

## **Affirmative Action to Increase the Women Representation in Legislative: a Study in Sijunjung Regency, West Sumatera Province**

**Astika Ummy Athahirah**  
Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri

**ABSTRACT:** This study aims to find an overview of the inhibiting factors that cause a low representation of women and the strategies needed to increase women's representation in the Sijunjung Regency. This semi-qualitative research design uses the Manual Data Analysis Procedure (MDAP). The conclusions are that the inhibiting factors come from internal and external factors. Meanwhile, the strategies to solve the inhibiting factors optimize affirmative action through several activities. Therefore, this research dramatically contributes to efforts to increase the representation of women in politics to realize various public policies that are friendly to women.

**Keywords:** women representation, legislative, affirmative action

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**Corresponding Author:** [astika@ipdn.ac.id](mailto:astika@ipdn.ac.id)

## INTRODUCTION

The representation of women in various activities is essential, especially in legislation that plays a role in voicing the aspirations of society as a consequence of the form of a system of people's representation in democracies (Rey, 2020, p. 3). Indonesia has made efforts to increase the representation of women in politics. The existence of an electoral system affects the presence of women in politics (Gonzalez-Eiras & Sanz, 2021, p. 1) in the form of a rule that provides a 30 percent quota for women's representation in politics through affirmative action policies. The regulation in Law No. 2 of 2008 concerning political parties, Law No. 12 of 2003 concerning General Elections, and updated and reaffirmed in Law No. 10 of 2008, Law No. 8 of 2012 concerning General Elections of members of the House of Representatives, Regional Representative Council, and Regional People's Representative Council.

Affirmative action policy is a form of positive discrimination because it is temporary and used to create opportunities for women to seize political opportunities (Sayuti, 2013, p. 41). This policy requires intervention from the state to realize a fairer order, ensure that everyone participates in ordinary life, and guarantee human rights. This step also mainstreams gender by integrating women's experiences, aspirations, needs, and interests into various policies. (Khaerah & Mutiarin, 2016, p. 415)

Women create the lion's share of Indonesia's population. However, based on the research results, the most significant number of women is not balanced with their representation in aspects of life, political, economic, educational, and other social factors. In politics, for example, it turns out that the representation of women in the legislature is minimal, even though, judging from the number of voters, it turns out that the female sex is greater than that of men. Therefore, it prompted the thought of giving birth to rules that gave affirmative to women.

Women's representation in politics is urgently needed to promote job opportunities for women (Lv & Yang, 2018, p. 37), reducing poverty, health, and women's rights. Furthermore, while male representatives tend to prioritize the development of infrastructure projects (Clayton et al., 2019, p. 69), this combination of representation is expected to realize the welfare of society. However, in its implementation, affirmative action policy does not immediately provide significant changes to women's needs. In reality, Indonesia, a country with a total population, according to the National Statistics Agency 2020 of 270.20 million people with a female population of 133.5 million or 49.42 percent, has not been represented in the legislature in Indonesia. Furthermore, it is proved with the results of the 2019 elections in (Lampiran Keputusan KPU, 2019) that the

representation of women in the National Legislative amounts to 120 female legislative members out of a total of 575 legislative members or around 20.8 percent, so it has not reached the 30% quota as required in affirmative action.

This low representation of women also occurs in the legislative institution in Sijunjung Regency, West Sumatera Province. The election results of the legislative members in Sijunjung Regency are as below:

Table 1. Number of Women Legislators from 2017-2021

| No | Year | Number of Legislative Members | Women's Parliament Members | Women's Representation (%) |
|----|------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1  | 2017 | 30                            | 3                          | 10                         |
| 2  | 2018 | 30                            | 3                          | 10                         |
| 3  | 2019 | 30                            | 4                          | 13,33                      |
| 4  | 2020 | 30                            | 4                          | 13,33                      |
| 5  | 2021 | 30                            | 4                          | 13,33                      |

Source: (BPS, 2022, p. 45)

