves various aspects and requires analysis of social, cultural, political, and social issues.

According to Eva Yuliana, the constituency in Soloraya is clearly a fanatical mass of PDI-Perjuangan. However, he considers this not an obstacle but rather a challenge. Eva is in the V constituency of Central Java which includes Boyolali, Klaten, Sukoharjo, and Surakarta regencies. In addition to dealing with the PDI-Perjuangan candidates, other candidates who used the santri

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Luluk Nur Hamidah, September 16, 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Eva Yuliana, August 23, 2021.

as their constituent bases were Mohammad Thoha from PKB and Gus Nabel Haroen from PDI-Perjuangan. The other Greater Solo *Dapil*, also a bull enclosure, is the Central Java IV Dapil which includes the Regencies of Sragen, Karanganyar, and Wonogiri. According to Luluk Nur Hamidah, the electoral district is a "red" area (an area dominated by PDI-Perjuangan with a dominant red color).<sup>29</sup>

The narrative above shows how Soloraya's claim to be a bull cage is confirmed through the secondary data in the media and acknowledged by the candidates running for Solo Raya electoral district who come from outside the PDI-Perjuangan. The information above shows that candidates who want to run in the election must be aware from the beginning. It is a challenge, especially related to the courage of women political candidates with a pesantren background to compete in an area that geopolitically is the basis of a nationalist party.

### **Finding a Political Mandate**

For a candidate of the people's representatives, selecting the electoral district (*Dapil*) is important because it becomes a kind of political party's mandate to him. When a political party decides that person A will compete in electoral district X, then he must fight in this electoral district. In other words, the electoral district becomes a battle arena for a candidate whose character must be recognized and understood. Suppose a political party asks to compete in a particular electoral district; in that case, the next step is to seek a real mandate from the constituent base or the voters, especially visiting influential figures in that electoral district.

As a candidate from pesantren milieu, the leadership blessing of pesantren is crucial and strategic to strengthen the candidate's steps in electoral political competition. Eva Yuliana admitted that

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Luluk Nur Hamidah, September 15, 2021.

Kyai's order was her momentum to dare to compete in the 2019 General Election;

When a Kiai has said that it is time for me to run as a candidate for the people's representative, then this is what makes me move forward in the political arena in the 2019 Election.<sup>30</sup>

The matter of Kyai's blessing to Eva Yuliana was acknowledged by several informants, one of whom was Agus Maarif, the head of *Jamaah Muji Rasul* (Jamuro) Surakarta.<sup>31</sup> Even though, as an institution, Jamuro is not involved in practical politics or supports specific candidates, Eva Yuliana's nomination process has the blessing and support of Kyai, who are in Jamuro's circle. Other informants also acknowledged giving this blessing; Nyai Hj. Sechah Wal'afiyah, Chairperson of *Mahabbah Rasul Putri Jamaat* (Jamuri) Surakarta. Nyai Hj. Sechah said that Jamuro Surakarta was just giving their blessing to run in the 2019 Election but did not give a mandate, let alone be bound by a political contract.

Not much different from Eva Yuliana, Luluk Nur Hamidah also paid attention to the mandate's importance. After deciding to compete in Sragen, Karanganyar, and Wonogiri electoral districts, she who is from Jombang, immediately visited Kyai in those electoral districts;

Then Mas Habib, the Chairman of RMI Sragen (K.H. Habib Masduqi Alawy) who brought me to visit Kyai, such as Abah Syarif.<sup>32</sup>

The narrative above shows how the mandate, in daily politics' language, is an important aspect of nominating candidates in the recent elections. Giving this blessing involves emotional aspects, the similarity of identity, mutual trust, and networking.

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Eva Yuliana, August 23, 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Agus Maarif, September 1, 2021.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Luluk Nur Hamidah, September 15, 2021.

