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Political Marketing and Gender Relations in Local Election: A Case Study of ASSIFA in Sumenep 2010

This paper seeks to observe, more deeply, the struggles of women in the race for public officers’ position, primarily towards the executive positions such as the head of regency (bupati), given that the electoral system has implications for the climate of increased competition among candidates. For women, this high-level competition is resulted from the combination with the cultural background that still tend to give negative stereotypes of women. This paper focuses on the political marketing of Dewi Khalifah in the 2010 Sumenep election, that successfully put Khalifah in the second place. Although defeated, this is one of the achievements in the history of the women struggles as political candidates, since the socio-cultural background of the Madurese community in general is a religious and patriarchal which almost does not allow women to become political leaders. This qualitative research using in-depth interview finds the fact that women can compete with men in a democratic manner if they deal with the concept of political marketing on the importance of building a relational connection with the potential voters. By looking at the whole process of marketing strategy, the combination of political products and the delivery process, it appears that even though she is a woman, Khalifah became a dominant figure of in gathering the votes. Khalifah was more able in utilizing her networks, which come from Muslimat NU, Kyai’s network, as well as the students and the alumni networks of the boarding schools.

Keyword: political, marketing, gender, local, election, Sumenep, Khalifah,

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