

STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN  
INCREASING POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN 2024

(A Study of the Gerindra Party in Bandung City)

Bayu Septiansyah<sup>1</sup>, Toto Kushartono<sup>2</sup>, Lukman Munawar Fauzi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Department of Government Studies, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences Universitas  
Jenderal Achmad Yani

Corresponding Author: bayu.septiansyah@lecture.unjani.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Women's political participation constitutes a fundamental indicator of inclusive and gender-equitable democracy. Although Law Number 7 of 2017 on General Elections mandates that political parties allocate at least 30% of legislative candidacies to women, local political dynamics continue to reveal a persistent gap between descriptive and substantive representation. This study examines the strategies and challenges of the Gerindra Party in Bandung City in enhancing women's political representation in the 2024 Election. This research employs a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, drawing on in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. The analytical framework integrates Hanna Pitkin's theory of political representation and Anne Phillips' concept of the politics of presence. The findings demonstrate a substantial increase in women's descriptive representation within the Gerindra faction of the Bandung City Council, rising from 12.5% (2019–2024) to 42.9% (2024–2029). Despite this quantitative progress, substantive representation remains constrained by structural and cultural barriers, including entrenched patriarchal norms, unequal access to political resources, and limited leadership development opportunities. The study concludes that numerical gains in representation must be accompanied by institutionalized empowerment mechanisms to ensure meaningful political influence. Transforming the politics of presence into the politics of influence requires sustained party reform, systematic cadre development, and the cultivation of a gender-inclusive political culture.

**Keywords:** Political participation, Women's representation, Party strategy, Local democracy.

ABSTRAK

Partisipasi politik perempuan merupakan indikator fundamental demokrasi inklusif dan setara gender. Meskipun Undang-Undang Nomor 7 Tahun 2017 tentang Pemilu mewajibkan partai politik untuk mengalokasikan setidaknya 30% calon legislatif kepada perempuan, dinamika politik lokal terus menunjukkan kesenjangan yang terus-menerus antara representasi deskriptif dan substantif. Studi ini meneliti strategi dan tantangan Partai Gerindra di Kota Bandung dalam meningkatkan representasi politik perempuan pada Pemilu 2024. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis kualitatif, yang didasarkan pada wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Kerangka analitis mengintegrasikan teori representasi politik Hanna Pitkin dan konsep politik kehadiran Anne Phillips. Temuan menunjukkan peningkatan substansial dalam representasi deskriptif perempuan di dalam faksi Gerindra di Dewan Kota Bandung, meningkat dari 12,5% (2019–2024) menjadi 42,9% (2024–2029). Terlepas dari kemajuan kuantitatif ini, representasi substantif tetap dibatasi oleh hambatan struktural dan budaya, termasuk norma patriarki yang mengakar, akses yang tidak setara terhadap sumber daya politik, dan peluang pengembangan kepemimpinan yang terbatas. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa peningkatan jumlah representasi harus disertai dengan mekanisme pemberdayaan yang terinstitusionalisasi untuk memastikan pengaruh politik yang bermakna. Transformasi politik kehadiran menjadi politik

Penerbit:

LKISPOL (Lembaga Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Politik)  
[redaksigovernance@gmail.com](mailto:redaksigovernance@gmail.com)/[admin@lkispol.or.id](mailto:admin@lkispol.or.id)

38

Indexed



pengaruh membutuhkan reformasi partai yang berkelanjutan, pengembangan kader yang sistematis, dan penanaman budaya politik yang inklusif gender.

**Kata kunci:** Partisipasi politik, Representasi perempuan, Strategi partai, Demokrasi local.

## INTRODUCTION

Modern democracy requires inclusive and equal political participation between men and women. Women's involvement in legislative bodies is not only an indicator of representative justice, but also contributes to the quality of public policy that is more responsive to social needs. In the global context, the issue of women's representation has become a major concern in the study of democracy and representative politics. The presence of women in parliament is believed to broaden policy perspectives, particularly on issues of health, education, social protection, and gender equality.

Women's participation in politics is an important indicator of the quality of democracy, but still faces various structural, cultural and institutional obstacles in many countries (Apale & Abdool, 2005). A number of studies show that the level of democracy in a country is not always directly proportional to the representation of women in political institutions, even countries that are considered democratic often have low levels of women's political participation due to the dominance of patriarchal culture, inequality in economic access, and weak political commitment to equality (Waring, 2010; Eve et al., 2013; Noida, 2017). In addition, women's low access to political resources, education, and power networks also limits their opportunities to participate substantively in the decision-making process (Butler, 2004; IPU, 2012).