Tabel 1 explains the representation of women as legislative members in the Sijunjung Regency has increased from 2017 to 2021. However, this figure has not been significant and has not kept up with the representation of women. The female population in 2021 amounted to 116,996 inhabitants out of 237.313 residents of Sijunjung Regency, or around 49.30 percent (BPS, 2022, p. 98). The reality is very concerning because the realization of affirmative action policies has not considered the number of women. The low percentage of women as elected representatives is because there are not enough female candidates to emerge as a viable force in the contestation, so the lack of presence of female legislative candidates leads to the inability to fulfill the promise of a quota of 30% of women represented in the legislature. (Yeong, 2018, p. 1)

In its implementation in Indonesia, this affirmative policy raises pros and cons. On the one hand, this policy allows women to participate in the public sphere, especially in public policy-making, not to cause descriptions against women in defending women's rights. On the other hand, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a surge in violence against women, sexual violence, cyber violence, and violence against children. Data in 2021 stated that there were 338,496 verified reports of gender-based violence cases and an increase of 50% from the 2020 report of 226,026 points (Komnas Perempuan, 2021). Therefore, the representation of women in the public sphere will be able to encourage the creation of legal products that can protect women.

On the other hand, the existence of women in the public sphere will abandon their primary role as a wife and mother in the family environment and reduce the intensity of taking care of domestic household affairs. Therefore, unlike the previous study, this study looked at the inhibiting factors of internal factors from the customs prevailing in the Minangkabau area. In addition, women involved in many public activities will undoubtedly be busy with administrative matters. Therefore, an appropriate strategy is needed to provide conditions for women to engage in political activities. Therefore, this research is essential so that readers can get an overview of the factors inhibiting the low representation of women in Sijunjung Regency and strategies to overcome these inhibiting factors under the current living conditions of the community.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research uses two theories, namely the first gender bias theory as a grand theory with an analysis focus: marginalization, subordination, stereotypes, violence, and unbalanced workload. The second theory is the theory of representation (Phillips, 1997, pp. 530-532), focusing on analysis, namely the politics of idea and presence. It makes it easier for the author to analyze social phenomena in the field. The theory of gender bias and the notion of representation analyze the optimization of affirmative action in increasing women's representation in the Sijunjung Regency's legislative institution. The form of gender bias, according to Fakihi (Agustino, 2007, pp. 229-231), includes several aspects, namely:

- 1) Marginalization

The economic impoverishment of women is due to various programs that are gender-blind and cause women to become backward and poor.

- 2) Subordination

Discrimination in terms of education is one of the forms of subordination that harms women. The assumption that women's main task is to take care of the household while men are to earn a living has consequences for differences in the access of men and women to adequate educational facilities. Based on this assumption, sending boys to school as high as possible is more valuable than girls. This situation will happen when financial limitations hinder children's education, so a problem arises in prioritizing boys' education over girls.

- 3) Stereotype

The low assessment of women's work in the public sector resulted in wage differences between men and women. This wage discrimination

can be in the form of differences in facilities and the provision of health or family benefits.

4) Violence

Violence happens in a positional relationship, where men as parties (physically stronger) are higher than women (who are physically weaker). So violence against women can be caused by the existence of gender power and stereotypes labeled on women, not just because of the element of beauty.

5) Unbalanced workload

There is a culture and tradition of women's gender roles to take full responsibility for work in the domestic sector. Therefore, it will be an unbalanced workload if women work in the public sector.

Representation refers to how a particular person, group, idea, or opinion explains in the news (Labolo et al., 2019, p. 21). Political representation consists of two forms, namely (Phillips, 1997, pp. 530–532)

1) Politic of Idea

A form of representation occurs when political representatives exist due to the proposal of ideas and opinions from the people represented.

2) Politics of Presence

Political representation arises by adjusting the existence of groups in society. Political presence hopefully can channel the needs and interests of each group.