After obtaining the mandate from political parties and socio-cultural blessing, the next move is to carry out socialization. This socialization emphasizes to prospective voters that the candidates are in the process of running for the 2019 General Election. The socialization step is carried out by considering the constituent base and target. According to Eva Yuliana, the socialization activity considers who will be visited;

I take a different approach in Soloraya. We adapt the constituents. If I come to the green base (Nahdlatul Ulama base), socialization is carried out when there is a religious gathering. It is different from the red base's constituency, so I will have a discussion or sit down together. However, I still introduce myself as a student.<sup>33</sup>

Referring to the socialization practice carried out by Eva Yuliana, she has previously mapped the constituent base. Eva's constituency is the constituency of Central Java V, covering Boyolali, Sukoharjo, Klaten, and Surakarta. This makes him have to be very careful and thorough in determining activities at the base. One of the informants, Mrs. Anna, a Muslimat NU Sukoharjo activist, said that Eva Yuliana's strategy in approaching the community was adjusted to the character of the community.

Visiting the constituent base is also a political activity, Luluk Nur Hamidah, after getting a mandate to compete in the electoral district of Central Java IV; Sragen, Karanganyar, and Wonogiri, she had to conduct socialization or self-introduction to the three areas. Luluk conducted socialization in the routine religious gathering arena;

I got help from Kyai and Gus whom I know. With Mas Kyai Habib, I am very friendly with him, including Abah Syarif. I need to visit it because this is a gathering place where I can exchange ideas and discuss local politics. I am also able to do

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<sup>33</sup> Interview with Eva Yuliana, August 23, 2021.

educational and political empowerment.<sup>34</sup>

In contrast to Eva Yuliana, stating explicitly that the division of the constituent base will differentiate the socialization strategy, Luluk's narration points more to a focus on religious gathering, although there are other targeted constituent segments. According to Saiful Bahri, one of the successful teams and experts, Luluk Nur Hamidah, besides being diligent in doing *blusukan* (impromptu visit) every day, they also managed meetings with the community to hear their aspirations.

Observing what Luluk did, the strategy for visiting prospective constituents was carried out optimally. Realizing that Luluk was a newcomer to the constituency of Central Java IV, she continued to visit various locations. Luluk claimed that she had visited hundreds of locations in various villages to meet with the voters in her electoral district.

The models and socialization strategies of these two women political candidates have their own uniqueness. However, they show similarities in emphasizing the urgency of political communication, in the form of *sowan* or visiting the constituents directly and interacting closely with them. This activity, which is closely related to the culture of pesantren, has become a model of activity used to strengthen the nomination steps and gain political legitimacy to facilitate the process of candidacy and competition in the 2019 General Election.

### **Women Politicians and Pesantren Network**

Pesantren community, from the family of pesantren leaders, santri who have met the requirements to vote, to pesantren alumni network, are the main targets of the candidates. The friendship and

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Luluk Nur Hamidah, September 15, 2021.



ties with pesantren and santri community, long before running as a candidate for representatives of the people, clearly made it easier for them to enter the circle of pesantren and its networks. Frequent visits to pesantren or religious teaching by Kyai or Nyai before the General Election have also eroded the suspicion that candidates come only to seek political popularity and vote support.

Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah have highlighted the identity of santri in daily political activism and electoral politics. They both claim to be part of santri, even though they belong to different political parties. Eva Yuliana ran through Nasdem Party, the nationalist party. Meanwhile, Luluk Nur Hamidah ran through the National Awakening Party (PKB), considered part of a religious party.

Several informants state that women politicians can mobilize pesantren community. Khoirul, Eva Yuliana's Expert, affirms that Mbak Eva, Eva Yuliana's nickname, drove pesantren network from the upstream to the downstream. Such a strong bond as santri and part of pesantren institution paved the way for Eva Yuliana to embrace and solidify pesantren network. Anna, an activist from NU Sukoharjo Muslimat, explains that Eva Yuliana's status as a student cannot be ruled out. A strong base in *majelis taklim* (religious teachings) such as Jamuro and Jamuri is also very useful.

