

Bourdieu's Habitus and Field: Implications on the Practice Aisiyah Cadre Candidacy of Legislative Elections 2024

Ikhrotul Fitriyah^{1*}, Lilik Wahyuni², Alifiulahtin Utaminingsih³

^{1,2,3} Master Program of Women Studies, Brawijaya University Malang Postgraduate, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: ikhrotul@student.ub.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This article discuss Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field about the candidacy practices of Aisiyah cadres running for legislative positions in East Java in the 2024 elections. Concerning the discourse of habitus formed from the socio-religious habitus formed through the experience in the Aisiyah organization, it transformed when they entered a political structure that was patriarchal, competitive, and transactional, and not gender-neutral. The method used in this study is qualitative with a phenomenological approach, the data source used is primary data, collected through semi-structured interviews with related sources. The results of this study show that the disposition of Aisiyah cadres in the political parties PAN, UMMAT and PDIP is based on inherent values in themselves and life journeys. In running their candidacy, they must adapt and build a strategy to navigate the contest arena by maximizing their modalities. The way is to approach party elites, local political figures, and organizational networks, take advantage of party assistance for campaigns, pengajian, and socialization with the transfer of their expertise

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INTRODUCTION

The legislative election of 2024, scheduled for February 14, 2024, to contest 120 seats in the East Java Regional House of Representatives for the 2024-2029 term. The election itself has already been intriguing, particularly regarding the candidacy process of female legislative candidates. On the other hand, the development of women's political participation within the open proportional electoral system opens opportunities for women to compete in the legislature. This aligns with the affirmative policy of a 30 percent quota for women, which serves as a crucial foundation for achieving women's political representation.

The constitution governing women's political representation is found in Article 26, paragraph 1 of Law No. 12 of 2003 on Elections, and the enforcement of Article 20 of Law No. 2 of 2008 on Political Parties, which mandates a minimum of 30% female representation. Furthermore, Article 53 of Law No. 10 of 2008 on Elections and the 2009 implementation of the zipper system in the legislative candidate list stipulates that for

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every three candidates, one must be a woman in each electoral district. These regulations have shown a result for the continuous increase in female representation, starting from the 2014 elections with 17.7%, the 2019 elections with 20.5%, and now increasing to 22.1% in the 2024 elections ([Perludem, 2024](#)).

Although the political system in elections provides affirmative action for female legislative candidates, in practice, the dominance of a patriarchal political habitus controlled by class structures in Indonesian society still does not allow female candidates to garner more votes than their male counterparts. It can be seen in the 2019 legislative elections ([Ramadhany & Rahmawati, 2020](#)). This phenomenon is not only caused by structural factors such as the electoral system and political party policies, but also by the habitus of women formed in patriarchal societies. Habitus, according to Pierre Bourdieu, are mental and cognitive structures that shape individual perceptions and actions in society. In the political context, women's habitus is often influenced by gender norms that place men as dominant actors, thus limiting women's space for movement and confidence to be actively involved in politics ([Bourdieu, P, 1977](#)).

In addition, patriarchal culture is also reflected in the recruitment process of political parties that are less friendly to gender issues ([Bulut & Yildirim, 2021](#); [Dewi, 2024](#); [Ohmura & Bailer, 2022](#)). Political parties often have difficulty recruiting female legislative candidates, and support for their election has not been maximized ([Blackman & Jackson, 2021](#); [Collignon, 2024](#); [Manik & Ekayanta, 2024](#); [Wäckerle, 2022](#)). As a result, although the quota of women's representation is met administratively, their political participation is practically limited ([OSCE/ODIHR, 2014](#); [Apriliandra & Krisnani, 2021](#)). In this context, the number of the involvement of women in 2024 legislative election has not meet the expectation, indicating that there is a problem with substantive political representation of women ([Gaol, 2023](#); [Hardjaloka, 2012](#)). Furthermore, it can be said that the attainment of women's political identity in Indonesia has not yet reached its maximum potential ([Wibisono, 2022](#)).

The political participation of women is not limited to cadres (key groups) within various political parties ([Adela, 2016](#); [Kusyuniardi, 2018](#); [Nurdin, 2021](#)). It becomes more intriguing when non-political party cadres also engage in the running for office for the 2024 legislative elections, having them already navigated the processes and stages of candidacy within political parties. Female candidates demonstrate that their attitudes and behaviors are influenced by gender dynamics and societal changes ([Schwindt-Bayer, 2020](#)). Female candidates demonstrate that their attitudes and behaviors are influenced by gender dynamics and societal changes ([Schwindt-Bayer, 2020](#)). Women candidates tend to prioritize financial capital, which may contribute to their reluctance to run for office ([Jenkins, 2007](#)). Despite these challenges, the presence of women in politics has been shown to bring a more cooperative leadership way to influence the legislative process ([Richard & Lawless, 2004](#)).

