

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM IN THE POLITICAL CAREERS OF WOMEN LEGISLATORS IN JEMBER REGENCY: A QUALITATIVE ETHNOGRAPHIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON GENDER EQUALITY AND SDGS

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Abstract

Women's underrepresentation in legislative institutions represents a critical barrier to inclusive governance worldwide. This ethnographic phenomenological study examines how symbolic interactionism shapes women legislators' political careers in Indonesia, analyzing their navigation of gendered expectations and institutional constraints within male dominated political environments. Conducted longitudinally from 2014 to 2023, the research employed interviews and participant observation of a female legislator in Jember Regency. Through symbolic interactionist analysis, the study investigated how interactions with political symbols including ambition, leadership perceptions, gender conflict, and integrity influenced career trajectories and political agency. Findings reveal that women's political entry challenges stereotypical perceptions of female leadership capabilities, yet persistent societal expectations and exclusionary male networks significantly limit lobbying effectiveness and policy influence. The participant's commitment to ethical governance contrasted with transactional political norms. However, institutional barriers including party hierarchies and internal power dynamics constrained advocacy for gender sensitive policies, while systemic biases diminished overall impact despite electoral success. The research demonstrates symbolic interactionism's crucial role in shaping women's political experiences and provides evidence based recommendations for advancing gender equity. Key strategies include strengthening quota systems, implementing social interventions to challenge gender stereotypes, and creating institutional support mechanisms for female legislators. Aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals, this study offers pathways toward more inclusive political systems and equitable policymaking processes.

Keywords: *symbolic interactionism, women legislators, gender equality, SDGs, political participation*

PENDAHULUAN

The role of women in politics has always been an issue that attracts attention and is relevant in the context of modern society. Often, women are considered to have an image that is considered weak and not

suitable for involvement in politics (Nurussa'adah, 2020). This is due to many things such as gender issues (Arrianie, 2018), disability stigma of political ability (Alfiyani, 2022; Saputra et al., 2020) and political communication barriers (Zamroni, 2013) hat

hinder women's political careers in the political arena in Indonesia.

However, along with social and cultural changes, more and more women are seeking political careers and becoming legislators. In an attempt to understand these women's political journeys, this research focuses on the subjective experiences of women in their political careers.

In a largely male-dominated political environment, women entering politics often face a series of obstacles that are not only unique, but also complex. Male dominance in politics creates diverse social dynamics, which in turn significantly shape women's political experiences. These barriers can include unequal access to political resources, social norms that inhibit women's participation, and multiple demands that can affect women's roles in politics. Beyond gender differences, long-entrenched cultural norms in politics can also create specific challenges, such as stereotypical expectations of women's roles and behavior in politics. (Assidiq & Triguswinri, 2021; Izdiha, 2017; Suprpta, 2020; Zamroni, 2013)

Previous studies have collectively shown that women legislators face various challenges and opportunities in their roles. Research (Fadhillah & Nuryadi, 2021) highlights that women legislators' representation is often motivated by formal quotas, which may not always result in a clear selection process. Bari (Bari, 2010) argues that while descriptive representation through gender quotas is important, substantive representation requires linkages to women's movements and networks for collective voice and capacity building. Martin (Martin, 1969) emphasizes the need for women parliamentarians to confront subtle forms of bias and discrimination. Swers' research (Swers, 2001) reviews

women in legislatures and discusses the impact of women as candidates, legislators, and their relationships with institutions. In summary, these studies collectively show that women legislators play an important role in advocating for gender equality and addressing women's issues on the political agenda.

Based on existing research, the research question of women's role in politics and its impact goes beyond gender representation. These studies highlight that women's political careers have the potential to open doors to a more inclusive political system and create major changes in political culture. Understanding the role of symbolic interactionism is crucial in understanding women's political experiences. Symbols and self-images generated through social interactions play an important role in shaping their career paths. Symbolic interactionism analysis can help understand how women interpret and respond to political symbols and how this affects their political participation. By gaining a deeper understanding of symbolic interactionism in the context of women's political careers, more effective strategies can be developed to promote gender equality and change existing political dynamics (Zamroni 2013; Wahyudi 2019; Samber 2018; Alvionita 2017).

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical framework that is fundamental to understanding the meanings that individuals give to social actions and interactions in society (Bruce & Blumer, 1988). In the context of politics, symbolic interactionism explores how individuals, including women legislators, understand, give meaning to and respond to political symbols in their daily lives. This includes how they perceive themselves in political roles, perceptions of political self-image, and how gender symbols influence their experiences (Hayat, 2018).