The author uses the theory above because it is appropriate to answer the formulation of research problems more comprehensively regarding gender bias theory and political representation theory. It also distinguishes between this study and previous studies.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach with Quasi-Qualitative Design (QQD). Quasi-Qualitative Design is the design used by the author in this study because at the beginning of the study. The author used a deductive approach using theory as an analytical tool, while when collecting data in the field, the research approach became inductive. The authors obtained information from 30 informants by purposive and snowball sampling in data collection. Data collection methods consist of interviews, documentation, and the dissemination of questionnaires. In analyzing the data, the author uses the Manual Data Analysis Procedure (MDAP), a data analysis technique with a manual process.

Therefore, the researcher is the main instrument in this quasi-qualitative study. The stages of MDAP, known as theoretical sampling, consist of making diaries, transcripts, coding, categorization, themes, memos, triangulation of results, building theories, confirming theories, constructing and publishing new theories (Bungin, 2020, pp. 252–292). This study's MDAP data analysis stages consist of seven steps: diaries, transcripts, coding, categorization, themes, memos, and triangulation of results.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

The research using the MDAP analysis technique obtained results in research memos from inhibiting factors and strategies in increasing women's representation. The resulting research memos contain five categories: women's model, weaknesses, constraints, strategies, and suggestions. Furthermore, these research memos are analyzed based on research theory and discussion. For example, here are the results of the research memos on the optimization of affirmative action.

