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# Women's Perceptions about Glass Ceiling in their Career Development in Local Bureaucracy in Indonesia

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**Abstract.** Inadequate women representation in upper position in workforce shows the persistence of the glass ceiling phenomenon in women career development. In Indonesia's bureaucracy, although the number of women civil service in government workforce had increased for recent years, only few numbers of women civil services who have structural positions, especially in upper echelon (high leader position). This problem is more noticeably on the local government bureaucracy. Focus of this study is to identify glass ceiling embodied in the career barriers women civil service in local bureaucracy. This study was conducted using qualitative method. Interviews were conducted against women civil service who held structural position in the provincial government of Special Region of Yogyakarta, and also toward key person related to civil service career development in Local Civil Service Agency of the Province of Special Region of Yogyakarta, and National Civil Service Agency. The study also based on secondary data. Grounded theory approach is used to analyze the data. Finding of this research show using open coding the barriers of women civil service career development can be identified into four categories that is individual, interpersonal, organizational, family, and societal. To find the glass ceiling that faced by women, it is needed to separating artificial barriers (glass ceiling) and natural barriers. Using axial coding, the barriers can be identified into two sub-categories, that is natural barriers and artificial barriers.

**Keywords:** glass ceiling, women civil service, women career development

**Abstrak.** Representasi perempuan yang tidak memadai di dalam struktur karir dalam angkatan kerja menunjukkan kegigihan fenomena glass ceiling dalam pengembangan karier perempuan. Dalam birokrasi Indonesia, meskipun jumlah pegawai negeri sipil perempuan dalam angkatan kerja pemerintah telah meningkat selama beberapa tahun terakhir, hanya sedikit jumlah pegawai sipil perempuan yang memiliki posisi struktural, terutama di eselon atas (posisi pemimpin tinggi). Masalah ini lebih terasa pada birokrasi pemerintah daerah. Fokus dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi glass ceiling yang diwujudkan dalam hambatan karir pegawai negeri sipil perempuan dalam birokrasi lokal. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif. Wawancara dilakukan terhadap pegawai negeri sipil yang menduduki jabatan struktural di pemerintah provinsi DIY, dan juga terhadap orang yang memegang posisi kunci yang terkait dengan pengembangan karir pegawai negeri di Dinas Sipil Daerah Provinsi DIY, dan Badan Kepegawaian Nasional. Penelitian ini juga didasarkan pada data sekunder. Pendekatan teori dasar digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan penggunaan kode terbuka hambatan pengembangan karir pegawai negeri sipil dapat diidentifikasi menjadi empat kategori yaitu individu, interpersonal, organisasi, keluarga, dan masyarakat. Untuk menemukan glass ceiling yang dihadapi oleh perempuan, diperlukan untuk memisahkan penghalang buatan dan penghalang alami. Dengan menggunakan kode aksial, penghalang dapat diidentifikasi menjadi dua sub-kategori, yaitu penghalang alami dan penghalang buatan.

**Kata kunci:** glass ceiling, pegawai negeri sipil perempuan, pengembangan karier perempuan

## INTRODUCTION

Women under-representation is one of gender issues that had been a major area in organization studies both the public and the private sectors (Bullard, Angela M. and Wright, Deil S. 1993). Despite an increasing number of women employment in the workforce, there is a small percentage of women holding managerial decision making or managerial positions on the overall number of women in the workforce. It also occurs in public organizations.

Women representation in upper echelon (high leadership position) in bureaucracy is important, due that positions are strategic decision makers within the bureaucracy. According to Reid, Kerr and Miller (Newman, Meredith A. 1996), participation by women in public management is important, both for women and the public agencies in which they serve. Numerous studies find that women

bring a different perspective to public policy problems. The lack of women representation in high leadership positions means that decision making in governance process are dominated by men. According to representative bureaucracy, the term active representation assumed that bureaucrats would deliberately act in the interests of the population they represent. So that the lack of women representation as strategic decision maker in bureaucracy will result in a lack of gender sensitive policies. Meanwhile the Indonesian government is currently implementing gender mainstreaming strategy, which aims to empower women and realize gender equality in development. This strategy would require more gender-sensitive policies.

Women under-representation in upper positions in government organization is globally problems. It occurs many states, such as US (Ballard, Velma J. 2015; D'Agostino, Maria and Levine, Hessile. 2010), Canada (Gray, Linda.