The importance of understanding symbolic interactionism in the context of women's political careers will not only provide deep insight into individual experiences, but will also help identify how political and cultural symbols influence women's political participation. With a deeper understanding of how women interpret their political roles, the government will be able to create more inclusive policies and create a more gender-equitable political environment (T. L. Osborn, 2014; T. Osborn & Mendez, 2010). Therefore, this research will adopt an ethnographic-phenomenological approach to explore symbolic interactionism in the political careers of female legislators, in the hope of generating useful insights to support better gender representation in a more equitable and inclusive politics.

METODE

This study used a qualitative approach and phenomenological ethnographic method. This method is an ethnographic research approach based on phenomenology, specifically Alfred Schutz's analysis of the world and life (vom Lehn et al., 2015). This approach involves the study and understanding of the lived experiences and subjective perspectives of individuals and groups within their social and cultural contexts. Phenomenological ethnography aims to uncover the meanings, intentions and interpretations that individuals associate with their experiences, and how these shape their actions and interactions (Ahmmed, 2022). This approach emphasizes the importance of subjective experience and the role of consciousness in shaping social reality (Wang, 2023). This research requires a large amount of personal space to explore the historical dimension of informants' life experiences. So that researchers explore the

role of experience as an important element, in addition to the interaction of informants in social and political contexts (Wijaya, 2018).

In this study, Y is a 59-year-old female informant who is a legislative member in one of the regions in Jember Regency. This research is basically a longitudinal study based on the researcher's experience of being the core team of informant Y from 2014 to 2023. The researcher was actively involved in the dynamics of the informant's political career during his time as a legislative member. The informant has been a member of the legislature for almost two periods or ten years.

The research results were analyzed using the symbolic interactionism analysis approach (Bruce & Blumer, 1988). This is because this research wants to describe the meaning and symbols of Y's career journey in politics. In (Kourtis et al., 2010) explores the concept of symbolic interaction in the social paradigm, emphasizing the role of individual actions and interactions in shaping social behavior. Carter (Carter & Fuller, 2016) provides an overview of symbolic interactionism as a micro-level theoretical perspective that focuses on how individuals create and maintain society through face-to-face interaction and subjective meaning. (Ahmadi, 2008) highlights the close relationship between symbols and interaction, emphasizing the unique meanings and interpretations that come from these exchanges. Whereas (Aksan et al., 2009) explains symbolic interaction theory as a process of mutual meaning and interpretation through symbols. In summary, these research articles collectively emphasize the importance of symbols, interaction, and subjective meaning in understanding social behavior within the framework of symbolic interaction phenomenology.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Based on the results of field notes and interviews, the data shows that Y decided to enter politics in 2014, the main reason being the desire to prove himself. Her old workplace experience had created a feeling of under-appreciation, and politics became a challenging platform to measure her abilities. In addition, Y was encouraged by a colleague who saw her potential in helping others. The colleague offered Y to run for election, seeing in Y an individual who could make a significant contribution to society through politics.

The symbolic interaction in this narrative reflects the significant changes in Y's thoughts and actions when she decided to enter politics in 2014. Y's decision to enter politics was driven by a desire to prove herself, symbolic in the sense that politics became a challenging platform to measure her abilities and gain recognition that may not have been obtained in her previous workplace. In addition, the encouragement from a colleague who saw her potential in helping others and offered Y to run for election, demonstrates how symbolic interactions in a social context can be an important factor in political decision-making, creating a dynamic that illustrates the changing motivations and aspirations of individuals in politics.

In 2014, in the context of the general election, candidate Y faced significant challenges for the first time in her bid to enter the legislature. The involvement of various sympathizers and support teams reflected the intensity and complexity of the political process. While many people were willing to become "success teams" or "vote brokers," some were not successful in garnering significant support. The symbolic interactions in this narrative reflect the struggles and dynamics that characterized

the political process in the 2014 general election. Candidate Y, who faced significant challenges, became a symbol of individuals who dared to enter politics with the hope of gaining a place in the legislative ranks.

The involvement of various sympathizers and support teams creates a symbol of the intensity and complexity of the political process, which often involves multiple stakeholders with different expectations and agendas. However, the failure of some "success teams" or "vote brokers" reflects the reality that in politics, outcomes do not always match expectations, illustrating how symbolic interactions in a political context can influence the course and outcome of an election, and create multiple meanings in the process.