To examine this phenomenon, the author focuses on the participation of Aisyiyah cadres in the 2024 legislative contest in East Java as the subject of this research. This is particularly interesting to study because women within non-governmental organization networks not only possess strengths and resources but also have close ties to grassroots, trust, and shared values they champion. This should provide them with leverage to political parties as more than just quota fillers; they should be actively “fought for” to win

the contest. Women originating from NGO networks tend to have an inclusive perspective, aiming to achieve gender equality.

As representatives of the organization, Aisyiyah cadres who participate in candidacy undoubtedly undergo social changes. This phenomenon recalls one of Pierre Bourdieu's concepts regarding habitus. Habitus, as a system of long-lasting and evolving dispositions, functions as a generative basis for objectively structured and integrated practices (Bourdieu, 1990).

This transition involves a shift from being organization cadres to party cadres, where each cadre continues to utilize their resources to gain votes in the electoral arena. Female candidates from non-political parties who enter the political sphere have certainly developed self-awareness through individual internalization, coinciding with a shift in the habitus of candidates collectively controlled by the class structure within society. Thus, to navigate the competitive electoral arena, each candidate must possess strong capital, which is generally dominated by the male class structure.

The arena is defined as a distinct social space with its own set of rules, independent of external regulations (Bourdieu, 1990). The battleground faced by Aisyiyah cadres encompasses not only the electoral arena, which involves mobilizing constituent votes through campaigns. Additionally, they must navigate the competitive space involving other Islamic organizations such as Muslimat-NU and even contend with challenges within the sponsoring political party.

In the dominance of candidacy studies in the legislative realm, this study seeks to enrich the discourse on women's candidacy, especially related to the relationship between habitus and arena faced by Aisyiyah cadres in the 2024 legislative election contest in East Java. In this context, not only do they see Aisyiyah cadres as individual candidates who fight in contestation but they are also as representatives of Islamic organizations whose views, attitudes and culture are reflected through their behavior. For Bourdieu, habitus is the internalization of social conditions and one's ability to behave in social situations and conditions in each arena.

The study of candidacy extends beyond understanding the selection process through stages of recruitment, female candidate nomination, and election (Norris, 2014). It also seeks to uncover the reasons or motivations behind women's participation in legislative candidacy. Candidacy in the legislative realm emphasizes gender-neutral procedures and structures (Ranney, 1965; Rush, 1969) in the behavior of political party elites (Bochel & Denver, 1983; Gallagher & Marsh, 1988), or a combination of both (Norris & Lovenduski, 2009). But more than that, non-political women deciding to fight in a candidacy is a study that deserves further investigation, this is not only due to structural factors such as the electoral system and political party policies, but also to women's habitus formed in patriarchal societies. Habitus, according to Pierre Bourdieu, are mental and cognitive structures that shape individual perceptions and actions in society. In the political context, women's habitus is often influenced by gender norms that place men as dominant actors, thus limiting women's space for movement and confidence to be actively involved in politics

Generally, factors of the difficulties faced by Indonesian Muslim women to participate freely in public and political lives are cultural, religious, and political (Maula, 2016). Research in the Sleman Regency shows that although there is an increase in

women's representation in the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD), this is not significant because women's political capital is still controlled by patriarchal structures that dominate the political field. The social, economic, political, and symbolic capital possessed by women is often not strong enough to compete in the male-dominated political arena (Ramadhany & Rahmawati, 2020), the way women overcome obstacles in candidacy by leveraging women's networks to mobilize so-called "social capital"; utilizing the political and financial resources of relatives (usually men) of "political dynasties". (Aspinall et al., 2021), a finding that shows 44% of elected female members of the Indonesian DPR in 2019 were from political dynasties (Wardani & Subekti, 2021), female candidate campaigns in Surabaya (Tuasuun, 2015), female candidate campaigns from the National Awakening Party (PKB) in East Java (Kusyuniardi, 2018), legislative candidacy in 2019 in Bitung City (Tampinongkol et al., 2019) and Ambalu (Talaohu, 2021), women's motivations for joining political parties (Utama, 2021), and the role played by female candidates in Central Java who are elite members of women's religious organizations affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muslimat and Fatayat, shows that strong female candidates with grassroots support can still win office because of dynastic ties and connections with local political elites in getting women elected in an environment increasingly dominated by money politics and clientelism (Mahsun et al., 2021).