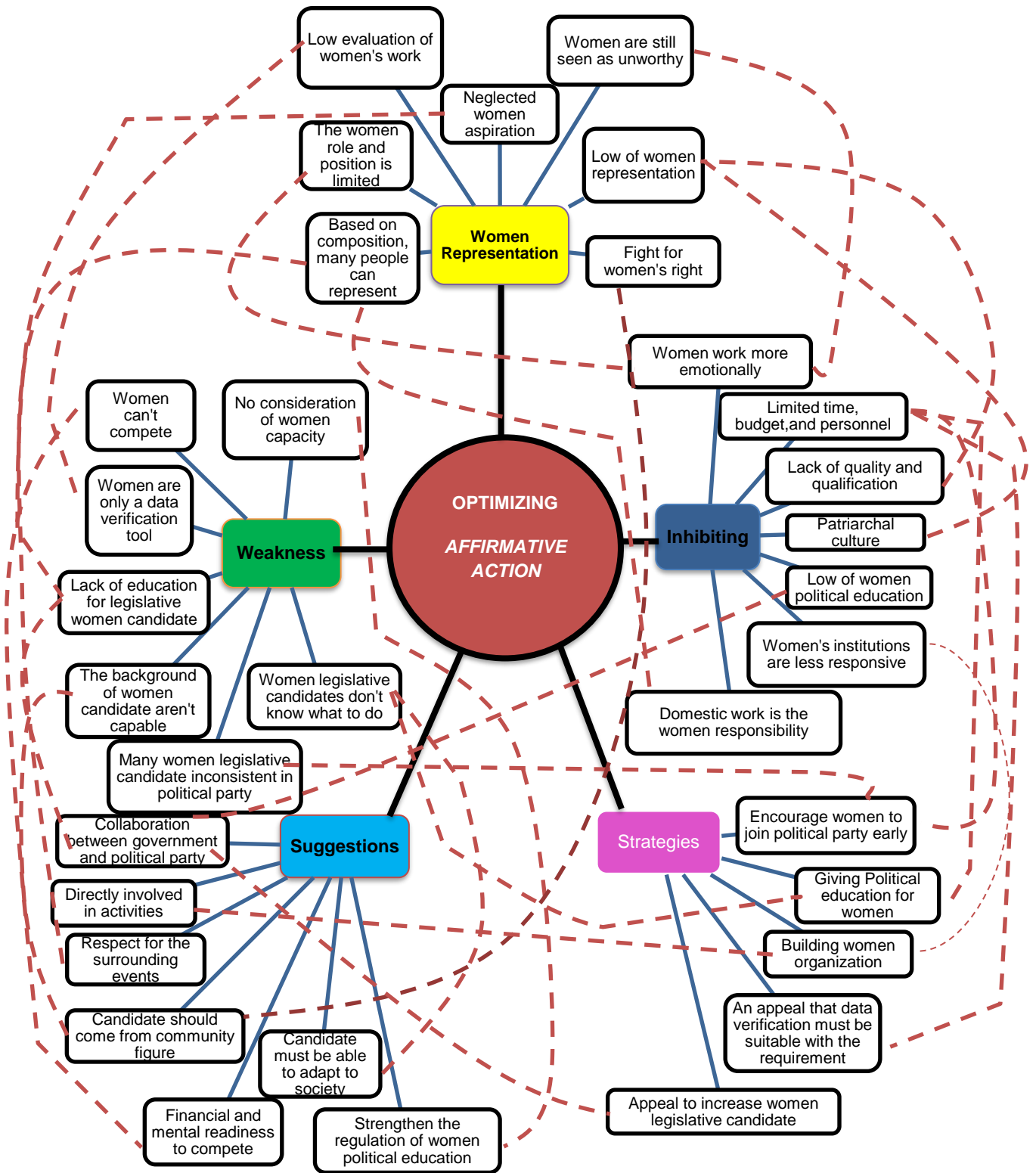


Figure 1. Memos result of women's representation in legislative in Sijunjung, West Sumatera

Figure 1 above shows 5 (five) categories produced through the data analysis process. So that the five categories form memos, each category describes several items in the discussion section.

## DISCUSSION

The further explanation of the results of the research memos based on the above is as follows:

### A. **Factors affecting the low representation of women in the Legislature in Sijunjung Regency**

The community in Sijunjung Regency has provided space for women to get involved in politics. However, the representation of women in the legislature is still not proportional because of several factors, namely:

#### 1) **Internal factors**

Internal factors that influence the low representation of women are the limited number of women with the quality and qualifications in the political field. In addition, the quality of women from the low level of political education and the quiet competitiveness between men and women.

Another internal factor is the lack of support between the women themselves. This support also manifests in women's lack of awareness of the importance of women's representation in the legislature. If support for fellow women is high, it can encourage the achievement of female representation (Spary, 2020, pp. 14–15). So that in terms of presentation, women, in general, prefer to believe in men. Public trust can affect voting rights, especially for female cadres who have the potential to compete in the political sphere. Trust is caused by believing that other people or certain parties have binding capacities and qualities on him, such as consistent, honest, fair, competent, and accountable actions.

Women's experience in organizations and political parties, financial ability, self-confidence, and other internal factors affect women's representation. Because in politics, it takes skills to establish relationships and public figures that are known to many people.

#### 2) **External factors**

External factors that influence the representation of women are the culture of the people of Sijunjung Regency, a predominantly Minangkabau tribe. Although the Minangkabau tribe has a kinship system from the maternal or matrilineal line, the community still adheres to patriarchy. Namely, men play the role of decision-makers. The traditional admonition



says, namely *Nagari bapanghulu, suku babuah paruik, kampuang batuah, Rumah batungganai, diasak layua, dibubuah mati*. The meaning is the Minangkabau has men to lead Nagari or are called *penghulu*. These tribes come from descendants who come from the maternal line, villages headed by the aged person, and villages consisting of houses led by the head of the house or *Tungganai*.

In addition to the influence on the priority of placing men as leaders, the people of Sijunjung Regency still believe that working in the domestic sector is the responsibility of women. Thus causing a dual role or responsibility that women must carry

The next factor is the lack of willingness of political elites to open up opportunities for women's involvement in politics and the lack of coordination between groups engaged in gender affairs. Many political parties have not been severe about regenerating female legislative candidates. Political parties still carry out the women legislative candidate only limited to data verification tools for elections.

#### **B. The strategies increase women's representation in the legislative in Sijunjung Regency.**

Based on the inhibiting factors above, the Sijunjung Regency Government responded correctly in increasing women's representation. Therefore, the strategies carried out are:

- 1) Encourage women to join political parties and community organizations early.