Although institutionally, pesantren, *majelis taklim*, and student alumni organizations do not engage in practical politics, individual political rights cannot be limited. Eva Yuliana's figure as a *santri* (student at pesantren) and alumni of pesantren is inevitable a strong magnet to attract santri constituents and the pesantren network. Ahmad Alfi, Al-Muayyad Alumni and Al-Muayyad Middle School Teacher, said that the alumni knew Eva Yuliana's track record as a politician who helped make the name of Pesantren Al-Muayyad known in the national political arena. In addition, there is a strong bond between Pesantren Al-Muayyad in Sukoharjo and Surakarta

and Pesantren Al-Manshur Popongan Klaten, making the network of these two pesantren important in helping catalyze Eva Yuliana in the process of candidacy, socialization, and electoral political competition.

Eva Yuliana admits that as a student, she is equipped to become someone who is able to cross boundaries. Not only able to be useful for pesantren community but also for society at large;

I remember very well the message conveyed by Kyai Dian Nafi was more or less like this, "...once what will be seen is people who are useful to others, not how big the group is but we do not do anything. It is what you look like in that circle in making a policy." This is what I hold in navigating the electoral districts that are considered nationalist and red-hot electoral districts. Because once again, the role of santri is *keboirunnas anfaubum linnas* (giving benefit to people).<sup>35</sup>

Although santri is a strong identity, the type of santri who is able to move to various segments of society seems to be Eva Yuliana's keyword to move without barriers, and not only to make pesantren and santri constituents the main target. Eva also developed another support line, "bolone mbak Eva." This forum is created to accommodate support groups outside pesantren.

Similar to Eva Yuliana, Luluk Nur Hamidah also has a network of affiliated pesantren or ties to a pesantren in Jombang. However, it is acknowledged that not all of these pesantren have expressed their support for Luluk Nur Hamidah's candidacy. In addition, according to Saiful Bahri, an expert in Luluk Nur Hamidah, the socialization and political competition process in Sragen, Karanganyar, and Wonogiri areas were also assisted by the network of Gus Yusuf, the Chairman of Central Java PKB DPW through Tegalrejo pesantren network.

Pesantren network model of Luluk is slightly different from

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with Eva Yuliana, August 23, 2021.

Eva Yuliana, a student at a pesantren located in Soloraya. Luluk, affiliated with a pesantren in Jombang, East Java, has established a cross-regional network of pesantren. With the help of the pesantren network, Gus Yusuf, who incidentally is the Chairman of Central Java DPW PKB, was intensively involved in assisting Luluk Nur Hamidah's socialization process and campaign.

Her success team admits that the support for this pesantren network is more than that of the alumni network because Luluk has never studied in pesantren in Soloraya. According to Nawir, this alumni network was formed when Luluk declared herself to be a candidate for representative of the people. The formation of this alumni movement network was due to the Luluk movement, which took inventory of figures intensely for almost two years before the 2019 General Election:

This network during the campaign process for Ibu Luluk is always coordinated, and even now, the network created by Ibu Luluk still exists.<sup>36</sup>

According to Nawir, the performance of pesantren network formed by Luluk was able to accommodate alumni and immediately go into the community to voice their efforts to win Luluk. The networks in the four electoral districts have never even met and coordinated to win Luluk Nur Hamidah.

This network works according to their territorial areas, for example, in Wonogiri, so they gather in Wonogiri, not across districts. These pesantrens, especially in Wonogiri, are open to prospective visitors. But the matter of choosing a candidate is the affair of pesantren caregiver.<sup>37</sup>

The same thing was confirmed by Handoko, the administrator of Wonogiri PKB DPC, who says that most of those who worked were pesantren alumni. Especially under the command of Gus

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with Nawir, September 15, 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Nawir, September 15, 2021.

Yusuf with Tegalrejo alumni network. In the case of Luluk Nur Hamidah, the role of pesantren alumni and pesantren with ties to pesantren in Jombang seems quite strong. In the interview, Luluk herself admitted that on the eve of election day, Luluk brought one of pesantren leaders from Jombang, who was still Gus Dur's family, to convince pesantren community in Sragen, Karanganyar, and Wonogiri:

"To convince pesantren community, I brought in a pesantren leader from Jombang who is still a Gus Dur's family. Pesantren, who are already convinced, will be even more convinced that I have a relationship with Gus Dur's family. While those who were previously undecided have finally become convinced."<sup>38</sup>

Pesantren networks, ranging from pesantren caregivers to alumni networks, are social capital that can be transformed into political capital by the two political candidates, Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah. Both can read the potential and utilize it optimally from the candidacy process until the election time in the 2019 General Election.