Not only in Indonesia that succeeded in electing the first Muslim woman as President in 2002 rather than Muslim countries like Malaysia (Ramadhan, 2020), Faith-based organizations can bridge civil society, politics, and the state in the public sphere with empowerment work in America (Wood & Warren, 2002), similar practices of women's candidacy under electoral systems are also observed in other countries such as Canada and Norway (Matland & Studlar, 1996), as well as Nigeria (Ugwu, C. S., & Okoye, C. A., 2022). This study fills the gap in the main research by emphasizing how the transformation of habitus changes from socio-religious to political habitus and how they adapt to party rules and develop new strategies to uphold organizational values in the midst of political pressure in the 2024 legislative election arena through the UMMAT party in East Java Province, from National Mandate Party (PAN) party in Sidoarjo Regency and Tulungagung Regency as well as The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) in Malang City and Regency Situbondo.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method. Through phenomenology, the author seeks to explore experienced changes in social habitus from participation as candidates. in phenomenologicxal research, author want to trace the way Aisyiyah cadres form, adjust, and even transform their habitus when moving from the sosio-religious arena to the political arena. Phenomenology allows researchers to explore the meaning of their political practice experiences. Because after all, this research is about seeing the experience, life, and appearance of the phenomenon and looking for the meaning of the various experiences that accompany it. A phenomenological description closely aligns with the naturalness (structured, qualitative, and supporting characteristics) of something. In other words, it captures the lived experience as it appears in consciousness and is perceived by the senses (Kuswarno, 2009).

Primary data collection involves semi-structured interviews and observation of the living environments of Aisyiyah cadres. Secondary sources include relevant documents, books, and journals. Informants were taken based on Letter No.413/PWA/A/X/2023, regarding the List of Aisyiyah Legislative Candidates in East Java, there are 30 female cadres registered in the DPT with consideration as active Aisyiyah administrators at both regional and local levels. Out of these 30 Aisyiyah cadres participating in the legislative contest, 16 are affiliated with UMMAT, 12 with PAN, and 2 with PDIP. The criteria or characteristics were taken based on consideration from the LPPA Aisyiyah leadership and the distribution of the party that oversees them and fulfils the elements of the research question 1) Aisyiyah cadres who are contesting for the first time and cadres who have participated in the 2029 legislative elections, 2) Being in an area that does not compete much with other Aisyiyah cadres.

From that exposure, informants were found who would represent each candidate: 2 were taken from PAN (FR in Tulungagung who had just participated in the 2024 legislative election and LN in Sidoarjo who had participated in the 2019 legislative election), 2 from PDIP (AR and DW who were both new to contestation) and 1 representative from UMMAT (NUI) because it was a new party and did not pass the parliamentary threshold, as well as a representative of the East Java Aisyiyah leadership who was value-free and prioritised empathy for the informant's narrative. The data analysis technique in this study refers to the opinion of Miles and Huberman and Saldana (2014: 12-14), the data analysis used is data condensation, data presentation and conclusions by sorting, simplifying rough data from interviews, observations, or documents into a more organised form as follows:

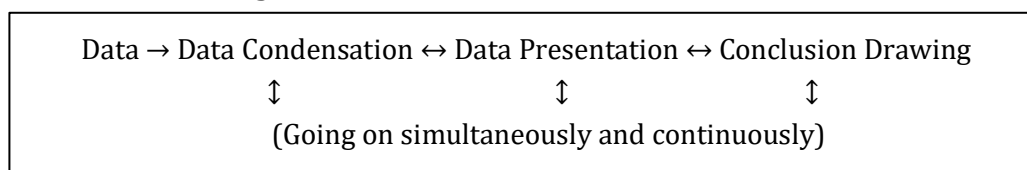


Figure 1. Data analysis process

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a faith-based women's organization (Momen, 2023; Ramadhan, 2020; Warren, 2009), Aisyiyah contributes not only to the empowerment of women in social-religious, educational, and economic fields, but also in national politics. To enhance women's political representation, Aisyiyah employs various strategies, including promoting progressive Islamic concepts (Azizah, ZA, & Maksum, 2022). It serves as the women's wing of Muhammadiyah, which is responsive to women's advancement and acceptance of women as leaders within Muhammadiyah's culture, where many women hold significant positions in both council and institutional leadership (Pranawati, 2006).

Muhammadiyah's perspective on women's leadership plays a significant role in the women's movement, indicating that Muhammadiyah members' views have shifted towards supporting women's leadership. This stance is currently a crucial factor in enhancing women's status (Dewi, 2008). As a result, it has been found that 70% of Muhammadiyah women, including Aisyiyah and Nasyyatul Aisyiyah members, actively engage in leadership and political roles in Central Kalimantan (Handayani & Rosmilawati, 2019).

As non-party cadre candidates, members of Aisyiyah have undergone the selection process according to the sponsoring political party's regulations. They reported no significant obstacles during the certification phase, where candidates are required to submit formal requirements as stipulated by the party. The nomination phase involves selecting qualified individuals based on selectors' criteria, which determines the candidate ranking. The election phase is the final step, deciding who will win the legislative election (Dewi, Ekawati, & Kusumaningtyas, 2018).