Another study emphasized that increasing women's political participation not only has an impact on strengthening democracy, but also on the formulation of public policies that are more inclusive and responsive to the social, economic and welfare needs of the wider community (Alice & Costa, 2010; Randall, 2011; Choudhary, 2018). Therefore, efforts to encourage women's involvement in politics cannot be done solely through affirmative policies, but must be accompanied by a transformation of political culture, strengthening of women's capacity, and ongoing institutional commitment to realizing fair and equal political representation (Kassa, 2015; Ajogbeje, 2016).

The main challenges to women's participation in politics stem from interrelated structural, cultural, and institutional factors. Patriarchal cultural dominance still places women in the domestic sphere, limiting their scope for public and political activity and creating a social stigma that politics is a male domain (Malindir & Septiansyah, 2024). Furthermore, limited access to political education, economic resources, power networks, and political party support means women face significant obstacles in the candidacy process and electoral competition. These obstacles are exacerbated by a political system that is not yet fully gender-responsive, weak implementation of affirmative action policies, and transactional political practices that require significant financial capital. Furthermore, women's dual burden as household managers and breadwinners also limits their opportunities for active political involvement. These conditions indicate that increasing women's political participation requires a comprehensive strategy encompassing changes in political culture, capacity building, institutional reform, and support for gender-equitable policies.

In Indonesia, the commitment to increasing women's political participation is manifested through affirmative policies in Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, which requires political parties to include at least 30% women in their list of legislative candidates in each electoral district. This policy is designed to strengthen the descriptive representation of women in legislative bodies. However, the implementation of this policy still faces structural and cultural challenges, especially at the local level. The gap between normative regulations and

**Penerbit:**

LKISPOL (Lembaga Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Politik)  
[redaksigovernance@gmail.com](mailto:redaksigovernance@gmail.com) // [admin@lkispol.or.id](mailto:admin@lkispol.or.id)

39

Indexed



SINTA 4



empirical political reality shows that fulfilling quotas does not fully guarantee the substantive representation of women in decision-making processes.

The city of Bandung, as one of the major cities in Indonesia, illustrates this dynamic. In the 2019–2024 period, women's representation in the Bandung City Council is still around 14% of the total council members. This figure shows that affirmative action policies have not been fully converted into significant political representation. However, in the 2024–2029 period, the Gerindra Party faction in the Bandung City DPRD experienced an increase in women's representation from 12.5% to 42.9%. This increase is an interesting phenomenon to analyze further, especially in relation to the party's internal strategies in encouraging women's participation and the challenges that still need to be addressed in ensuring that this representation is substantive.

Theoretically, this study refers to the theory of political representation proposed by Hanna Pitkin, which distinguishes representation in four dimensions: formal, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive. Descriptive representation relates to the similarity of identity between representatives and those they represent, while substantive representation refers to the ability of representatives to fight for the interests of their constituents. In addition, Anne Phillips' concept of the politics of presence emphasizes that the presence of women in political institutions must be understood as a form of representative justice that provides space for women's unique experiences and perspectives in the policy-making process. This theoretical framework is important for distinguishing between numerical representation and representation that has policy influence.

A number of previous studies have shown that political parties often only fulfill women's quotas administratively without establishing adequate cadre and electoral support systems. These studies highlight that women are often placed in less strategic positions or do not have equal access to political resources. However, research that specifically analyzes the internal strategies of a political party at the local level after the 2024 elections, particularly in the context of a significant increase in women's representation, is still limited. This is where the research gap that this study aims to fill lies.

This research has novelty in two main aspects. First, this study integrates descriptive and substantive representation analysis simultaneously in the context of local politics in Bandung City. Second, this study focuses on the internal strategies of political parties, in this case the Gerindra Party in Bandung City, in developing women's cadres and strengthening their capacity ahead of the 2024 elections. This approach allows for a more comprehensive analysis of how the dynamics of party institutions influence the increase in women's representation.