The strategy adopted by Y during her political campaign was a community-rooted approach. Her husband played a central role in approaching various segments of her constituency, making him a key element in gaining support. As a respected community figure, her husband had a significant appeal in garnering votes. However, the initial challenges in Ms. Y's political journey were not few. Especially as she herself had no previous political experience, new methods had to be tried. This approach came at a significant political cost, including significant time and resources. Ms. Y was open to accepting help from various parties who wanted to assist in the political process, without strict selection or filtering of her supporters.

This approach reflects Y's dedication to building strong community support, while facing challenges that required him to learn and adapt to political dynamics. His sincerity and humility in accepting help from various parties are the hallmarks of his journey in politics, which created a unique dynamic in his political campaign.

Y faced a political journey full of challenges and slander. Several times, he was the victim of accusations from political opponents who accused him of being involved in money politics, although this was not true. Nevertheless, Y remained steadfast in her belief that helping others is her main goal, and that is what people will remember about her. Her political journey taught her that it is not easy to stand out among other candidates in an effort to gain support and votes. Moreover, there is an unwritten law in politics that states that in order to get elected, one must try as much as possible to influence others to vote for them. One of the most common ways is by giving away goods and various incentives to constituents to increase their level of recognition. While this can be a common political strategy, Y chose to stick to his principles of genuinely helping others and gaining support based on his integrity and dedication, despite facing challenges involving image and tactics in politics.

This reflects the complex dynamics of politics, particularly in the context of campaigns and elections. The accusations against Y of practicing money politics are symbolic of political opponents' attempts to damage her image, which in turn creates a sense of injustice. Y, with his belief that helping others comes first, creates a symbol of strength of character and integrity in politics. It also reflects the symbolic interactions that create the difference between Y's self-image and the image created by her opponents.

Thanks to Ms. Y's political strategy, she won a seat in the legislature. She received the most votes in her electoral district, illustrating her great success in gaining public support. However, as is often the case in politics, this victory did not come

without consequences. Y had to incur enormous political costs, including significant time, energy and financial resources. This reflects the reality that politics is a competitive and challenging arena. However, having the most votes does not automatically elevate Y to a significant leadership position in parliament. This reminds us that politics is not just about popularity, but also about the ability to build coalitions, negotiations, and proficiency in convincing other members of parliament. Thus, Y, having won public support, still has steps to take to gain a significant role in the legislative process. This process requires political wisdom, hard work, and the ability to influence political decisions at the parliamentary level. Ms. Y's journey in politics is thus a journey full of challenges and valuable lessons about the complex dynamics of politics.

This creates a strong symbolic interaction meaning about politics and one's struggle to succeed in the political arena. Y, in his political journey, is a symbol of an individual who has a strong strategy and dedication. His success in winning a seat in the legislature and gaining the most votes illustrates a significant achievement and great support from the community. However, a deeper symbolism emerges when we see that this victory did not come without sacrifice. The high cost of politics, which includes time, energy and financial resources, reflects that politics is a competitive and challenging place. This is a symbolic picture of the great effort required in politics.

The next challenge relates to the election of the faction leader. Despite gaining the most votes, it does not necessarily make Y occupy the leadership position. This is because leadership in

parliament is not always based on popularity but on the ability to build coalitions, negotiate, and influence other MPs, creating symbolism about the complexity of politics. Y symbolizes an individual who must face the deeper realities of politics, requiring political wisdom, hard work, and the ability to influence political decisions.

Y also explained about the process of electing party leaders, which often involves a number of interesting transaction processes. In this context, the transaction process is an important element in the internal dynamics of political parties. The selection of party leaders is not only based on meritocracy or ideological support, but also involves complex lobbying dynamics. Within the party, being the chairperson is a highly desirable top position, and candidates who want to achieve it must be brave enough to engage in a series of transactions with existing party leaders. These deals can include a variety of things, including financial deals such as giving a certain amount of money, or even offering certain projects that can benefit both parties. This process reflects the fact that politics does not always take place in a purely ideological context, but also involves pragmatic aspects that influence the selection of leaders.

Y, a figure in a political party, shared that he felt constrained by the party's complicated internal dynamics. This feeling arises from two main factors that have been haunting him. The first is the constant threat of being replaced by another board member in her party. In this political environment, positions and power within parties can be highly susceptible to change, and MPs often live in uncertainty regarding the stability of their positions. In addition, this feeling of constraint arises because party power is often used as a tool for larger political interests, even if it means getting rid of

political opponents. Party power is often more dominant than the power of legislative institutions, creating a challenging imbalance in political dynamics. Decisions relating to the removal or placement of members within the party are often based on broader political considerations rather than policy considerations or competence.