Interview excerpt representing the recruitment selection process during the nomination stage:

- (1) Regarding the administrative recruitment process, I think it is normative, as established by national legislation. There were no interviews... Just questions about background, daily activities... only asked about the seriousness, whether they could genuinely gather a support base or not... That's all when it comes to... perhaps, in quotes, like in other parties where I've often heard about initial fees for registration (AR, 10 Mei 2024).

In the 2024 legislative election, almost all major parties in Indonesia met the 30% women quota target. According to the recapitulation data of the 2024 legislative election results announced by the General Election Commission (KPU) on March 20, 2024, out of the 8 parties that passed the 4% parliamentary threshold and are likely to gain seats in each electoral district. It is estimated that 127 women legislative candidates were elected to the House of Representatives (DPR) from a total of 24 participating political parties (Adiantoro, 2024).

Table 1. Electoral Districts (Dapil) of East Java for the 2024 Legislative Election

No.	Electoral District (Dapil)	Coverage Areas
1	East Java 1	Surabaya
2	East Java 2	Sidoarjo
3	East Java 3	Pasuruan, Probolinggo
4	East Java 4	Banyuwangi, Bondowoso, Situbondo
5	East Java 5	Jember, Lumajang
6	East Java 6	Greater Malang (Malang City, Malang Regency, Batu City)
7	East Java 7	Blitar, Tulungagung
8	East Java 8	Kediri (Kabupaten and Kota)
9	East Java 9	Ngawi, Ponorogo, Trenggalek, Pacitan, Magetan
10	East Java 10	Jombang, Mojokerto (Regency and City)
11	East Java 11	Nganjuk, Madiun (Regency and City)
12	East Java 12	Bojonegoro, Tuban
13	East Java 13	Gresik, Lamongan
14	East Java 14	Madura (Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, Sumenep)

Source: dprd.jatimprov.go.id, 2024

The legislative election in East Java not only highlights the party's power, but also offers insight into the local political landscape within electoral districts across various agglomeration-cultural regions such as Arek, Mataraman, Tapal Kuda, Pantura, and Madura, where the electability is still predominantly held by the National Awakening Party (PKB). As Aisyiyah cadres running for the 2024 legislative election, NUI (UMMAT Party candidate), FN and LN (PAN candidates), and AR and DW (PDIP candidates) can

utilize this momentum to advance their candidacies. The true challenge lies during the election period, as they face the broader arena of campaigning to secure votes in the 2024 legislative election.

The political party platform significantly influences the choices of Aisyiyah cadres in their candidacy. This influence is not solely based on the fact that most Muhammadiyah members believe PAN and the UMMAT Party are founded by Muhammadiyah figures, but also on the party ideologies aligning with their values. Meanwhile, those who voted for the PDIP party believe that there is a similarity in the values of social struggle, equality, and justice, which are the same as the ideology of PDIP. Essentially, Muhammadiyah as an organization is not political and does not affiliate with any political party, allowing its cadres the freedom to choose any party.

Differences in the choice of political parties form the trajectory of a cadre, cadres who choose PAN, UMMAT and PDIP political parties will certainly experience different changes in habitus. In the political parties PAN and UMMAT, where generally Muhammadiyah cadres are also cadres in the two parties, it is possible that there is no significant change in habitus both individually and collectively. Meanwhile, those who voted for PDIP received less responsiveness from the Muhammadiyah leadership and had to show their ability to follow the rhythm of political parties. This can be seen from the results of the following interview:

- (2) Muhammadiyah and Aisyiyah... If the PDM may be clear, the PCM is not clear, the PCA is surprised that everything can... Even though we have a design that we can't choose to have... Like that. What I'm afraid of is not that I win or lose... What I worry about is when I don't find a good group that can help me with that. But that's the upheaval... This means that in the PDI body itself, after I have carried out these activities, it is quite in the spotlight... Positive. But in the body of Muhammadiyah Itu itself which still does not accept. Even recess time. I invited the workshop of the council members, PDM, PCM was not present there so I was okay, it doesn't matter to that. The important thing is that I am Bismillah, (AR, 10 Mei 2024)
- (3) I was a little surprised when I first attended a work meeting at PDI,.. We must loudly voice the yells... long live PDI.. and listen carefully to the direction of the meeting leader, because I have to quickly learn it to be recognized as their cadre (DW, 20 M2i 2024)

From here, it can be seen that the transformation process in different social fields is visible. This process has a relationship between habitus and capital owned by Aisyiyah cadres in influencing their movement from one social arena to the political arena. The trajectory of cadres from socio-religious organizations to political party cadres must have given rise to significant changes and adaptations in habitus and capital use (Fowler, 2020). They must navigate and balance the values and dispositions of the terrain of origin (social-religious) with the demands and dynamics of the new arena (political). Success in political candidacy depends heavily on the ability to integrate and utilize the modalities possessed in the political arena, as well as adapt their habitus to suit the demands of the political arena.