### **Pesantren-based Political Network**

Pesantren is an institution that accommodates various parties. Apart from the founders of pesantren, whose existence is highly respected, there are also pesantren caregivers who often still have family ties to the founders of pesantren. Another element that is no less important is the presence of santri. Santri is the one actively studying at the pesantren. When graduated santri forms or joins an organization or alumni association.

Discussing pesantren network, of course, cannot be separated from network formation. The formation of this network also cannot be separated from the bonds that make up the network.

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<sup>38</sup> Interview with Luluk Nur Hamidah, September 15, 2021

Referring to Pribadi,<sup>39</sup> various ties that are formed in pesantren, which ultimately form and bind into a network. This bond is, for example, between fellow *kiai* or *nyai* caregivers of pesantren, pesantren and NU, and between NU and *kiai* or *nyai*. This bond becomes a substantial capital in forming pesantren network.

This network has not yet considered the bond between santri, alumni, and pesantren. The older the boarding school is, the stronger the bond can be. For example, the haul event that commemorates the death of the pesantren's caregiver is often a meeting momentum between santri or alumni and pesantren. This event is also a meeting place for pesantren with outside parties. Not to mention, for example, events related to the birthday of pesantren. It shows that pesantren has become a solid magnet to become a meeting room for various parties. Referring to Hasanuddin,<sup>40</sup> social networks such as pesantren or pesantren alumni organizations have the opportunity to become political capital when members of these network organizations become members of political organizations such as political parties.

In this context, this paper shows that Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah, who had been in pesantren, have strong bonds with the actors in pesantren. According to Giddens,<sup>41</sup> social networks and individuals can thrive with support from common social backgrounds to shared identities. Based on the data and information from the informants, the political activities carried out by Eva and Luluk cannot be separated from the symbols and identities of santri. Eva and Luluk's activities cannot be separated from the attributes of santri and alumni. Their involvement in

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39 Yanwar Pribadi, *Islam, State and Society in Indonesia: Local Politics in Madura* (London: Routledge, 2018).

40 Sansan Hasanudin, "Mekanisme Religio-Politik Pesantren: Mobilisasi Jaringan Hamida Dalam Politik Elektoral Tasikmalaya," *MASYARAKAT: Jurnal Sosiologi* 22, no. 1 (2017): 53–80.

41 Anthoni Giddens & Simon Griffiths, *Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006).

practical political organizations is ultimately closely related to their attributes or identity as santri and has strong ties to the pesantren.

Even though pesantren does not have practical politics, the individual leaders of pesantren still have political rights that can still be used as long as they do not violate the rules. Eva Yuliana's pesantren network with a background of Al Muayyad Islamic boarding school helped her to be able to enter santri community that connects to the Al Muayyad Islamic boarding school network. Similarly, Luluk Nur Hamidah, although not from a pesantren in Solo Raya, Luluk is supported by a network of elite pesantren led by the National Awakening Party at the district and provincial levels, which also has bases in several pockets of santri voters in Solo. The ability to synergize and mobilize this network is politically beneficial and valuable in making pesantren network a political base.

### **Building Trust and Political Channels**

The pesantren network and political blessing from pesantren leaders are important aspects of candidacy for pesantren-based politicians. In the case of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah, both have important individual performances to complement existing social capital. For example, the aspect of friendship with the broader community and a sense of trust in the public are factors that cannot be ignored.

According to Eva, when carrying out political campaign activities, she never claimed to be a good and honest person and deserved to be elected. Eva chooses to do good and positive actions so that in the end, people judge her as a good person:

In the campaign, I never said I was good. As long as my pesantren is good, it will make my image and my pesantren good. But the people's actions will judge me and my pesantren

in the future.<sup>42</sup>

The narration above describes the figure of Eva Yuliana, who, in the view of religious leaders at the local level, is known as a trusted person. This trust is very important because it is the key to choose a candidate, especially in the midst of the image of the people's representatives who are considered unable to represent well. Moreover, it brings local votes to the constituency. Eva's appearance seems to be a figure who is considered to represent the constituents of pesantren in the Soloraya area, which is considered PDIP's basis.