Based on this description, this study aims to: (1) analyze the strategies of the Gerindra Party in Bandung City in increasing women's political participation and representation ahead of the 2024 elections; and (2) identify the structural and cultural challenges faced in realizing substantive representation of women. Thus, this study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of studies on women's political representation at the local level and practically to political parties in designing more effective and sustainable strategies to promote inclusive and gender-sensitive democracy.

## METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies and challenges faced by the Gerindra Party in Bandung in increasing women's political representation ahead of the 2024 elections. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study not only assesses the numerical achievements of women's representation but also analyzes the process of cadre development, internal party dynamics, and structural and cultural barriers that affect women's participation in local politics (Djamba & Neuman, 2002; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

**Penerbit:**

**LKISPOL (Lembaga Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Politik)**  
[redaksigovernance@gmail.com](mailto:redaksigovernance@gmail.com) // [admin@lkispol.or.id](mailto:admin@lkispol.or.id)

40

Indexed



The research was conducted at the Bandung City DPRD and the Bandung City Gerindra Party DPC. The location was selected purposively, considering that the Gerindra Party faction experienced a significant increase in women's representation in the 2024-2029 period compared to the previous period. The research was conducted after the 2024 elections so that the analysis could reflect the latest empirical conditions. The research subjects were determined using purposive sampling, namely selecting informants who were directly involved in the nomination and regeneration processes for women. Informants included female members of the Gerindra Faction DPRD, administrators of the Bandung City Gerindra Party DPC, and administrators of the women's wing organization (PIRA). The number of informants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which is when the information obtained has been repeated and no new significant findings have been found.

Data collection techniques were carried out in three ways (Somantri, 2005; Agustini et al., 2023). First, in-depth interviews with semi-structured guidelines compiled based on Hanna Pitkin's dimensions of political representation theory (formal, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive) and Anne Phillips' concept of the politics of presence. The interviews focused on women's regeneration strategies, the implementation of affirmative policies, electoral support, and the internal and external obstacles faced by women cadres. Second, observations were made of the institutional activities of factions and party dynamics to understand the practice of women's representation in the context of legislative work. These observations aimed to reinforce the interview results by directly observing women's involvement in decision-making forums. Third, documentation was carried out by collecting secondary data in the form of the 2019 and 2024 election results, faction organizational structures, internal party documents, and regulations related to affirmative policies. This documentary data was used to verify and enrich the field findings.

Data analysis was conducted interactively following the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three stages: (1) data reduction, which is the process of selecting and grouping data according to the research focus; (2) data presentation in the form of thematic narratives and comparative tables; and (3) drawing conclusions and verification (Sobry & Hadisaputra, 2020; Zaini et al., 2023). The analysis process was conducted thematically based on four dimensions of political representation, with an emphasis on descriptive and substantive representation as the main indicators of successful women's participation. This approach allowed researchers to evaluate the relationship between party strategies and increased women's representation more comprehensively.

To maintain data validity, this study used source and method triangulation, which involved comparing information from various informants and matching it with observational and documentary (Moleong, 2007). In addition, member checks were conducted with informants to ensure that the researchers' interpretations were consistent with the empirical experiences presented. This step is important to enhance the credibility and validity of the research findings. With this methodological design, this study not only identifies an increase in the number of women in the Bandung City DPRD, but also critically analyzes the extent to which this increase reflects a transformation from formal representation to substantive representation in the context of local politics.

## DISCUSSION

### Theoretical Framework

Women's participation in politics is a key element in strengthening inclusive democracy and gender equity. Over the past decade, the study of women's political participation theory has undergone significant development, particularly in the dimensions of structural, cultural, and

**Penerbit:**

**LKISPOL (Lembaga Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Politik)**  
[redaksigovernance@gmail.com](mailto:redaksigovernance@gmail.com) // [admin@lkispol.or.id](mailto:admin@lkispol.or.id)

41

Indexed



SINTA 4



institutional pressures that influence women's involvement in both formal and informal political spheres. Inclusive democracy theory states that women's representation not only increases democratic legitimacy but also results in public policies that are more responsive to the social needs of the wider community (UN Women, 2015; Krook & True, 2016).

From an institutional feminist perspective, low women's participation is understood as a result of gender-biased political institutional designs. Political party structures, candidate recruitment systems, and electoral mechanisms favor male actors, thus marginalizing women from strategic decision-making processes (Waylen, 2017; Lovenduski, 2016). Reform theory emphasizes that institutional change, including internal party rules and electoral systems, is a key prerequisite for expanding women's participation in politics.