Transformation of the Habitus of Aisyiyah Cadres Before and After Joining a Political Party

Aisyiyah cadres, as part of the Muhammadiyah women's organization, have a habitus formed through Islamic values, simplicity, and social service. This habitus is

reflected in their orientation towards da'wah, education, and community empowerment. Although they have different backgrounds, their habits in the socio-religious realm (empowerment work) have shaped them into formidable politicians with social, cultural capital and activist experiences in the past.

Table 2. Profile and Motivation of Aisiyah Cadres in the 2024 Legislative Election

Cadre's initials	No. Sort	Constituency/ District	Profile	Motivation
FN (PAN)	1	Tulungagung 3/ Kalidawir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bachelor of Nursing - Housewife - Chair of the PCA Health Council and Chair of the Aisiyah branch - Trustee of the Tahfiz Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was no special motivation, just an offer from my husband - Looking up to the figure of a PAN woman who is active in helping residents
LN (PAN)	3	Sidoarjo 6/ Waru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bachelor of Psychology - Housewife - Since 2019, PAN cadres have been trusted to serve in the economic sector - Member of MEK PWA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trying for the second time as a legislative candidate - Helping women, especially mothers, to get out of the trap of usury debt
AR (PDI)	2	Situbondo 5/ Kendit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bachelor of Sociology - HMI Activist - Housewife - Rural PNPM Facilitator (2007-2016) - Facilitator of the Jalin Mitra Jatim and Jatim Pustaka 2022 foundations - Founder of the TB Care Foundation - PDA deputy secretary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouragement from the Regent of Sidoarjo - Expanding networks and contributions in community service, especially related to health issues
DW (PDI)	8	Malang City 3/ Kedungkandang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bachelor of Economics - HMI Activist - Housewife - Secretary of LIRA Malang City - Participated in the 2018 Malang City KPU selection - Malang City educational activist - Member of MEM PDA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patron encouragement from political teachers - Wanting to experience the contestation - Diaspora cadres in politics
NUI (UMMAT)	2	East Java DPRD 1/ Simokerto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bachelor of Biology - Masters in Islamic Education - Middle school teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuing the struggle of Muhammadiyah figures

- 2019 PAN legislative candidates
- Provincial UMMAT party administrator
- Secretary of LLHPB PDA
- Treasurer of the Wiyung PCM Tablighi Council

Source: Author, 2024

From the table above, it is found that the habitus of Aisiyah cadres is the habitus of a woman who habitually engages in social interactions, supported by higher education and activism activities. Habitus as a system of dispositions also encompasses long-lasting inclinations that can be applied across different domains. On one hand, habitus functions as a structure shaping social life. On the other hand, habitus is seen as a structure shaped by social life (Bourdieu, 1990).

Bourdieu defines habitus as a long-lasting and variable system (durable, transposable disposition) that serves as a generative basis for objectively structured and integrated practices (Lumendek, Kudubun, & Susanti, 2022). This change in habitus cannot be separated from a series of candidacy processes, where it is also influenced by social construction. According to Pierre Bourdieu, there is a social construct that is then attached to a certain body and legitimizes a form of domination related to morality and ethics. Habitus is not something natural or innate. This is derived from a product of history that is about social experience and education as well as training that has been carried out (which applies aspects of what remains unconscious of habitus can be partially formed consciously and explicitly) (Musarrofa, 2019; Santoro, 2011).

In Bourdieu's perspective, habitus is formed through dialectical relations, which is a process of internalizing the exterior and externalizing the interior. The process of internalizing the exterior can be interpreted as the process of applying and appreciating a person to the situation and environmental conditions in which he or she is located. Meanwhile, the process of internalization is the embodiment of the result of self-appreciation to the external realm (social space) in which one lives (Bourdieu & L, 1992). Aisiyah cadres externalize what they learn and use to build their quality by being supported by existing capital through the practice of political institutionalization during legislative contests. Habitus can also be flexible, providing room for adaptation for individuals related to their position in the social arena.

When entering the practical political arena, there is a significant transformation of habitus. Aisiyah cadres have to adjust to the logic of a competitive and often patriarchal political field. They face challenges in maintaining organizational values while meeting practical political demands, such as campaigning, power negotiations, and electoral strategy. This transformation reflects a shift from a socio-religious habitus to a more pragmatic political habitus. According to Bourdieu, the success of individuals in a field is greatly influenced by the accumulation and conversion of different types of capital (Bourdieu, P, 1977). In this context, Aisiyah cadres use more social capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital without denying economic capital. The combination and conversion of these capitals determine the success of Aisiyah cadres in the contestation (Table 3). A deficiency in one of the capitals can hinder their success, while an advantage in a particular capital can be a determining factor in victory.

