

# Balinese Female Politicians Formed by Social Formations in Interplay Process: The Structure of the Social System and Culture

Ni Putu Yunita Anggreswari, Henri Subiakto, Irfan Wahyudi

Airlangga University

Email: ni.putu.yunita-2021@fisip.unair.ac

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## Abstract

This research aims to analyze the social formations formed by Balinese female politicians in the process of interplay between themselves as actors and the social and cultural structures and systems of Balinese society. This research is expected to increase understanding of personal branding activities carried out by political actors concerning systems and structures which then form structuration. This research uses a qualitative approach. This research finds that Balinese female politicians can participate as actors in shaping social formations. Female politicians do not always raise women's issues as a strategy for marketing political advice but can provide solutions to various social problems faced by society. Balinese female politicians as political actors deliberately establish a reciprocal relationship (dialectic of control) with the system and structure of Balinese society, thus creating structuration.

**Keywords:** Balinese culture, community culture, patriarchal culture, social formation, female politician, social system.

Indonesia has experienced political turmoil in favour of women, where women are in political power in several regions. During the reign of Majapahit in East Java, the government was led by women, namely Sultanah Triuana Tungga Dewi (1328-1350 AD), and Sultanah Suhita (1429-1445 AD). In Central Java, there are also recorded periods of female leadership, namely Sultanah Sima and Sultanah Kalinyama reigning in the seventh and sixteenth centuries. Apart from the island of Java, women have also led in South Sulawesi, namely Siti Aisyah We Tenriolle who led in the mid-19th century. Meanwhile, Aceh has a history of women in a strong position where Lasmana Keumala Hayati commanded one of the hundred warships owned by Aceh in 1599. In the 19th year, Cut Nyak Dien exerted energy and strength in politics which was later followed by Pocut Daren. As if forgetting history, the role of women was then portrayed as

subservient to men, namely since the New Order era. Women's roles as wives and mothers are clearly defined so that there is marginality towards women. The New Order period promoted very limited women's participation through school curricula, health care clinics, development institutions, and mass media. Policies regarding the promotion of the nuclear family and the role of the mother, often called abusive, define five main duties of women consisting of (1) as a wife; (2) as a mother; (3) as procreator; (4) as financial manager (household); (5) as a member of society (Van Wichelen, 2010).

The representation of ideal women created during the New Order era then led to the domestication of women, where regional policies focused on providing tools and cooking training. Regional policies do not address reproductive issues and domestic violence.

Women also do not receive support to take part in public activities. The research was conducted by WRI ( Womens Research Indonesia ) with the title "The Impact of Regional Autonomy on Woman Political Participation in Decision Making at the Local Level" in 2005. This research found that there were regional policies that did not favour women. The findings from this research are the denial of women's role in the public sphere, low budget allocation for women's programs, neglect of health and reproductive rights, and high taxes on women's trafficking without any protection for women.

### Method

This research uses a qualitative approach. Atmaja et al., (2020) said that qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantitative ones in data collection and analysis. Elmhirst (1999) argues that qualitative research is a general term for a series of directional attitudes and strategies for conducting investigations aimed at discovering how humans understand, experience, interpret and produce the social world. Qualitative research involves a form of participant observation to engage in certain social activities to observe and take a participant role. In qualitative research, interviews were also carried out and documentary evidence was taken from various documents. Qualitative research also looks at previous research to see a picture of the life of the research object and analyzes the form of language used in explaining certain phenomena.

### Discussion and Results

#### Patriarchal Culture in Bali

Patriarchal culture often shackles women which then limits women's space to advance in their careers. Patriarchal culture causes limited space for women to move around so that everything women do must receive support from their husbands, in-laws and family. In the family, women's position seems to be only as housekeepers, and implementers of customs and religious ceremonies. The patriarchal culture,

which until now is deeply rooted in cultural life, has certainly become an obstacle for women who want to pursue a career in the public sphere. The strong patriarchal culture in society means that Balinese women have to bear many burdens (Jones, 2010). Picard (1997) also argues that the patriarchal structure that dominates in most societies contributes to the minimal involvement of women in the decision-making process. In general, countries that still adhere to a patriarchal system provide limited opportunities for women's involvement in the policy formation process.