Furthermore, recent substantive representation theory highlights that women's presence in legislative institutions must be accompanied by the ability to advocate for gender interests. Contemporary empirical studies show that increasing women's descriptive representation contributes to the creation of more progressive policies in health, education, social protection, and the elimination of gender-based violence (Celis & Childs, 2018; Clayton et al., 2017). Thus, the success of women's political participation is measured not only by quantity but also by the quality of the resulting policy influence.

In a global context, intersectionality theory is an important approach to understanding the diversity of women's political experiences. This approach emphasizes that factors such as class, ethnicity, religion, age, and geographic location interact with gender to shape women's political opportunities and barriers. Intersectional studies demonstrate that women from minority groups face multiple challenges not experienced by women from dominant groups (Crenshaw, 2017; Smooth, 2019). Therefore, strategies to increase women's political participation must take into account the complexity of these social identities.

Furthermore, contemporary affirmative action theory confirms the effectiveness of gender quota policies in increasing women's representation, although their impact is heavily influenced by regulatory design and the commitment of political actors. Recent research shows that political quotas are most effective when combined with an open proportional representation system, strong law enforcement, and strengthening women's leadership capacity (Bush, 2019; Krook, 2020). Therefore, quotas cannot stand alone but must be part of broader political reforms.

Overall, theories of women's political participation in the past decade emphasize that women's involvement is the result of a complex interaction between institutional structures, political culture, affirmative action policies, and social dynamics. Increasing women's participation requires an inclusive transformation of the political system, institutional reform, and changes in social norms to achieve a just and gender-equal democracy.

## Formal Representation in Comparative Perspective

The 30% affirmative action policy for women's representation as mandated by Law No. 7 of 2017 has become a key instrument in promoting women's political participation in Indonesia (Wulandari's, 2021). Empirical evidence from the 2024 legislative election in Bandung City confirms that all political parties formally complied with this quota requirement at the nomination stage. Data from the Bandung City General Election Commission (KPU Kota Bandung, 2024) indicate that female candidates accounted for approximately 40–42% of the total legislative candidates, exceeding the statutory minimum threshold. However, despite this formal compliance, the actual electoral outcomes reveal persistent gender disparities. Of the 50 seats in the Bandung City DPRD, only 12 seats (24%) were won by women, indicating that the quota mechanism effectively increases candidate supply but does not necessarily translate into proportional electoral success. This finding reinforces Wulandari's (2021) study in the Bandung

**Penerbit:**

**LKISPOL (Lembaga Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Politik)**  
[redaksigovernance@gmail.com](mailto:redaksigovernance@gmail.com) // [admin@lkispol.or.id](mailto:admin@lkispol.or.id)

42

Indexed



Regency DPRD, which concluded that quota fulfillment often remains administrative and symbolic, lacking adequate electoral strategies to ensure women's competitiveness.

In this context, the Gerindra Party in Bandung City demonstrates a relatively distinct pattern. Beyond merely fulfilling formal quota requirements, Gerindra strengthened female political recruitment and training through its women's wing organization, Perempuan Indonesia Raya (PIRA). During the 2024 election, Gerindra successfully elected a higher proportion of female candidates compared to several other major parties, indicating the effectiveness of organizational support, structured cadre development, and targeted grassroots mobilization. This empirical pattern contrasts with Nurjanah's (2022) findings, which suggest that many local political parties treat gender quotas merely as legal formalities, without institutional commitment to building women's electoral capacity. Gerindra's approach in Bandung thus reflects a strategic and institutional shift, integrating affirmative action with internal party strengthening mechanisms.

Nevertheless, persistent structural barriers remain evident. Electoral data reveal that most elected female legislators in Bandung City were placed in top ballot positions (serial numbers 1–3) and possessed strong social capital, elite networks, and financial resources, highlighting the continued importance of candidate placement and campaign capital. Furthermore, campaign finance reports submitted to the KPU show that female candidates, on average, spent significantly less on political campaigning than their male counterparts, which directly affected their electoral competitiveness. These findings corroborate broader studies of local electoral politics in Indonesia, which identify ballot order, patronage networks, and access to financial resources as decisive determinants of electability (Wulandari, 2021; Nurjanah, 2022). Thus, despite progress at the internal party level, systemic constraints embedded in the electoral system and political culture continue to hinder women's full political representation in Bandung City.