Table 3. Linkages between Political Habitus and Modalities of Aisyiyah Cadres

Aisyiyah Cadres	Political Habitus and Modalities	Vote acquisition
FR	FR is a housewife but for 2 periods (10 years), she internalized and accompanied her husband as a council member in recess activities and party activities, so that FR was quick to adapt and had no difficulty in carrying out his role as a novice politician, he admitted that he had social work habits to help the community such as building a mosque and tahfidz house in his home environment besides being a gentle self, Selling basic food packages at low prices during the campaign period, visiting every assembly/recitation to get vote support	5424
LN	LN is an Aisyiyah cadre and a PAN cadre for 2 periods. He admitted that he had no difficulty in dividing institutional and party tasks because there was no difference where he was placed in the social and economic fields of the people that he was interested in. Jumping as a candidate is not a new thing because he previously contested in the same constituency in 2019. So that the 2024 legislative election only requires adjustments to new rules and part of self-improvement	511
AR	Departing from an activist who often works in the social realm where his home is the office of the Bhanu Yasa Sejahtera Foundation (YABHYSA), it continues to strive to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria. AR builds itself with proficiency in communication and networking with various levels of society. For him, entering the political world with the PDIP vehicle is to test the principles that he has been holding for the benefit of the people. He did not hesitate to ask for the help of the Regent of Situbondo and PDIP officials during the campaign and was never absent from participating in every party activity. AR utilizes party programs, such as the distribution of social assistance programs, house renovation programs as many as 10 items, culvert repairs and electricity procurement.	585
DW	DW is a housewife who has a holistic view of the political world. DW's participation in the contest could not be separated from the relationship and encouragement of comrades-in-arms, bohir as well as relations with academics and youth from the Muhammadiyah ortom. DW has a kinship line with PDIP figures in Ponorogo so that for him there is no difficulty in adapting to PDIP cadres and rules in Malang City. He utilizes all available resources without spending personal capital to meet his needs during the campaign, such as utilizing party funds, and facilities from educational institutions such as ambulances and literacy cars for campaign programs	147
NUI	NUI, which was previously also a PAN administrator, switched to UMMAT because according to him, PAN was no longer in accordance with the party's ideology. NUI, which is an ideological cadre of Muhammadiyah, was formed in the awareness of the struggle of his parents (his father) to serve the organization by entering parliament through a women's quota even though he knew that UMMAT would	459

not pass the parliamentary threshold, but for him to start again the struggle in the political field in accordance with his conscience was a must. He also has to spend personal funds for his campaign needs

Source: Interview results by author, 2024

These experiences subsequently form a political habitus characterized by perseverance, advocacy, and concern for the surrounding environment. The candidates acknowledge the need to adapt widely due to the demands for vote acquisition, without forsaking the inherent values as cadres of the organization. Thus, in practice, when entering the electoral campaign arena, every activity session undertaken highlights the attributes of the endorsing party. The approach involves persuasive methods long practiced by Aisiyah cadres in their social activities, such as active participation in religious study groups, socializing topics aligned with their expertise (health, economy, environment), providing political education tailored to the younger generation, and rejecting all forms of political malpractice through offering open dialogue, focused discussions, and fostering a discourse on politics that is honest, just, and equitable, along with displaying a good demeanor or personal appearance. This is illustrated in the following figure.

Dynamics of the Aisiyah Cadre Contestation Arena

In the 2024 elections, which encompass presidential and legislative elections at the national, provincial, and district/city levels, 24 parties qualified through the General Election Commission selection process. Among these 24 parties, PDIP emerged as the winner in the legislative elections. However, unlike the 2014 and 2019 elections where PDIP secured victories in both executive and legislative branches, in the 2024 elections, PDIP only succeeded in the legislative branch. The context of electoral elections organized by Indonesia is intriguing to examine, not only in terms of the development of democratization, the party system, and the electoral system, but also in the aspect of women's involvement in politics, which is mandated by the constitution.

Organizationally, Aisiyah does not engage in practical political activities to maintain the purity of its movement as a community organization. Aisiyah is an autonomous organization under Muhammadiyah, focusing on social, economic, and educational activities. Aisiyah's involvement in the political sphere is aimed to respond to current social and political issues, by supporting Muhammadiyah cadres who are willing to participate in political contests through elections.

Aisiyah's perspective on women's roles in politics can be discerned from the decisions of Muhammadiyah institutions. The decisions of the Majelis Tarjih, compiled in "*Adabul Mar'ah Fil Islam*", affirm that women are allowed to be leaders. This interpretation encompasses a broad scope, not only taking roles in practical politics through political superstructure institutions at the central and regional levels, but also through household activities by actively participating in beneficial community activities ([Muhammadiyah, 1982](#)).