Patriarchy is also clearly visible in Balinese customary law, where there are the concepts of *purusa* and *predana*. *Purusa* from a Hindu religious perspective means soul power or spiritual power that gives the breath of life to nature and everything in it, which is identified with men. Meanwhile, *Predana* has the meaning of material physical strength or physical strength which manifests the power of *purusa*, which is identified with women. Thus, it can be interpreted that to realize two forces in the household balance between men and women (husband and wife) in their positions as *purusa* and *predana*, the division of roles has a very important function in an effort to create physical and spiritual happiness in marriage ( Moksartam Jagaditha ya ca iti Dharma ). Putra & Creese (2016) said that gender bias occurs due to the belief in society that women's work in the domestic sphere is considered inferior to men's work. What causes gender imbalance is the result of gender which is socially and culturally constructed in Indonesia concerning the law of patriarchal hegemony. The existence of gender inequality in the education sector that occurs in Bali is caused by Balinese patriarchal culture which considers boys to be the successors of the family lineage, thereby positioning that men have the right to receive higher education than women.

The patriarchal system which is also regulated in Balinese customary law is related to the inheritance distribution system, where

inheritance will fall to the man as regulated in inheritance law (Raya et al., 2023; Sunardi, 2009). In inheritance, *purusa* are those who continue, pass on, and carry out their *swadarma* as successors to their descendants. Meanwhile, *predana* is a descendant who after marriage cannot continue, continue and carry out *swadarma* as the successor of the offspring and *swadarma* is then carried out in the house of their partner who is in the position of *purusa* (Salehi et al., 2020).

In a patriarchal culture, men dominate women and form a collective agreement in society that women are not competent enough in decision-making. Balinese women are conscious that their position as women is under the auspices of men but often consciously give consent to this. Balinese women also internalize patriarchal cultural values so that most Balinese women consciously accept their position as second-class citizens in their own families (Saskara & Marhaeni, 2017; Sugita et al., 2021).

#### Social Media Activities of Balinese Female Politicians

Building an image for a public figure is the first step in getting closer to the wider community, especially if the figure is involved in the political field which requires the voice and support of the community. Building a positive image has been done a lot, not only for figures in the entertainment industry but also for politicians who are not left behind by current developing trends. One of the politicians who often greets the wider community through his social media posts is Dra. Utami Dwi Suryadi, is a female politician from the Democratic faction. Dwi Utami actively uses social media Instagram to share his activities during his career as a politician. Through her social media Instagram @utami7, Dwi Utami has 736 followers, which can be seen in Figure 1. The incumbent politician in the 2019-2024 election year for the Denpasar electoral district is a female politician with good experience in the Bali DPRD. Dwi Utami has succeeded in entering the people's house of the

Bali DPRD for three periods, namely 2009-2014, 2014-2019, and 2019-2024. Even now, Dwi Utami is being asked to prepare a strategy for the 2024 election while completing his duties for the remainder of his term of office. Since being elected in 2019, Dwi Utami has stated that he will focus his struggle on children and women. Dwi Utami began actively uploading activities as a political party cadre via her Instagram on February 7, 2017. Not only political activities or her duties as a politician representing the people, Dwi Utami often uploads togetherness with her family.



Figure 1. Screenshot of Utami Dwi Suryadi Instagram Profile

Carrying out his duties as a people's representative, it is not uncommon for Dwi Utami to make visits to the wider community, as was the case in the post on July 31 2018 which showed Dwi Utami's concern for the elderly foundation. Apart from that, Dwi Utami also showed his concern for the existence of the elderly through Instagram posts on 14 and 29 May 2022. Apart from visiting elderly foundations, Dwi Utami is also active in social activities such as those carried out with the Indonesian Red Cross. This is shown in Figure 4 which shows a collection of his activities on AIDS Day, PMI activities related to blood type recognition, and plasma donation activities held by PMI.