In relation to the party, the meaning of symbolic interaction that emerges illustrates conflict and tension in internal party politics. Y, as a symbol of an individual within a political party, represents individuals who feel uncertainty and threat regarding the stability of their position. This creates symbolism of how in the world of politics, individuals often feel constrained by larger interests. The threat of being replaced by another councillor within the party is symbolic of the high internal competition in politics. Party power, which is portrayed as more dominant than legislative power, creates symbolism of how in politics, political factors often dominate policy factors or individual capabilities. When the paragraph highlights that party power is often used as a tool of larger political interests, it creates symbolism about how in politics, power can be utilized to achieve certain goals, even if it involves actions that are not always fair or ethical.

Y's long journey as a council member has taken him through a variety of experiences that reflect the complex dynamics of politics. Along the way, one of the narratives that has emerged is the rivalry between parties in their efforts to endorse presidential candidates, which often fills the political agenda. However, the biggest rivalry occurs within the party itself. Within the party, it is clear that all councillors compete for greater influence. Gender is not an obstacle in this competition, as the desire to achieve goals and maintain positions is

paramount. Although there is a regulation that stipulates a minimum allocation of 30% of votes for women in the party, unfortunately, its implementation does not always reflect gender equality. This makes the regulation feel like a formality that only applies during the registration process, but does not provide significant privileges or advantages for women in their daily political journey.

In the course of Y politics, we can see how political complexity impacts symbolic interactions. The rivalry between political parties in their efforts to nominate presidential candidates creates a political narrative that often dominates the political agenda. This fierce competition reflects the ambition and desire of politicians to gain influence and win ultimate power. Paradoxically, however, the greatest rivalry experienced by Y occurs within her own party. In this environment, gender differences are not a major factor in political competition. What matters is the ambition to achieve personal goals and maintain a position in the party hierarchy. This creates a strong competitive dynamic among board members vying for greater power and influence. In this context, the regulation mandating the allocation of a minimum of 30% of votes to women in parties appears to be more of a formality than a real commitment to realizing gender equality in politics. Its inadequate implementation reflects the misalignment between aspirations for equality and political realities that often lead to inequality. This regulation, while applicable during the registration process, does not provide significant privileges or advantages for women in everyday politics.

Y, as much as possible to expand his influence in politics. However, in her

political journey, she faces various obstacles that limit her abilities. One of the main barriers is her role as a woman in a political world that is often dominated by men. Y realizes that as a woman, she is often faced with social expectations that limit her ability to lobby freely. She is faced with the view that women are less capable and not as flexible as men in undergoing a series of lobbying activities that often occur in politics. Most political lobbying takes place in various entertainment venues such as cafés, entertainment venues, or golf courses, which are important arenas for discussions and relationships in politics. However, as a woman, Y feels limited in her ability to follow in the footsteps of male colleagues who have freer access to these venues.

The second barrier Y faced was the view of titles in politics. She noted that some people may assume that having a certain title will give them an edge in achieving leadership positions. However, Y emphatically states that having a title does not necessarily reflect one's ability in the political process. For him, political integrity and commitment to serving the interests of the people are the real decisive factors in politics.

The symbolic interactionist meaning of Y's barriers illustrates how individuals' views and perceptions of politics can greatly influence their roles and interactions in the political arena. This symbolism reflects how important it is to understand and overcome gender stereotypes and views that may not always be accurate in relation to political achievement and ability. In this context, two symbolic elements stand out. First, the role of women in politics illustrates social symbolism that identifies women as individuals who may have limitations in carrying out political activities. This reflects

gender stereotypes that still influence how society sees women in politics. In this symbolism, men are considered more flexible and have greater bargaining power in political lobbying, while women are considered less capable. Secondly, views on titles and titles in politics create another symbolism. Titles are often considered an indicator of excellence or ability in politics. However, Y emphasizes that titles do not always reflect the actual ability to understand the interests of the people and have integrity in politics.

In addition, the third obstacle faced by Y in his political journey is related to the issue of political integrity. Y noted that some of his colleagues in the legislature have a certain flexibility in carrying out the political process. However, this flexibility is often linked to the often-heard term "busking" for positions or projects. Y feels uncomfortable with this approach, as he sees it as incompatible with the principles of political integrity that he believes in. For him, politics should be based on strong moral and ethical principles that encourage honest and sincere public service. In this context, the approach of "busking" for personal gain is seen by him as a violation of these principles. In the often complex and competitive world of politics, political integrity can be challenging. For Ms. Y, integrity is a value that cannot be sacrificed, even if it means facing obstacles and pressures in her political journey.