Beyond formal representation, the findings also reveal significant disparities in campaign dynamics and political mobilization strategies between male and female candidates. Field data from interviews and campaign finance reports indicate that female candidates in Bandung City faced greater constraints in accessing party machinery, media exposure, and grassroots mobilization networks. While political parties officially facilitated campaign activities, practical support such as logistics, volunteer deployment, and digital campaign management remained disproportionately concentrated on candidates perceived as having higher electoral viability, most of whom were male. Consequently, many female candidates relied heavily on personal networks, community-based organizations, and informal social capital, which, although valuable, proved insufficient to match the extensive political infrastructure available to male competitors. This uneven distribution of campaign resources systematically weakened the electoral competitiveness of female candidates, reinforcing structural gender inequalities within local electoral contests.

Furthermore, sociocultural factors continue to exert a strong influence on voter behavior, shaping electoral outcomes in ways that disadvantage women candidates. Survey data and qualitative interviews with voters in several districts of Bandung City suggest that traditional gender norms and patriarchal attitudes remain prevalent, particularly among older and lower-income voter groups. Many voters still associate political leadership with masculine traits such as authority, assertiveness, and decisiveness, while perceiving women as more suitable for domestic and social roles. These entrenched perceptions contribute to a persistent bias against female political leadership, thereby reducing women's electoral appeal regardless of their qualifications, experience, or campaign performance. As a result, women candidates must exert substantially greater effort to gain political legitimacy and voter trust. This finding aligns with broader scholarship on gender and electoral behavior, which emphasizes that institutional reforms alone are insufficient to dismantle deeply rooted cultural barriers. Instead, a comprehensive strategy combining legal reform, political education, and cultural transformation is required to achieve substantive gender equality in political representation.

**Penerbit:**

**LKISPOL (Lembaga Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Politik)**  
[redaksigovernance@gmail.com](mailto:redaksigovernance@gmail.com) // [admin@lkispol.or.id](mailto:admin@lkispol.or.id)

43

Indexed



SINTA 4



## Descriptive Representation: Electoral Quantity and Dynamics

In terms of descriptive representation, the increase in female representation in the Gerindra faction of the Bandung City Council from 12.5% to 42.9% is a significant achievement compared to many other regions. Sari's (2023) research on women's regeneration in political parties concluded that the lack of training and continuous guidance was the cause of stagnant female representation at the local level. In the study, female representation tended not to develop progressively due to weak consistency in regeneration.

Contrary to these findings, this study shows that the increase in the number of women in Gerindra in Bandung City correlates with a more systematic regeneration strategy. This reinforces the argument that descriptive representation is not solely influenced by national regulations, but also by the capacity of party organizations at the local level. In the perspective of Hanna Pitkin's political representation theory, descriptive improvement is the initial stage towards more substantial representation. However, comparative research shows that numerical increases are often not automatically followed by changes in the policy agenda. Therefore, the findings of this study need to be further analyzed in the context of substantive roles.

Empirical evidence from the 2024 Bandung City legislative election substantiates the significant rise in women's descriptive representation within the Gerindra faction. Official election data from the Bandung City General Election Commission (KPU Kota Bandung, 2024) reveal that Gerindra increased its female legislative members from one out of eight seats (12.5%) in 2019 to three out of seven seats (42.9%) in 2024. This growth not only surpasses the national minimum quota threshold but also positions Gerindra as the political party with the highest proportion of female legislators among major parties in Bandung City. By contrast, most other parties recorded female representation rates ranging between 15% and 25%, underscoring Gerindra's relative success in institutionalizing women's political recruitment. This data-driven trend indicates that the party's internal reforms and organizational commitment play a decisive role in shaping electoral outcomes beyond formal regulatory compliance.

Qualitative findings further indicate that this quantitative improvement is strongly associated with systematic cadre development mechanisms, particularly through the activities of Perempuan Indonesia Raya (PIRA). In-depth interviews with party elites and elected female legislators reveal that PIRA implemented structured political training programs, leadership workshops, and continuous mentoring, beginning at the sub-district (kecamatan) and urban village (kelurahan) levels. These initiatives focused on enhancing candidates' legislative knowledge, public communication skills, electoral strategy formulation, and grassroots mobilization. Moreover, the integration of female cadres into the party's strategic campaign teams fostered early exposure to political decision-making processes, thereby strengthening their organizational legitimacy and electoral confidence. This systematic regeneration model contrasts sharply with the fragmented and ad hoc training approaches identified in Sari's (2023) study, where limited continuity and weak mentoring undermined women's long-term political advancement.