2011), and South Korea (August, Rachel A. and Tuten, Tracy L. 2003; Choi, Yujin. 2015). The problem of the lack of representation of women in high positions in government bureaucracies, or top management in the private sector, is often associated with patriarchal cultural factors. Several studies have shown that Asian countries tend to have a strong patriarchal culture, which influences the phenomenon of women's lack of representation in high positions (Choi, Sungjo and Park, Chun Oh. 2014;

Marhaeni, AA Istri Ngurah, 2011; Murniati, Caecilia Titiek. 2012).

The phenomenon of women under-representation in upper position in government organization is also occurs in Indonesia. Women's participation in the government's workforce in Indonesia has increased significantly in recent years. Percentage of women in the bureaucracy in Indonesia was about 44 percent in 2017 become 48.89 percent in 2015 (Table 1).

**Table 1. The number of civil service in Indonesia separated by gender**

Year	Men		Women		Total
	Amount	%	Amount	%	
2007	2.292.555	56,00	1.774.646	44,00	4.067.201
2010	2.460.283	53,51	2.137.817	46,49	4.598.100
2013	2.260.608	51,82	2.102.197	48,18	4.362.805
2014	2.288.631	51,37	2.166.672	48,63	4.455.303
2015	2.319.334	51,11	2.218.820	48,89	4.538.154

Source: Internal data from National Civil Service Agency.

Despite the increasing number of women civil service in Indonesia's bureaucracy workforce to be almost equal to the number of men civil service, representation of women civil service in upper position (high leadership position) only 17.42 percent of all official of high leadership position.

In overall there are 443,281 civil service that hold structural positions. Of this amount, only 29.76 percent are women civil service. The largest percentage is official in low-level echelon, and the smallest percentage is official in the top level echelon (Table 2).

**Table 2. The number of structural official in Indonesia's bureucracy by gender bureucracy**

Structural Job	Men		Women		Total	%
	Amount	%	Amount	%		
Echelon I	1.344	0,30	497	0,11	1.841	0,42
Echelon II	23.913	5,39	4.831	1,09	28.744	6,48
Echelon III	77.542	17,49	20.275	4,57	97.817	22,07
Echelon IV	208.582	47,05	106.297	23,98	314.879	71,03
Total	311.381	70,24	131.900	29,76	443.281	100

Source: Internal data from Local Civil Service Agency of the Provincial Government of DIY.

The phenomenon of women's under-representation in the upper echelons occurs in both central and local government in Indonesia. This phenomenon became more strategic in local government, due the most of civil service in Indonesia (79.05 percent) are local or regional civil service. So that phenomenon women's under representation in high leadership position also occurred in almost all of the local government in Indonesia, include the Province of Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY). According to internal data of Local Civil Service Agency of the Province of DIY, there are only nine women civil service that occupy the high leader position (24,3 percent), out of 37 official of upper echelon (high leader position).

Empirically, women under-representation in upper position related to women career development or upward mobility in public organizations (Ballard, Velma J. 2015; Bullard, Angela M. and Wright, Deil S. 1993; Burke, Ronald J. 2001; Choi, Sungjo and Park, Chun Oh. 2014; Choi, Yujin. 2015; US Merit System Protection Board. 2011). On one hand the number of women civil service is almost equal with men civil service, but women civil service do not contribute strategic role in the decision

making in the process of governance and development. Due to structural positions are career positions, so this phenomenon can be assumed that the career development of women civil service in the high structural position relatively slower compared to men civil service.

Career development has traditionally conceptualized as entailing a successive and systematic sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with work related experiences, which acknowledges the individual's personal life over the entire span of the cycle (Mavin, Sharon. 2001). Related to career in theory and practice, traditional notion of career development, working pattern and full-timer career are based on the typical working lives of men. They likely appropriate with life cycle of men, even though women have fundamentally different experiences and situations when developing their career, compared with men (Mavin, Sharon. 2001). Even more, society and organizations continue to force women to conform to the traditional stereotype of male workers. This conditions cause women facing many barriers in their career development and achievement. The barriers faced by women in their career development and

achievement are often associated with the term glass ceiling (Bombuwela P.M. and Chamaru, De Alwis A. 2013; Bullard, Angela M. and Wright, Deil S. 1993; Burke, Ronald and Vinnicombe, Susan. 2005; Choi, Sungjo and Park, Chun Oh. 2014, Cornelius, Nelarine and Skinner, Denise. 2005; Daley, Dennis M. 1998; Murniati, Caecilia Titiek. 2012; Newman, Meredith A. 1996).