The aspects of trust and integrity are among the factors that paved the way for Eva Yuliana to become a channel for representational political aspirations. In terms of channeling aspirations, a research informant (Ana) added that the figure of Eva, a woman, is also an important factor that facilitates the organization of constituents from women's groups. Representing the female constituency is an important narrative in building and strengthening trust as well as fostering integrity in pesantren's constituents, which is one of the main targets of Eva Yuliana and her winning team.

Luluk Nur Hamidah's efforts to build trust are clearly more difficult because Soloraya is not her hometown. According to Saiful Bahri, Luluk Nur Hamidah's expert, Luluk travelled to the area to meet with voters. This needs to be done so that there is closeness and a feeling of representation in politics;

“Mrs. Luluk is willing to jump in for a full day, sometimes even going to the electoral district 4 times to accompany farmers, plant rice, accompany women in the *majelis* to socialize. It is that closeness that makes people unite to benefit the surrounding area. The thing to remember is that you do not have money in politics, and there is no political contract. And that is what convinced pesantren and the community to vote

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<sup>42</sup> Interview with Eva Yuliana, August 23, 2021.

for her.”<sup>43</sup>

Building political affinity with constituents is also a concern for Handoko, the administrator of Wonogiri PKB DPC. He stated that Luluk Nur Hamidah is a person who can communicate with people from various backgrounds. Therefore, there is a feeling of closeness between the voters and the candidate for the representatives of the people.

Luluk's efforts to build trust in his constituents are important in her efforts to gain constituent sympathy. In addition to relying on the pesantren network, Luluk individually displays the performance of politicians willing to come to locals, listen to complaints, and become a channel for their aspirations. She said she built a perception as a women representative of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) in the national political arena and did not hesitate to go down to the people's base wherever she was. This *blusukan* strategy is important because Luluk is not a candidate from the constituency. “I am ready to become a political conduit.”<sup>44</sup>

The narration of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah provides an overview of women politicians based in pesantren who are able to penetrate socio-cultural barriers. So that it has a performance that is not only known in pesantren but is also able to communicate and interact with a broader constituency, especially outside the pesantren community.

### **The Transformation of Social Capital into Political Capital**

The process of candidacy, competition, and nomination activities until the election of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah as people's representatives in Soloraya shows the practice of utilizing social capital into political capital. With social capital in the

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43 Interview with Saiful Bahri, August 11, 2021

44 Interview with Luluk Nur Hamidah, September 15, 2021.



form of a pesantren network, a solid santri network, trust, and constituent militancy, they are able to dominate non-pesantren political areas. Areas that have not been easily penetrated by politicians who rely on the pesantren network, especially by women politicians. Moreover, the two political parties are not from PDI-Perjuangan, which has been the political affiliation of the majority of the constituents in Soloraya.

The phenomenon of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah is interesting to explore because they are able to manage the disappointment of their constituents, especially the female students' constituencies from Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) background, who so far feel that their voices have not been represented. In the last few elections, there has been a representation of NU, such as Mohammad Thoha from the National Awakening Party in Dapil 5. But there is no representation from female santri constituents yet.<sup>45</sup>

The absence of female santri representation has become a political disappointment for the pesantren constituents, especially those affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama. This political disappointment became ammunition that the two women political candidates processed as a way to arouse and organize constituents. This also shows how women political candidates are able to observe the problems of their constituents who have been marginalized so far, mobilize disappointments in a structured manner, and have clear goals—making women political candidates with pesantren background as representatives at the central level.

Turning disappointment into a source of strength becomes an important point as a support for social capital, which has been presented in women political candidate. The activist bases in these two case studies have become a way of facilitating network organizing activities and building constituent solidity and militancy.

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Ajie Najmuddin, September 22, 2021.