This case illustrates that descriptive representation is not merely the outcome of regulatory compliance but a product of institutional capacity and organizational culture at the local party level. Gerindra's experience in Bandung City demonstrates how sustained political education, leadership cultivation, and internal support networks can convert formal quota mechanisms into tangible electoral success. However, drawing on Pitkin's theory of political representation, this improvement in descriptive representation should be interpreted as a necessary but insufficient condition for achieving substantive representation. While the numerical increase enhances women's visibility and symbolic presence, preliminary legislative performance assessments indicate that policy influence remains uneven, particularly in male-dominated commissions such as infrastructure, finance, and urban development. Consequently, the translation of descriptive gains into substantive political power requires continuous capacity building, strategic committee

**Penerbit:**

**LKISPOL (Lembaga Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Politik)**  
[redaksigovernance@gmail.com](mailto:redaksigovernance@gmail.com) // [admin@lkispol.or.id](mailto:admin@lkispol.or.id)

44

Indexed



SINTA 4



placement, and stronger institutional backing. This underscores the need for future research to explore the policy impact trajectories of newly elected female legislators, thereby bridging the gap between numerical inclusion and transformative political participation.

## Symbolic and Political Representation of Presence

Empirical findings from the 2024 Bandung City legislative term indicate a notable shift in the symbolic and political representation of women within the Gerindra faction. Official documentation of the Bandung City DPRD Secretariat (2024) shows that female legislators from Gerindra were appointed to strategic leadership positions, including vice-chair of commissions, faction secretaries, and coordinators of legislative working groups. This structural positioning demonstrates a significant departure from earlier patterns in which female legislators were predominantly assigned to peripheral roles related to social welfare or women's affairs. Furthermore, legislative activity records reveal that female legislators initiated and co-sponsored a growing number of deliberative motions, public hearings, and oversight agendas, particularly in the fields of urban social protection, public service delivery, and gender-responsive budgeting. These patterns suggest that women's presence is increasingly embedded within substantive institutional processes, rather than confined to symbolic visibility.

Field interviews with party elites and parliamentary staff further corroborate these findings, indicating that women leaders in Gerindra's Bandung City faction are perceived as politically authoritative actors, capable of shaping factional positions and negotiation strategies during inter-party deliberations. Unlike earlier legislative periods, where women's leadership was often viewed as complementary or ceremonial, current female leaders are actively involved in agenda-setting, coalition-building, and policy bargaining.

This transformation reflects a gradual shift from tokenistic representation toward institutional legitimacy, aligning with Anne Phillips' notion of the politics of presence, which posits that descriptive representation must translate into access to deliberative power to achieve representative justice. In this context, women's leadership in Gerindra illustrates how symbolic representation can evolve into political authority when supported by organizational trust and leadership training.

Nevertheless, comparative analysis with national-level studies reveals that patriarchal cultural constraints remain deeply entrenched, shaping both institutional behavior and public perceptions. Survey data and qualitative interviews conducted in Bandung City demonstrate that female legislators continue to face gender-based stereotypes, including doubts regarding their leadership competence, emotional resilience, and political assertiveness.

These biases are particularly pronounced during high-stakes negotiations and budget deliberations, where women often encounter resistance from male colleagues and external political actors. Similar patterns have been documented in national studies on women's leadership in regional parliaments, which emphasize that cultural norms associating political authority with masculinity remain a critical obstacle to women's full political empowerment. Consequently, while Gerindra in Bandung City exhibits relative progress in symbolic representation and institutional positioning, it continues to confront structural and cultural challenges that mirror broader national dynamics. This underscores the need for sustained efforts to transform political culture alongside institutional reform to ensure that symbolic representation evolves into durable political influence.