The glass ceiling metaphor is frequently used to describe the obstacles and barriers, that is transparent, that prevent women seeking promotions to the top levels of organizations (Burke, Ronald and Vinnicombe, Susan. 2005). In other word, Glass ceiling is a term for a smooth and transparent barriers, but so strongly inhibits women (or minorities) to expand or move up in the management hierarchy (Choi, Sungjo and Park, Chun Oh. 2014). So that glass ceiling is often not visible, but can be felt by women. Bullard and Wright (Bullard, Angela M. and Wright, Deil S. 1993) cited the glass ceiling as a phenomenon when female employees the opportunity to occupy a high position in the organizational structure, but for a reason beyond the issue of qualifications, are unable to obtain or get it. Specifically, US Dept of Labor in 1991 (Hind, Patricia and Baruch, Yehuda. 1997) define that glass ceiling is the artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upwards in their organization. According to two opinions above, glass ceiling is barrier that invisible and artificial.

Many studies show that glass ceiling phenomenon occurs in both private and public organization. In the context of public organizations, although the participation of women in the workforce is increased and the opportunity to occupy high positions open to women, but the facts prove that the career achievement of women in high positions are very rare. This paper focused on identifying glass ceiling phenomenon among women civil service in local government in Indonesia.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This study based on qualitative inquiry, that using grounded theory methodology. This method is used

according to the researcher’s needs to gather deep information about the glass ceiling phenomenon among women civil service in local bureaucracy. Grounded theory method means that theory that derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process (Strauss, Anselm and Corbin, Juliet. 1998). In this method, data collection, analysis and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another (Strauss, Anselm and Corbin, Juliet. 1998).

Data collection in this research was using in-depth interviews to obtain primary data. Documentation carried out in order to obtain secondary data. Locus of this study is local government, namely provincial government of DIY. Interview conducted against 8 women civil service include echelon II, III and IV. Determination of 8 participants is based on the notion that qualitative inquiry is more emphasis on in-depth on a relatively small sample that be selected purposively (Patton, Michael Quinn. 2002). Interviews were also conducted on the official of Local Civil Service Agency of DIY. Interviews were conducted using interview guide that contains primary questions, which could be developed at the time of interview. The primary question includes questions about the experience of women civil service on glass ceiling in order to identify the barriers for their career development.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The number of civil services of the province of Yogyakarta in 2016 is about 6,707 people, that consisting of 3,898 men civil service and 2,809 women civil service. Percentage of the number of women civil service against men civil service has increased, from 48 percent in 2015 to 49 percent in 2016. That is mean that the number of women civil service almost equal with men civil service.

According to data of Local Civil Service Agency of the provincial government of DIY, percentage of women civil services who occupies high leader position only 24.3 percent (Table 3). However, the percentage of women representation in high leader position of the provincial government of DIY is higher than percentage of national level (17.42 percent).

**Table 3. The number of structural official in the Provincial Government of DIY (2016)**

Level of Structural Position	Men Civil Service		Women Civil Service		Total
	Amount	%	Amount	%	
Echelon I	1	100	-	0	1
Echelon II	28	75,7	9	24,3	37
Echelon III	105	67,5	52	32,5	157
Echelon IV	241	58,0	174	42	415

Source: Internal data from Local Civil Service Agency of the Provincial Government of DIY.

Based on class rank, there is an almost equal number of men civil service and women civil services in IV and III rank (Table 4). The IV rank is the highest rank in the rank system of civil service in Indonesia. Civil service with IV rank usually are echelon I and echelon II and/or middle and primary of functional official.

As percentage of women civil service with IV rank is 45 percent, it means that there is almost equality of

rank achievement between women and men civil service. But it doesn’t followed by equality of in achievement of structural position between men and women civil service. It is assumed that most of women civil service are functional officials. As stated by stakeholder of Local Civil Service Agency that mostly women civil services are functional (professional) officers, such as teachers and nurses. According to this stakeholder, the two professions

are dominated by women.

Related to the women under-representation in structural position, especially in high leadership position, The assistant district secretary of Province DIY, that ever occupied the Chairman of Women and Society Empowerment Agency of Province of DIY, argue that it is not only about 'number' or percentage, but more important is the quality and capability of women occupied high leadership

positions in the government. According to these opinions above, women under-representation especially in government organizations is seen not as a problem. Or it is considered a natural thing to happen. But theoretically, women under-representation in upper position indicates that there are some problems in career development of women civil service. These problems often are artificial and invisible, that called as term glass ceiling.