With the pesantren network, both in the form of a network of pesantren caregivers, alumni networks, and networks of community organizations such as Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama and Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama, the two candidates show how important the selection and sorting of constituents is. In other words, Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah were able to evoke the voices of the political minorities drowning in the PDI-P basis.

In addition to building voter militancy at the level of santri constituency, these two women politicians have also expanded their voter base. Eva Yuliana, for example, entered non-pesantren voter base by creating "Bolone Mbak Eva" network (a network of Mbak Eva's friends) targeting non-pesantren. Meanwhile, Luluk also established closeness with voters through his family ancestry in Karanganyar.

This expansion of the voters is important because many santri or pesantren constituents are also targeting it from internal Nahdlatul Ulama and outside NU. This can be done quite well because Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah are typical of inclusive students who can mingle and communicate well in various segments of society.

This study proves that the solidity of the constituency base of santri and pesantren as well as the expansion of the voter base, coupled with the support of religious elites and the performance of women political candidates based on pesantren, are the keys to the success of transforming social capital into political capital to win electoral politics in areas that are not the basis of pesantren.

From the side of the network model developed by Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah, both seem to have chosen to consolidate the network between parties. This means that Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah carry out a network combination strategy within pesantren, strengthen the organizational structure of political parties in the electoral district, and support the

combination of these networks with the social capital inherent in the individuals of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah.

The strong relationship between the pesantren leaders, santri, and alumni smooths the way for them to navigate electoral political competition. Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah are typical of pesantren alumni who are able to maintain relationships and cultivate them into forces that support political activism in the local sphere. This further proves what Hilmy believes about pesantren as a political locus for voice granaries and a locus that provides resources to fill political spaces at various levels.<sup>46</sup>

This study clearly shows how women political candidates with pesantren backgrounds can optimize the social and political assets attached to pesantren. Suppose non-pesantren actors usually take advantage of the votes from pesantren through visits or political safaris ahead of electoral political events. In that case, Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah are descriptions of santri or pesantren alumni who can manage the votes of pesantren to choose candidates who have ties to pesantren. Both Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah were able to map social and political assets in the pesantren so that they were able to support their performance in the 2019 Election.

This study also shows a portrait of the strength of pesantren in the area of the nationalist constituency in the local sphere, especially for women candidates. The political activism of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah emphasizes that pesantren has legitimacy and a strong social base, even though they are in a political space dominated by nationalist constituent groups. Interestingly, this is done by political forces who have a pesantren background. In other words, this study proves that the political power of pesantren is not only tested in the santri community base

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<sup>46</sup> Hilmy, "Towards a 'Wider Mandate' of Pesantren: In Search for A New Nomenclature of Political Role of Pesantren in an Era of Democracy.," n.d.

but is also able to show its existence in a political area dominated by nationalist groups.

The case studies of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah, when referring to Isaak in Effendy,<sup>47</sup> show that the pesantren network works well supported by the strong power and influence of the pesantren caregivers. Although formally pesantren is not involved in a practical politics, the political tendencies shown in the 2019 General Election can be read by the political constituents of santri, and there is political compliance in it. This is an important aspect of the operation of the pesantren network as a political force.

If you look at the existing data, as mentioned by Bachtiar Effendy,<sup>48</sup> there are three important aspects that become the driving factor: the similarity of identity, obedience, and trust. There is a similarity of identity that emerges when learning from the cases of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah, the identity of santri and the identity of pesantren attached to both. The election of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah shows that aspects of obedience and trust can be found and proven by their election. One of the informants says that dawuh Kyai (Kyai's order) to choose one candidate is an important consideration and makes it easier for successful teams at the grassroots to "sell" candidates, Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah, supported by the performance of both that can be trusted or have a trustworthy aspect. Hence, the aspects of obedience and trust are strong factors attached to Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah.

### **Mobilizing Resources and Managing the Political Disappointment**

What cannot be ignored is the ability of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah to mobilize and manage the

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47 Effendy, *Teologi Baru Politik Islam : Pertautan Agama, Negara Dan Demokrasi*.