After joining a political party, 'Aisiyah cadres faced complex internal dynamics. They had to adapt to a hierarchical and often male-dominated party structure. Internal competition for strategic positions and party support is a challenge in itself. Externally, Aisiyah cadres compete with other candidates in competitive election contests. They must build political networks, gain voter support, and confront the gender stereotypes

inherent in society. These dynamics require them to develop adaptive strategies and strengthen their political capacity. This can be seen in the following activities (Figure 2):



Figure 2. Socialization of Aisiyah Cadre Candidates in Constituents

The contest of Aisiyah cadres in their candidacy for legislative positions becomes apparent when they enter the campaign arena. According to Bourdieu, an arena is seen as a relational space that connotes competition or the struggle for positions, making the social structure dynamic, where agents can shift positions, indicating a battle or struggle (Ritzer & Goodman, 2008). The struggle for legitimacy within the arena cannot be undertaken empty-handed; thus, each agent must accumulate their own capital to stake in the competition, whether in the contest for a constituency within the same electoral district among party cadres, in the arena for constituent acquisition, or among other Islamic organizations to secure votes in the 2024 legislative elections. This also includes internal struggles within Aisiyah, particularly for cadres choosing the PDIP party. This statement was articulated by the following informant:

- (4) Actually, our movement compared to the Nahdliyin is quite far behind... The Nahdliyin have been thinking pragmatically for quite a long time, whereas we supposedly focus on value politics... So, NU (Nadhlatul Ulama) has long been involved in the political diaspora... Even within PDIP, many of my colleagues... are from NU rather than Abangan... Nowadays, many positions are held by Nahdliyin (AR, 10 Mei 2024).

The struggle of Aisiyah cadres in the political arena can be seen in the following Figure 3:

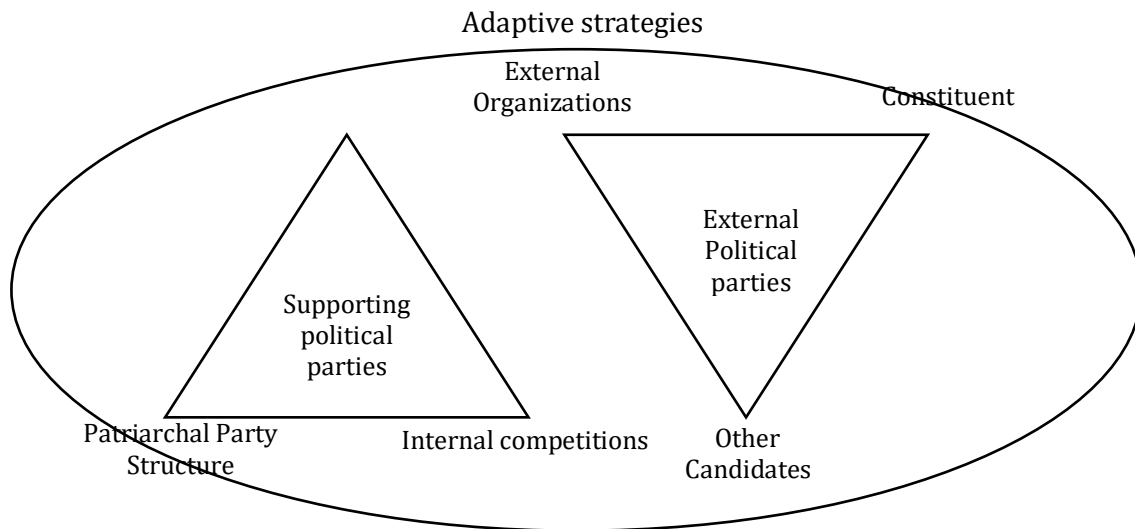


Figure 3. Internal and External Dynamics of Aisyiyah Cadre in Political Parties

The figure above is the arena faced by Aisyiyah cadres during the contest which requires an adaptive strategy. Arenas that are connected within supporting political parties and outside political parties are increasingly complex. Aisyiyah cadres have to face a patriarchal political party structure with male dominance and hierarchy as well as competition between fellow party candidates in one constituency. Most political parties in Indonesia still have a masculine structure, both in leadership, decision-making, and work culture. This makes women, including Aisyiyah cadres, experience a change in habitus from the socio-religious arena to a political arena full of competition, formality, and power relations in the field that has been formed by male norms. Meanwhile, in the hierarchical structure of political parties, Aisyiyah cadres who are familiar with the collective leadership system and deliberation values must position themselves, build power relations, and understand the rules of the game in a system that is not always inclusive of women.