Participation in a party or community organization can increase knowledge of politics. In addition, it can also improve the ability to recognize the importance of relationships and how to solve problems around society, development, and government. Women's interest in participating in a political party will spur interest in joining election contestations that encourage more opportunities for women to sit in the legislature.

The importance of joining a community organization will make it easier for a prospective legislative member to introduce himself to the community. Especially for those who entered politics for the first time, it took a long process to convince the public through his vision and mission as a candidate for the legislature. Women should also possess solid political experience or political education by training candidates to improve the confidence and skills of women who aspire to join politics

(Palmieri & Zetlin, 2020, p. 4). In addition, positive activities related to society can form an excellent image to affect the community's mindset, which initially considered that the woman was only taking care of the household.

## 2) The necessity for political parties to engage women

The law guarantees women to engage in politics. However, involvement in politics for women provides a minimum quota for women of 30% to run as candidates for legislative members. The existence of this law offers hope for women to be active in politics. Therefore, it is mandatory that every political party actively involve and elevate many women in the party's political structure (Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019, p. 1) and ensure women's involvement during candidacy. If this is not happening, then data verification cannot be done.

The involvement of women requires an essential role from political parties. Political parties provide female cadres who are sensitive to issues related to gender. Women who understand their duties when entering politics are not just limited to fighting for personal interests and their party. Women politicians must be able to play a broader role, namely encouraging the creation of public policies that fight for women's rights. (Allen & Childs, 2019, p. 1)

The involvement of women also gave rise to a new rule known as the zipper system. The zipper system exists as a mechanism for increasing the number of women's representation in the legislature. The Zipper system is a rule that aims to arrange the sequence number of male candidates who must be alternate or *vis-a-vis* with the sequence number of female candidates.

## 3) Formation of women's organizations

The formation of women's organizations is one of them through the Association of Women's Organizations (AWO). AWO is an organization that must empower women. AWO consistently fights to improve women's roles, quality, and insight. This increase includes providing a variety of political education.

The development of fundamental societal values relevant to the dynamics of social change is one of the primary forms of political education given to women in Indonesia. So that in the process, what happens is not only the process of transformation of science but also social transformation. It will make the community able to have the character of a citizen and the forerunner of a leader

who has the integrity and capacity as an ideal leader to realize the welfare of the community.

In this discussion, the author also uses gender bias and representation theory to analyze the optimization of affirmative action in increasing the representation of women in the Sijunjung Regency legislature. The research analysis based on the theory for more details is:

#### **A. Dimensions of Marginalization**

This dimension consists of the attitude shown to women regarding regulations or activities carried out. In Sijunjung Regency, there are various kinds of women's empowerment facilities. One of them is AWO or the Association of Women's Organizations. However, based on the results of interviews conducted by the author with the Head of the Division of Socialization, Voter Education, Community Participation, and human resources of AWO, it is still not running optimally. In addition, there are no facilities provided expressly for women in Sijunjung Regency to learn various things about politics.

#### **B. Dimensions of Subordination**

The subordination dimension explains the existence of discrimination in several ways experienced by women, especially in terms of education. The formation of this discrimination was due to several obstacles, so a situation arose to prioritize men's education. Based on the results of interviews with the Head of the Division of Socialization, Voter Education, Community Participation, and Human Resources and a survey conducted by the author, the dimension of subordination in the representation of women in the legislative institutions of Sijunjung Regency is closely related to the lack of political education taken by women in Sijunjung Regency.

#### **C. Stereotype Dimensions**

The stereotype dimension is the low assessment of women's work in the public sector. Stereotypes will affect voters' evaluation of candidates (Bauer, 2015, p. 705). Based on interviews the author conducted with female legislators of Sijunjung Regency, this stereotype dimension in women's representation from the lack of appreciation for women who work in politics. One of the causes of negative *stereotypes* towards women who become legislature members is that after being elected and serving in the legislative, they are only spectators or not participating in the voice. It is due to the image of women who are subject to the representation of women

in patriarchal families and societies (Prasad & Thampi, 2021, p. 6). It gives rise to public opinion that women are only a complement to a policy made by the government. Therefore, an effort is needed for women to manage their gender by downplaying feminine stereotypes and playing with their masculine stereotypes (Bauer, 2016; Schneider & Bos, 2014) to be able to cause public opinion on their performance.