48 Effendy.

political disappointment of santri constituents in Soloraya. The absence of people's representatives at DPR RI level from women with a pesantren background is powerful ammunition to raise the fighting spirit, especially for women voters with a pesantren background. Several informants admit that inviting women's groups based on santri or pesantren is very easy because the candidates also come from elements of women with Islamic boarding schools background. This informant also says that fighting for and choosing women are easier.

From the reformation era until the 2019 general election, the greater Solo area has never been elected by a women pesantren-based politician at the national level. According to several informants, this has led to disappointment among pesantren, especially NU. Although this disappointment do not lead to violence, every time there is an election, more men are elected among santri.

As far as concerned, the electoral district where Luluk Nur Hamidah is contesting is Central Java IV constituency; there has never been a PKB representative who has passed. It is both a challenge and an advantage for Luluk. It is called a challenge because Luluk must be able to organize from the start and solidify his ranks. The advantage is that Luluk does not have to fight with PKB's internal politicians because the electoral district is still empty of PKB politicians' representation or is based on pesantren and santri. An interview with one of the informants also confirms that there is no representation of female santri engaged in politics from Soloraya constituency.

One way to manage the constituency base of santri and pesantren is to organize and strengthen the regional base. For example, Eva Yuliana was actively involved in the recitation forums and women-based organizations. Many women usually attend majlis recitation. In this way, Eva tried to strengthen herself in the

santri electorate and the pesantren community, especially those involving female voters.

Luluk Nur Hamidah did the same thing. Even though she does not have a pesantren base in Solo Raya like Eva Yuliana, Luluk's activities in national organizations with downward structural relationships were used by Luluk to gather support. For example, through organizational networks within NU to the pesantren network, the head of PKB region, Gus Yusuf, have influenced the alumni of Tegalejo, Magelang, Central Java students.

Being examined, the transformation of political disappointment into political energy is not only felt by santri constituent base and pesantren circles. Eva and Luluk are politicians with a sense of political disappointment because they felt defeat and failure in 2014 General Election. For the record, in 2014 Election, Luluk stepped forward to become a legislative candidate from the electoral district in East Java. However, Luluk lacked votes and failed to be elected as a legislature from the electoral district in East Java. Eva Yuliana experienced the same thing. In 2014 election, Eva lost to the electoral district V Central Java (Solo, Sukoharjo, Boyolali, and Klaten). At that time, she joined the National Democratic Party (Nasdem).

The meeting of these two political disappointments seems to be substantial enough to encourage Eva and Luluk's political activities. On the other hand, santri and pesantren constituents are disappointed because there has been no political representation from female santri at the national level so far. On the other hand, the defeat and political disappointment of Eva and Luluk, who failed in 2014 election, made them both learn more and forge themselves so that they have a better and more targeted political strategy so that they succeeded in leading them to be elected in 2019 election.

Interestingly, despite experiencing political disappointment, both santri and pesantren constituents and women pesantren-based politicians practice themselves as a 'silent community'. There is no turmoil or conflict related to defeating, as is sometimes found when there are supporters of certain politicians who, when they lose, carry out destructive activities. However, the pesantren community and women pesantren-based politicians choose the peaceful path and the silent strategy to engage in political activities again in the coming years.

Eva and Luluk's victory in 2019 election and their election as members of the national legislature prove how appropriate and valuable the political strategies and activities they are doing. The ability to mobilize the pesantren network to strengthen the community base of santri and pesantren who have experienced political disappointment has resulted in a political victory which at the same time has become a new milestone, the presence of women representatives of pesantren-based politicians at the national level.

If we refer to the resource of mobilization theory, Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah can organize marginalized voices who have been voting. Actually, they become floating masses who tend to be silent. So far, female constituencies with pesantren backgrounds have a choice of candidates. However, they are waiting for a candidate to be representatives of the people close to the identity similar with the female constituents—women from pesantren from among santri.

This study of the political activism of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah shows that the women candidates with a pesantren background show that there is a solid representation among pesantren. Eva and Luluk both point out that the constituency base of pesantren in constituencies based on nationalist groups requires representatives in the central parliamentary institutions. Eva and Luluk show how important it is to have a representative of the

santri constituents in the non-student constituency. This is to ensure that the interests, needs, and problems faced by the pesantren constituents have a special channel to be heard and fought nationally.