#### Mass Media Reporting on Balinese Female Politicians

Running for the third time in the 2019 election was not an easy thing for Dra. Utami Dwi Suryadi. As an incumbent candidate, you do not guarantee that you have the public's trust in choosing him. Various efforts and strategies to

maintain the trust of voters have certainly been carried out. The efforts made produced good results and succeeded in bringing Dwi Utami back to the people's house of the Bali DPRD for the 2019-2024 period.

### Perjuangan Utami Dwi Suryadi Lolos ke DPRD Bali



Utami Dwi Suryadi  
 Hasil dari survei – Tahun ini pemilihan mendatang, akhirnya, Utami Dwi Suryadi menang dari Partai Demokrat akhirnya berhasil lolos dalam Pilg 2019 dan kembali memegang ke kursi wakil di DPRD Provinsi Bali. (Rian)

Figure 2. Utami Dwi Suryadi Efforts 2019 Legislative Election

As politician Dra. Utami Dwi Suryadi, carrying out his duties, was also present at the launch of the Trans Metro Dewata Program. This attention not only represents the leadership of the Bali DPRD, but also shows its seriousness in supporting the government in providing adequate transportation for the community.

### Utami Dwi Suryadi Hadiri Launching Program Trans Metro Dewata



Wakil Ketua Komisi DPRD Bali Dwi Suryadi dan Sekretaris Komisi DPRD Bali menghadiri launching program Trans Metro Dewata yang digelar di kawasan Pura Watugeduk, Denpasar. (Berita 19/10/2023)

Figure 3. The presence of Dra. Utami Dwi Suryadi at the Launching of the Trans Metro Dewata Program

Carrying out his duties as the people's representative Dra. Utami Dwi Suryadi shows his concern for society during the COVID-19 pandemic. This concern was shown by distributing basic food packages and masks to online motorcycle taxi operators, cleaning staff and small traders. This seriousness shows that Dwi Utami supports and positions itself together with the wider community when economic difficulties hit.

### Political Activities of Balinese Female Politicians



Figure 4. Listen to Sekehe Arja Astiti Bakti

As an effort to absorb the aspirations of the community, Utami Dwi Suryadi held a meeting with Sekaa Arja Astiti Bakti on Saturday, December 9 2023. At the meeting with the arja dancer organization, Utami Dwi Suryadi heard about several obstacles in preserving the art of arja itself. As one of the Balinese dance arts which is often used as entertainment for the public and tourists, the art of arja seems to receive little attention from the government. The head of the Sekaa Arja Astiti Bakti arts group, Ni Wayan Sri Astiti, said that these activities and associations were held not only to seek material gain but with a foundation and sense of cultural preservation for the younger generation in Bali. This is demonstrated by the art group which involves the younger generation in art groups, providing opportunities for the younger generation which is believed to have a positive

influence on increasing empathy and a sense of ownership towards Balinese art and culture. The principles implemented by Sekaa Arja Astiti Bakti are something that Utami Dwi Suryadi fully appreciates. Utami Dwi Suryadi stated that the steps taken by Sekaa Arja Astiti Bakti are something that must be spread throughout Balinese society, especially among artists. Behind the initial intention of preserving Balinese art and culture, to introduce the art of Arja dance, it turns out that there are conditions that have become pebbles in the journey of preserving this art. Through discussions, Utami Dwi Suryadi learned that all this time Sekaa Arja Astiti Bakti had been running *ngayah* performances with personal funds. Personal funds spent by artists include transportation costs when carrying out activities over long distances, procuring clothes, and other things. Limitations are not only in terms of clothing and performance props, but Sekaa Arja Sri Astiti Bakti stated that there are limitations in the gamelan equipment used to accompany arja performances.