#### **D. Dimensions of Hardness**

Violence happens in a positional relationship, where men as parties (physically stronger) are higher than women (who are physically weaker). So violence against women can occur because of the power and *gender* stereotypes labeled on women. Based on the survey results, as many as 73.9% of the people of Sijunjung Regency still think that women in the domestic and public sectors use emotion rather than logic. As a result, it has led to a lack of support for women to occupy legislative positions in the Sijunjung Regency today.

#### **E. Unbalanced Workload Dimensions**

This dimension explains the existence of culture and traditions of the role of women to be fully responsible for work in the domestic sector. Various problems consist in measuring this unbalanced workload, one of which is the traditions and customs that have taken root in society. The rule in question is the primary nature of women in various household jobs.

Concerning the theory of political representation as described (Phillips, 1997, pp. 530–532), there is the following discussion:

##### **A. Dimension of Politic idea**

The politics of idea dimension is a dimension that explains the form of representation that occurs when the existence of political representatives is due to the proposed ideas and opinions of the people represented. Based on the author's interviews, legislators in Sijunjung Regency are selected based on the community's interests. The community gave the votes to each candidate who managed to win in the Sijunjung Regency legislative election in 2019. Based on the study results, 30 people received the most votes. They were candidates who gained the trust to carry out their duties and occupy positions as people's representatives in the legislative members in Sijunjung Regency.

## **B. Dimension of Politics presence**

The Politics of presence dimension explains the political representation that arises by adjusting the existence of groups in society to channel the needs and interests of each group. Based on the results of an interview with the Secretary of the KPU on Friday, January 14, 2022, currently, the formation of positions in legislative members, especially in Sijunjung Regency, is filled based on the interests of the community and not based on the existence of groups represented. Therefore, the politics of presence, especially in the Sijunjung Regency, has not been implemented, so various community interests cannot be met, such as needs related to the scope of women's and children's problems. The presence of 49.01% women is one example of a group in the community that the legislative members in the Sijunjung Regency have not represented.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results of research on affirmative action in increasing the representation of women in legislative institutions in Sijunjung Regency, the following conclusions are:

- a. Factors Affecting the Low Representation of Women in the Legislative Institution in Sijunjung Regency are:
  - Internal factors include the limited number of women with the best quality and qualifications in the political field, the lack of support between fellow women and women's experience in organizations and involvement in political parties, limited economic capabilities, and public trust.
  - External factors include the patriarchal culture that is still entrenched. In addition, there is still the assumption that women hold responsibility in the domestic sector, the lack of willingness of political elites to open up opportunities for women's involvement in politics, and the lack of coordination between groups engaged in gender affairs.
- b. The strategies carried out in optimizing Affirmative Action in increasing the representation of women in institutions legislative di Sijunjung Regency are:
  - Encourage women to join political parties and community organizations early on.
  - Encouraging political parties to engage women

- The formation of women's organizations.

Based on the results of the memos, the author also provides several recommendations, namely:

- In providing political education, the government should collaborate with political parties.
- Women legislative candidates should start building their political brand early to create their electability during the legislative elections, such as being directly involved in community activities and caring for and responding to the needs and aspirations of the community.
- Candidates should also have the financial and mental readiness to compete in the contestation of legislative elections.
- The government and political parties do strengthen regulations on political education for women.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH**

This research has limitations in discussing its scope. Therefore the author hopes for sustainability in this study. In this regard, the authors recommend conducting further research in evaluating the performance of female legislators in fighting for community aspirations, especially related to women's rights, even though the quota has not reached 30%. Hopefully, the future research will provide an overview of whether it is necessary to draft new regulations or new rules related to the representation of women in the legislature or whether more efforts are needed to maximize the affirmative action that the government has set. Further research can also relate to strategies to build a political brand for female legislative candidates to realize the 30% quota required in affirmative action.

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