The description of the relationship between the representative agent and the group represented can be seen from the explanation stated by Houtzager and Lavallo.<sup>49</sup> First, the community represented in this study is the santri group and pesantren as the main group. These main groups became the main base of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah. The groups are bound in a common struggle to encourage representatives or representation agents among female santri. However, constituents with non-pesantren group backgrounds also important in supporting the main constituent groups.

Theoretically, the pesantren network and social capital attached to pesantren-based political actors have potential and strength when managed and consolidated correctly and carried out appropriately. Moreover, women voters groups have extreme loyalty and militancy. In the case of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah, the loyalty and militancy of women voters are very important in sustaining their electoral political activism in Soloraya constituency.

The phenomenon of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah, who combine formal and informal political power and manage existing resources, ultimately become the key that is able to lead them both to be elected and to represent political constituencies in Soloraya, especially from the female student voter base.

## Conclusion

This study discusses the transformation of social capital into

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<sup>49</sup> Peter P. Houtzager, "The Paradox of Civil Society Representation: Constructing New Forms of Democratic Legitimacy in Brazil." (n.d.).



political capital by proposing a case study of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah. Both are women politicians with pesantren background who participate in the electoral political competition in Soloraya. Both are candidates for people's representatives running in 2019 General Election from Soloraya electoral district. Eva ran in the fifth electoral district of Central Java (Klaten, Sukoharjo, Boyolali, and Surakarta) with the Nasdem party. Meanwhile Luluk Nur Hamidah is from the fourth electoral district of Central Java (Karanganyar, Sragen, and Wonogiri).

Their ability to optimize social capital and manage the political disappointments of the santri constituents has made them both elected to represent their respective electoral districts. Interestingly, even though both are pesantren-based, they won political competitions in a PDI-P base or non-pesantren political base areas. They are both able to build solidity and trust in the pesantren network, so they are solid in choosing Eva and Luluk as their representatives in the central parliament. This study proves that a solid minority, as shown by the santri constituency in Soloraya and the expansion of voters, can lead a candidate to become a member of parliament at the central level.

The important contribution of this study is to illustrate how women politicians' circulation of representative power is carried out based on pesantren. Eva and Luluk are portraits of two politicians elected for the first time, although this is not the first time they have competed in electoral politics. The choice of the two becomes an important marker of the shift in political representation at the national level. Previously, the voters chose men or women politicians who are not based on pesantren, then in the case of Eva and Luluk, this circulation of power is happening.

In the case of Eva Yuliana and Luluk Nur Hamidah, there are signals about pesantren as an instrument of political consolidation of the lower classes. It is undeniable that Luluk and Eva both work

by making pesantren as the factor to bind voters to vote for them in 2019 Election.

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## Interview

- Interview with Eva Yuliana, parliament member of Nasdem, via zoom, 23 August, 2021
- Interview with Luluk Nur Hamidah, parliament member of PKB, via zoom, 15 September, 2021
- Interview with Nawir, member of PKB Wonogiri, 8 August, 2021
- Interview with Handoko, member of PKB Sragen, 10 August, 2021
- Interview with Saiful Bahri, an expert staff of parliament member, 11 August, 2021
- Interview with Anna, Muslimat NU Sukoharjo and team of Eva Yuliana, 14 August, 2021
- Interview with Sunarno, volunteer of Mbak Luluk, 16 August, 2021
- Interview with Khoirul, local expert staff of Eva Yuliana, 24 August, 2021
- Interview with Ahmad Alfi, an alumae of Pesantren Al-Muayyad (AKAMAL) and teacher of Junior High School of Al-Muayyad, 26 August, 2021
- Interview with Agus Maarif, leader of Jamuro Surakarta, 1 September, 2021

Interview with Nyai Hj Sekhah Wal'afiyah/leader of Jamuri Surakarta, 2  
September, 2021

Interview with Aje Najmuddin/Gusdurian Soloraya and NU  
Online, 22 September, 2021.