The conditions conveyed regarding the arja artists received great sympathy from Utami Dwi Suryadi, where Utami Dwi stated that art practitioners and conservationists have a big responsibility so they need to be supported as best as possible. Through the *simakrama* held, Utami Dwi Suryadi said that artists have the right to receive assistance equally for the efforts made. Through the Bali Province APBD which is allocated for the preservation of arts and culture amounting to Rp. 1 trillion. Through the available APBD, Utami Dwi Suryadi will try to bridge art conservationists with people's representatives in the field of culture. Not only that, Utami Dwi Suryadi concretely provided solutions for preparing proposals for the procurement of equipment that could support the operations of Sekaa Arja Sri Astiti Bakti. In preparing the proposal, Utami Dwi Suryadi will seek assistance together with accompanying staff to supervise the Sekaa Arja Sri Astiti Bakti art group in preparing the proposal to produce a good proposal. Apart from that, Utami Dwi

Suryadi also provided directions regarding the documents that must be prepared for preparing the proposal. In the *Simakrama* activity, Utami Dwi Suryadi also highlighted artists in the commercial sector who perform in collaboration with a company such as a hotel, restaurant and others. Ironically, Utami Dwi Suryadi discussed that in the field, not all artists receive good treatment and facilities when preparing for performances and in terms of wages they receive. Through his experience, Utami Dwi Suryadi said that when Utami Dwi Suryadi served in Commission IV, he often communicated with the company to provide good treatment for all workers, including artists who would be performing.

The discussion procession and listening to the community's aspirations went well, the activity continued with the delivery of information that Utami Dwi Suryadi, who currently serves as a member of the Bali Provincial DPRD, again had the opportunity to nominate himself as a legislative candidate in the Bali Provincial DPRD Election from the Democratic Party with serial number 1. In conveying this information, Utami Dwi Suryadi asked for support from the public for the election process during the upcoming general election. In the introduction process, Utami Dwi Suryadi said that the public must understand and know very well that the chosen candidate is indeed a figure representing the people who can bridge the aspirations of the people in government. Utami Dwi Suryadi said that the three periods in the DPRD were used as best as possible to provide good service to the community, and will continue to strive for good service to the community for the fourth nomination for the February 2024 election. For this reason, Utami Dwi Suryadi asked for the best possible support from the community, especially for art conservation practitioners with the tagline "5 minutes, for 5 years". This *simakrama* activity closed with the handover of cash assistance to the Sekaa Arja Astiti Bakti arts group to support operations and training sessions, apart from that

the activity closed with a group photo procession.

Utami Dwi Suryadi's meeting with the Al-Ikhlâs Study Association

As a member of the Bali Province DPRD which currently occupies Commission II which oversees the economic and financial sectors, Utami Dwi Suryadi is present among the people who are members of the religious study association. Utami Dwi Suryadi's presence received a warm welcome from the residents for an in-depth discussion about the current condition of society. This study group is located on Jalan Cokroaminoto Gg. The entire stork is a nomadic community that comes from outside the province of Bali. This meeting was held to listen directly to the aspirations of the community, especially overseas communities. Utami Dwi Suryadi asked whether the residents of the Al-Ikhlâs Study Association knew and received direct contact from the people's representatives. In the discussion, it was stated that the community had not received direct assistance from council members, even during the COVID-19 situation, assistance had not been touched. During the meeting, Utami Dwi Suryadi also said that it is very important for the public to recognize DPRD members as representatives of the people, making it easier for the public to convey their various aspirations. Utami Dwi Suryadi said that when people elect unknown people representatives, it will be difficult to solve the social problems they have in the future. At this *simakrama*, the community conveyed their aspirations and complaints directly, aspirations and complaints both in terms of the environment, welfare, education and health.