The meaning of symbolic interaction that emerges from this paragraph is about how individuals in politics give meaning and interpretation to political integrity and ethics. Y, as a symbol of individuals who are steadfast to the principles of integrity, faces obstacles in the form of the practice of "busking" which may be considered by some of his peers as a flexible way of achieving political goals. In this symbolism, "busking"

is a representation of dubious actions in politics, which may include unethical actions or corruption. Y, by maintaining his moral principles, creates symbolism about the importance of maintaining integrity in politics. In this symbolic interaction meaning, political integrity is considered a value that should not be sacrificed for the sake of personal interests or political office. This symbolism illustrates how individuals in politics give meaning to moral and ethical values, and how political actions can symbolize loyalty to these principles. It also highlights the importance of ethics in modern politics and how individuals can influence political dynamics through upholding strong moral and ethical values. On the other hand, one of the advantages Y has as a council member is his relationship with the executive element of government. Y has managed to build a very good relationship with the Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD) in his area. This is a valuable asset in politics, as strong relationships with the executive can have a significant impact on political decision-making.

Y feels that his voice is more valued and has greater weight when he recommends certain policies to the executive. His close relationship with the OPD (Regional Apparatus Organization) allows him to have greater influence in the policy-making process and the implementation of government programs at the regional level. This advantage is inseparable from his feeling that he is not constrained by party decisions that can directly implicate his political career. In this context, the relationship with the executive creates an opportunity for Y to be a prime mover in advocating for policies that he considers important for the public interest. These advantages provide important insights into

how political connections can shape a councillor's role and influence in a complex political environment..

In the political process, the relationship between the Y and its constituents is very dynamic. His constituents consist of diverse groups of people with different needs. Y is faced with very diverse demands from the communities it represents, and is expected to always respond in a positive manner, despite the fact that these demands are not always easy to fulfill.

Faced with the diverse needs and expectations of constituents, Ys need to undergo a complex process of recommending or creating relevant policies. This step is not always straightforward. Before policies can be implemented, political processes such as political lobbying and approval from other councillors must be passed. At times, this process often stops at the party decision stage, which has major implications on the Y's ability to realize the desired policy.

In this context, Y is in a challenging position where he has to balance the diverse demands of constituents, internal political processes and the role of the party. He must navigate the complex political dynamics to achieve his political goals and best serve the community.

To deal with the complex dynamics in her relationship with constituents and political processes, Y seeks a middle ground that allows her to maintain a delicate balance. This often required her to provide diplomatic answers in response to diverse constituent demands. Often, Ms. Y can only recommend policies on behalf of herself that differ from her party's views or decisions. These non-ideal conditions led Y to see that a more effective approach was to seek support from new voting pockets rather than

simply maintaining old ones. This was due to his understanding that tackling complex political issues and meeting the demands of old constituencies was often difficult and required extra effort. By seeking support and proving that he "works" for new people, Y feels that this is an easier way to gain support, especially since the demands of old constituents are often more numerous and difficult to realize.

The symbolic interaction that emerges from this paragraph reflects how Y tries to maintain a balance between different roles and demands in politics. He uses diplomatic language and behavior to respond to the demands of diverse constituencies. In this case, the symbolism of diplomatic action is an attempt to maintain positive relations with various groups of society without facing excessive conflict.

The importance of recommending policies on personal behalf, which differ from the party's views, creates symbolism of how a councillor seeks to maintain her political integrity and understand the interests of the community over those of the party. This demonstrates Ms. Y's commitment to speaking on behalf of her constituents rather than simply following the party line.

In addition, Ms. Y's strategy to seek support from new voting pockets illustrates the symbolism of how politics requires adaptation to overcome challenges. It creates an understanding that dealing with old constituents, who have more and complex demands, is more difficult, while seeking new support is a more efficient way to expand the political support base. This symbolic interaction illustrates how individuals in politics create meaning from their actions and decisions, and how this symbolism reflects efforts to maintain a

balance between party expectations, constituents, and moral principles in politics. Over time and with more political experience, Y has made important developments in her understanding of the political process. Y has learned to be less vocal and more diplomatic in dealing with complex political issues. This understanding came as a result of her deepening knowledge of politics and how to interact with various stakeholders.