**Table 4. The number of civil service in based on ranl in the Provincial Government of DIY (2016)**

Rank of Structural Position	Men Civil Service		Women Civil Service		Total
	Amount	%	Amount	%	
Rank IV	682	55	556	45	1.238
Rank III	2.230	52	2.044	48	4.274
Rank II	849	81	200	19	1.049
Rank I	137	94	9	6	146

Source: Internal data from National Civil Service Agency.

To identify the glass ceiling phenomenon, it is needed the women civil service perception about barriers on their career development. It is not easy to get the information about glass ceiling, due the part of women civil service were not aware of it in their career development. That is understandable, because the impact of patriarchal culture within society on public organizations. This is consistent with the previous research conducted by Wrigley in 2002 cited by (Smith, Paul, Caputi, Peter, and Critenden, Nadia. 2012) that questioned why women deny their glass ceiling in their career development.

Data gathered from interview about barriers on women career development were analyzed using open coding analysis. Each indicator that found was coded, and compiled into several groups. Barriers of women civil service career development can be grouped as individual, interpersonal, organizational, and family related.

The four categories of women civil service career development that described above, then each group divided into two groups (sub categories) along the lines of their properties and dimensions. This step finds the sub-categories of barriers, that called artificial barriers and natural barriers (see Table 5). This step of this research aims to find the artificial barriers that called glass ceiling. Natural barriers mean that barriers come from the nature of women, which distinguish their role from men's role. It implicated that women cannot overcome these barriers. Conversely, artificial barriers that called glass ceiling are barriers that women can relatively overcome them.

The next step of data analysis is generalizing all the data from the two step before. This step explained the four categories that be resulted from open coding analysis connected with the two sub categories that be resulted by axial coding.

**Table 5. Barriers of women civil service in their career development in summary**

Factors	Barriers	
	Artificial	Natural
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must work harder than men peer, to be a leader</li> <li>- Differences between men and women in perception of career progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multiple role of women (domestic and work)</li> <li>- Differences between men and women in responsibility to care for children</li> </ul>
Interpersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of formal mentor for career development</li> <li>- Lack of informal networking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Women make different choice about their career than men,</li> </ul>
Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must have 'masculinity' nature to reassure the boss about her ability and leadership competency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Culture of organization that tend to masculine</li> <li>- Lack of organizational support (e.g. working hours is not flexible, span of less flexible maternity leave)</li> </ul>
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Demands of the task that had to leave the family for a relative long period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must spend more time to the family role, when to have children aged toddlers to preteens.</li> <li>- Assumption that women's careers to follow her husband's career</li> </ul>

Source: primary data that have been analyzed.

### *Individual*

According to Table 5, the results show that not all individual factors are barriers for women civil service career development. Advance in formal education is found as important factor that support women to compete with peer include men civil service. Developing in expertise through trainings is also important factors. But as the opportunities to get trainings are determined by the organization, then it is often a barrier for women. This is caused by the stereotyping that women less interesting in training due that must reduce the time for the family. A participant who holds a lower-level structural position (echelon IV) states that the determination of employee who will attend training conducted by superiors, based on the needs of employees. But if the quota of training participant is limited, there will be a priority. In determining the priority, there can be no doubt to choose women employee, because women will make a lot of consideration before deciding to accept this opportunity or not. They usually consider is the need to leave the family for a period of time for training. However, all participants assume that training is important for their career advancement.

Individual factors that became barriers for women civil service career development are the 'demand' to work harder than men peer if want to be a leader. Participants that hold high leadership position assumed that when they are following the selection process of the high leadership position, they must point out the achievements above the average of other candidates that dominated by men. This they do so that 'considered' by the selection committee.

Almost all participants that hold middle position (echelon III) also assumed that to be able improve their career, they perceived that they would have to work harder than men peer. The reasons are to show their capabilities, and also women have multiple roles (work and family role, and sometime role in society). That means that women have to work hard to balance these roles. Although with different arguments, all participants agree that they have to work harder to be a leader. This finding supports the finding of previous research such O'Brien's study (O'Brien, Denise H. 2013), that stated women career in tend to experience doubts and uncertainties in their career development, which they call glass ceiling.

The second artificial individual barrier is different perceptions about career progression between men and women. In contrast to men who think their career is their life, women in this research tend assume that work is their 'second career'. They are more prioritized their family. It causes women often do not consider career development as something important in their lives.

This result of study identify natural-individual barrier. Women naturally have different roles with men, such as pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding. This is despite indirectly affecting women's career development, but is unavoidable.

### *Interpersonnal*

The second category of barriers for women civil service career development is interpersonal barrier. This category divided into sub-category natural and artificial barriers. Lack of formal mentor is the first interpersonal-artificial barriers for women civil service career development.