In an open proportional system by placing the list of candidates' sequential numbers, it becomes a battle arena for Aisyiyah cadres after passing the candidacy stage because the candidates who are at the top usually have the closest relationship with the party elite and have the greatest chance of winning the contest compared to the candidates who occupy the lowest number order. The problem of placing the serial numbers of the candidates further emphasizes the high competition between candidates among other parties for the most votes. So they must be ready to receive the serial number given by the party leader.

The struggle of Aisyiyah cadres in the political arena as legislative candidates is intriguing to study because it involves a domain of dominance and power. This arena is largely dominated by cadres from the National Awakening Party (PKB), affiliated with the Islamic organization Nahdlatul Ulama. According to data from the East Java General Elections Commission (KPU), PKB has consistently dominated the legislative elections, securing 4,053,015 votes and 20 seats in 2014, 4,209,000 votes and 25 seats in 2019, and 4,517,228 votes with 27 seats in 2024 (KPU, 2014; KPU, 2019; KPU, 2024). This is where the real battle is over, where the habitus of cadres formed by Muhammadiyah religious

organizations has changed due to the encouragement of higher political competence. They then use social capital and adaptive strategies that are appropriate to the political context to not rely on the assistance of political parties. Aisyiyah cadres then played their capital, this was revealed in the following interview:

(5) Several months before the campaign period, we had already started to move. Indeed, it requires an approach, and the favored approach is direct engagement. We go directly to the field. Sometimes, candidates are represented by others and never show up themselves, only sending their teams. Many do this; they don't want to come. So, in meetings, it's only their teams that show up. As for me, I prefer to handle it myself and be genuinely present. This way, I truly know what's happening. Most of the community prefers this; they want to know who the candidate is and meet the person directly. This allows us to talk and share. (FR, 20 Maret 2024).

The battleground involving the local election at the local level illustrates the complex relationship between agents and structures. These relationships start from a network of relationships, political kinships, institutional relationships, resource allocation, all of which are charged to the candidates, all of which contribute to the sustainability of the interests of political party power for the upcoming elections. This relationship greatly affects the position of the party at the local level in gathering political support at the grassroots level (Wardani, 2018). So, in the context of practice, according to Bourdieu, the implications of the participation of Aisyiyah cadres in the 2024 legislative election contest reflect the dynamics and relationships in which the success of individuals in a field is greatly influenced by the accumulation and conversion of various types of capital.

CONCLUSION

The persistent phenomenon of women's challenges in politics must be taken seriously by all sectors to achieve gender equality. Over the periods of the 2014, 2019, and 2024 legislative elections, the representation of women as election participants at regional, provincial, and national levels has consistently increased by over 40 percent. However, their election has never exceeded the minimum threshold of 30 percent. Despite fulfilling the candidacy quota, many issues still impede women's achievements.

Aisyiyah is one of the women's Islamic organizations that plays an important role in empowering women in the country. Therefore, the presence of Aisyiyah cadres in the national and local political arena does not need to be doubted. The nomination of Aisyiyah cadres as legislative candidates is a form of contribution to political and national empowerment. Aisyiyah cadres who have decided to run for office in the 2024 legislative election contest are then given assistance through the Aisyiyah Research and Development Institute (LPPA) of the Aisyiyah regional leadership. The assistance aims to explore and build their capacity and capabilities to be ready to enter the political world. The involvement of Aisyiyah cadres in the 2024 legislative election contest reflects the dynamics of candidacy practices that have been passed. The implications of this practice can be seen from the change in religious social habitus – collective, relational, and normative – when entering the competitive and hierarchical political arena. The change in habitus occurs when he has been declared as a party cadre and must follow party rules in acting. This can be seen when party activities such as campaigns are in accordance with the jargon of the political party that oversees them and carry out the vision and mission

of the party and also carry out the party's direction to voice the party's presidential candidate. So they must always be adaptive in navigating the political arena to get constituent votes in the midst of a party political arena that is not neutral with a party structure that tends to be masculine and transactional

This study shows the relevance of Bourdieu's conception of habitus and arena in explaining the complexity of the relationship between agents, structures, and capital in religious and patriarchal political contexts. These findings enrich the study of politics and gender in Indonesia by showing how the habitus of Aisyiyah cadres in the electoral political arena is used as a lesson that women departing from religious organizations become resources that are ready to penetrate candidacy which can then become reflective material on power dynamics, gender relations, and the ethics of political struggle.

For further research, the gaps that have not been elaborated are part of the cadre modality that can be added to enrich this study because after all, the success of Aisyiyah cadres in politics is greatly influenced by their resources both in building networks across communities and parties, financial resources, symbolic resistance that can be shown by Aisyiyah cadres both individually and collectively and it is also important to elaborate the cultural capital of the candidates. Therefore, partnerships between cadres across ideologies are needed to support each other and build a collective power base for women who are fighting in electoral elections.

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