As the next legislative election approached, Y became more relaxed in seeking support from voting pockets. As he had built a strong reputation and had gained recognition in the eyes of the community, he had a clearer picture of how to approach his constituents. Although the number of people involved in this process may be fewer, as there is already a more targeted filter process, Ms. Y is still faced with some situations where vote brokers may come to offer support and vote bags. Ms. Y's experience reflects how a councillor's progression in politics can affect the way they interact with voters and the political process as a whole. It also illustrates how individuals in politics learn to adapt and develop wiser strategies over time. Y hopes to be elected again in the next election.

The symbolic interaction meaning that emerges from Y's political journey is about how individuals, in this case Y, experience development in the way they understand and interact with the political world. Y may have initially been too vocal and less diplomatic in addressing political issues. However, over time, his political experiences have taught him to be wiser and more diplomatic in his political approach. In addition, the change in Y's attitude towards the upcoming legislative elections creates a symbolism of how he has evolved as a politician. He is now more relaxed in

seeking support, having built a strong reputation and support base. This reflects a change in how he sees the electoral process, recognizing the importance of the relationships already built with his constituents, and understanding how to interact with the fewer vote brokers that may come along at this stage.

In this symbolic interactionist sense, it illustrates how an individual's development in politics can result in changes in their actions, strategies and outlook towards politics. This symbolism illustrates the learning and adaptation process inherent in politics, and how individuals transform into wiser and more efficient politicians over time.

PENUTUP

Based on the results of the study, several aspects that emerged as conclusions in this study are:

1. Nomination as a Symbol of Ambition and Leadership: When Y decided to run for election, this act was a symbol of political ambition and a desire to lead. The candidacy itself is a symbolic act that declares her intention to engage in politics and represent constituents.
2. Majority Vote as a Symbol of Support for Women: If Y wins the most votes, it can be interpreted as a symbol of support given by constituents to a woman running for office. This creates a symbolic message about the importance of women's representation in politics.
3. Political Integrity as a Symbol of Ethics: During her political journey, Y faced pressure to engage in practices that were considered unethical. Her political integrity became a symbol of ethics in politics.

Her actions and decisions create a symbol of the ethical values she holds.

4. Party View vs. Individual View as a Symbol of Political Dilemma: The conflict between party views and individual Y's views is an example of symbolic interaction creating a political dilemma. It reflects how symbols such as political parties and individual identities play a role in political decision-making.
5. Reputation as a Symbol of Women's Success in Politics: The reputation built by Y in politics also reflects a symbol of women's success in the political arena. It provides a symbolic message that women can succeed and gain recognition in the often male-dominated world of politics.
6. Political Relationships as a Symbol of Influence and Access: The political relationships built by Y with the executive and the Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD) are symbols of influence and access in politics. These relationships allow better access to resources and political support, creating a symbol of power in politics.
7. Gender Conflict in Politics: The conflict between gender norms and social expectations and Y's political aspirations is an example of symbolic interaction involving gender symbols. This conflict reflects the struggles faced by women involved in politics, who often have to deal with different gender stereotypes and expectations.

Limitations:

This research has some limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, this research is based on a qualitative approach with phenomenological ethnographic methods and symbolic interactionism meaning analysis. As a result, the findings from this study may not be generalizable to a wider context due to the focus on one particular picture.

Secondly, the use of symbolic interactionism analysis also involves a degree of subjectivity, where the researcher must interpret the data at hand. This may introduce bias and uncertainty in the research results. Finally, it should be noted that this research only looked at political meanings at the time of the research. Changes in political meanings or subsequent developments may affect the relevance of the findings in the long run.

Suggestions for further research:

For future researchers who want to deepen this topic, several suggestions can be considered. First, the research can be expanded by applying a comparative method that compares political narratives from different political leaders or political groups. This will help understand the differences and similarities in the use of political and gender symbols in different contexts.

In addition, field studies and interviews with political leaders, community members and gender activists can be a useful approach to gain first-hand perspectives on symbolic interactions in politics. This would overcome the limitations of secondary data and provide deeper insights into political dynamics.

Future research could also take a longitudinal approach to analyze the development of political narratives over time. This will help in understanding how

gender and political symbols develop and change over the long term.

In addition, more comprehensive research on gender norms in politics and their impact on women's participation in politics can also be a relevant research area.

These suggestions are expected to help future researchers in overcoming the limitations of this study and expanding the understanding of symbolic interactions in political careers and gender roles in political dynamics.

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