The meeting was held in Gang Bangau, which is a rented location used to carry out recitations. The rental is rented monthly, which is often flooded during the rainy season. These aspirations and complaints quickly received a response from Utami Dwi Suryadi and the activity staff, Utami Dwi Suryadi, questioned the assistance that could be provided to resolve these problems. Through this discussion, Utami Dwi

Suryadi and the activity support staff stated that they would immediately communicate with the authorities regarding this problem. The next complaint expressed was about education, where children had difficulty getting an education in state schools even though they already had family cards and Bali Province identity cards. The next aspiration expressed by the community is health issues. Primarily regarding the independent BPJS which is initially paid once for free by the people's representatives, and then becomes an arrears that must be paid by the community. Utami Dwi Suryadi responded by calmly explaining to the public the conditions. Through the explanation given by Utami Dwi Suryadi, he said that BPJS membership could not just be handled directly, but rather through a well-arranged and systemized protocol. Utami Dwi Suryadi explained that for every independent BPJS that has become arrears, it must be paid to be used again, for this reason, a solution is provided for the community to take care of the BPJS KIS to the sub-district. The transfer of BPJS was carried out by eliminating arrears following the KTP owned by the community. Utami Dwi Suryadi explained and provided concrete and clear solutions regarding the community's complaints.

This meeting also absorbed the aspirations of the community regarding the prices of basic commodities which often increase and this condition is felt to be difficult for residents. Regarding the complaints submitted by the public, Utami Dwi Suryadi explained in detail how economic law practices relate to supply and demand conditions which influence market prices. Utami Dwi Suryadi conveyed the solutions that the community had prepared regarding the existence of market cooperatives because the community could take advantage of this when prices rose. Utami Dwi Suryadi also invited the public to be more aware of information that could help society in the economic sector. Apart from that, conveying the aspirations of the community received appreciation from Utami Dwi Suryadi, who

stated that this appreciation was a motivation for the government to continue holding market cooperatives in the future.

Meetings with study groups then ended with an introductory session and conveying information that Utami Dwi Suryadi again had the opportunity to nominate himself as a people's representative in the Bali Province DPRD seat. During the delivery of this information, Utami Dwi Suryadi stated that he would provide real work with responsibility as a commitment to the people's representatives. Utami Dwi Suryadi also ensured that if he received support and succeeded in returning to the seat of people's representative, Utami Dwi Suryadi would help the community to pay 50% of the monthly costs for the full five years for the rental costs for the prayer room which is a place of shared worship. This is based on aspirations expressed by the community regarding the location of the prayer room which is a place of worship with residents. This location is a place that is rented monthly with the proceeds collected from the community through cooperation. This condition is a bit of a burden for the community, who hope for more funds so that they can be rented for a long period so that people can worship in peace. Apart from that, Utami Dwi Suryadi also provided recitation uniforms for members of the Al-Ikhlas recitation association for their willingness to provide support for him in the upcoming Legislative Election. At the end of the meeting session, Utami Dwi Suryadi provided cash assistance that the community could use to pay rent for the land used as the prayer room location. This activity ended with the confirmation of the information that Utami Dwi Suryadi as Bali Province DPRD had once again had the opportunity to contest politically in the level I legislative election in

Bali Province, who came from the Democratic Party with serial number 1. Not to forget, the activity closed with a joint prayer for Utami Dwi Suryadi's nomination and group photo session.

## Conclusion

This research finds that Balinese female politicians can participate as actors in shaping social formations. Female politicians do not always raise women's issues as a political marketing strategy but can provide solutions to various social problems faced by society. Balinese female politicians as political actors deliberately establish a reciprocal relationship ( dialectic of control ) with the system and structure of Balinese society, thus creating structuration. The structuration that occurs is the acceptance of women's potential and ability to lead so that stereotypes about women's inability to act as legislative bodies are refuted. The social practices carried out by female politicians focus on social issues by taking a recursive practice approach, discursive practice. In the regressive practice of Balinese female politicians, this is done by approaching the community consistently and repeatedly to create trust in the performance of women in politics. Being able to grow public trust in women's performance in politics is an achievement obtained from social practices carried out by being fully present in society. Meanwhile, discursive social practice is carried out by exploring people's abilities regarding the social system with knowledge abilities, namely individual knowledge abilities. Discursive practices are implemented by exploring people's abilities regarding legislative functions and how people understand social phenomena that are occurring through political communication media.

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