Most of participants argue that they don't have formal mentor that direct them to achieve the upper position. Part of participant said their bosses often act as informal mentors.

The second interpersonal-artificial barrier is lack of informal networking. Sometimes to be success reaching the higher position, it is needed the informal networking. Through informal networking, someone will be known, and this is often a consideration when promoted into leadership positions. Informal networking may take the form of sport and/or arts, etc. Part of participant argues that they don't have much time to build informal networking. Two of eight participant state that they tend to be less interested the informal networking.

Women tend to have a different career choice with men. Career decision for women is not easy, because it requires consideration of the husband. All of participant in this study assumed that the support and (sometime) permit from her husband is important. That means that career decision will indirectly depend on the support of the women's husbands. In contrast to men, who tend to make decisions about their career based on his own-decisions. According to O'Neil and Billimoria (O'Neil, Deborah A and Bilimoria, Diana. 2005), women's careers may take on forms, continuity and advancement patterns, and directions substantially different from those of men. It also underlies differences in career choices, for consideration of the nature of different career women with men. Women cannot overcome themselves this problem, so that this issue classified into natural barriers.

### *Organizational*

Organizational categories of barriers for women civil service career development that fundamentally is organizational culture that tend to masculine. This culture is seen embodied in one aspect of the organization, namely career system. Career system in bureaucracy tends to a traditional career pattern. According to O'Neil and Bilimoria (O'Neil, Deborah A and Bilimoria, Diana. 2005), "an ordered career pattern is characterized by stable, predictable movement through organizational hierarchies, is strategically planned and executed, reflective of choice-full learning opportunities, and may involve long term planning to accommodate other life rolls". Traditional career pattern that follows the organizational hierarchy is not in accordance with the life cycle of women. This is because historically bureaucracy tends to be masculine (Halford, Sushan; Savage, Mike and Witz, Anne. 1997). So that women are able to achieve high position in bureaucracy, are women who can follow and accept masculine patterns within the organization. Almost all women civil services who participated in the study did not object the condition of the organization that tended to follow the masculine patterns.

According to 'contingent perspective about gendered organization', bureaucracy basically is an organization that neutral gender and patterned down according to gender (Halford, Sushan; Savage, Mike and Witz, Anne. 1997). This is evidenced by those rules that tend to be gender-neutral. The practice of gender neutrality in the bureaucracy will indirectly preserve the masculine nature of the bureaucracy. The acceptance of women civil service

against organizational patterns that tend to be masculine, causing such patterns to be preserved.

Related to organizational barriers for women civil service's career development, masculinity pattern of bureaucratic organization as if not artificial barriers but more to natural barriers. This is because it is too difficult to change the patterns that are so long attached to the bureaucracy. Applying gender-neutral rules is expected to provide women with more opportunities to develop their careers, even though it can still be said that it has not yet realized gender equity.

#### *Family Related*

Different from men naturally, working women are always faced with multiple roles. Men tend more focus on their work. The multiple role of working women often affects women's decisions in career. Most of women civil service that participated in this study, agree that their decisions related in career strongly influenced by their role in family.

Family factors are also become a consideration for women, when they participate in higher position selection. That is because when the position is increasing, roles and responsibilities in the work will be greater. This will require extra energy to perform their roles. Strong patriarchal pattern in social and community life, also indirectly affecting women's career decisions. There is assumption that the wife's career follows the husband's career. When raising a husband's career requires a shift or rotation in other region, she should follow, and may be forced to leave her career for a while.

Women civil services who occupy middle and upper level (echelon II and III) positions, can better balance work and family, compared to women civil service at lower level position. This is because of their age is more mature and their career advancement is more steady. Women on lower level echelon position, on average still at the age of nurturing children aged under five or primary school age. At this age women tend to be more heavily in the role of the family than their careers.

The results of this study support the previous studies, such as Murniati's research (Murniati, Caecilia Titiek. 2012) that concluded that families are key for women in the effort to manage the pressure between professional and domestic role (role in family); support from the nearest individual is very important for women with multiple role.

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to analyze the glass ceiling phenomenon that inhibit women civil service in developing their career. Using grounded theory method, this first step (open coding) results the four categories of barriers of women civil service career development in the provincial government of DIY, that are individual (personal), interpersonal, family related, organizational and including societal. The next step, using axial coding, this research results two sub categories that are artificial barriers that called glass ceiling and natural barriers. And the last step, using the result of the first and second step, this research formulating the finding that is glass ceiling

phenomenon in women civil service career development.

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