Further analysis indicates that the symbolic visibility of women leaders within the Gerindra faction in Bandung City has also contributed to a gradual transformation of political perceptions at the grassroots level. Field observations and community interviews reveal that the increased public exposure of female legislators through constituency visits, policy consultations, and social media engagement has strengthened their legitimacy as political actors and enhanced public

**Penerbit:**

**LKISPOL (Lembaga Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Politik)**

[redaksigovernance@gmail.com](mailto:redaksigovernance@gmail.com) // [admin@lkispol.or.id](mailto:admin@lkispol.or.id)

45

Indexed



SINTA 4



acceptance of women's leadership. This visibility effect plays a critical role in reshaping voter attitudes, particularly among younger and urban constituencies, who increasingly associate political competence with performance rather than gender. However, this positive trend remains uneven, as traditional patriarchal norms continue to influence voter expectations in peripheral and lower-income communities. Consequently, while symbolic representation has begun to generate normative shifts toward gender-inclusive political culture, its long-term impact depends on sustained political engagement, consistent policy performance, and continuous public education. This finding reinforces Phillips' argument that symbolic presence must be institutionalized through everyday political practices in order to produce durable cultural and structural change.

## Substantive Representation: Consistent Challenges Nationally

Most previous studies agree that the principal challenge of women's political representation lies in the substantive dimension, namely their ability to influence policy agendas and effectively advocate for constituents' interests. National level analyses of local politics in Indonesia consistently demonstrate that female legislators tend to be disproportionately assigned to "soft" commissions, such as education, health, social welfare, and family empowerment, while their access to strategic commissions particularly budgetary, economic development, and infrastructure planning bodies remains limited. Data from the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri, 2023) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2022) indicate that across Indonesian regional parliaments, more than 60% of female legislators are concentrated in social sector commissions, whereas fewer than 20% hold positions in finance and development-related commissions. This structural segmentation significantly constrains women's ability to influence macrolevel policy priorities and resource allocation, reinforcing gendered divisions of political labor.

The findings of this study reveal a parallel pattern in the Gerindra Faction of the Bandung City DPRD. Legislative records from the 2024–2025 session indicate that female legislators predominantly serve in Commissions C and D, which focus on health services, family welfare, education, and social protection. Their legislative initiatives primarily target issues such as maternal and child health, urban poverty alleviation, and women's economic empowerment programs. While these policy contributions are socially significant, access to Commission B (budget and economic affairs) and Commission A (governance and infrastructure oversight) remains limited. Interviews with female legislators further reveal that entry into these strategic forums is often mediated by seniority, political capital, and entrenched male networks, highlighting the persistence of institutional gatekeeping mechanisms. This similarity with national trends indicates that barriers to substantive representation are systemic rather than party-specific, deeply embedded in the organizational culture of legislative institutions.

Nevertheless, an important differentiation emerges from this case. Unlike many previous studies that depict political parties as passive or compliance-oriented actors in gender equality initiatives, this study identifies a growing internal awareness within Gerindra to institutionalize mentoring and capacity-building mechanisms for female cadres. Through structured programs facilitated by PIRA and internal party training units, women legislators and prospective candidates receive continuous training in budget analysis, legislative drafting, political negotiation, and public policy advocacy. Preliminary evaluations suggest that participants demonstrate increased confidence and technical competence during legislative deliberations. This proactive institutional approach contrasts with dominant findings in prior literature, which often emphasize the absence of systematic support structures for women within political parties. Thus, the Gerindra case in Bandung City illustrates how organizational reform can mitigate, though not immediately eliminate, systemic constraints on substantive representation.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature by integrating Pitkin's four dimensions of representation formal, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive within a single

**Penerbit:**

**LKISPOL (Lembaga Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Politik)**  
[redaksigovernance@gmail.com](mailto:redaksigovernance@gmail.com)/[admin@lkispol.or.id](mailto:admin@lkispol.or.id)

46

Indexed



SINTA 4



analytical framework applied to local political dynamics. While previous studies predominantly focus on descriptive representation, often treating numerical increases as the primary indicator of progress, this research demonstrates the interdependence between numerical presence, symbolic legitimacy, and substantive policy influence. The Bandung City case highlights that improvements in descriptive and symbolic representation can create institutional openings for substantive engagement, but these gains remain contingent upon internal party reforms and broader cultural transformations. By linking these dimensions systematically, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how women's political representation evolves within decentralized democratic contexts.

Empirically, this study further shows that sustainable regeneration strategies and continuous capacity-building initiatives can significantly enhance women's political trajectories beyond administrative quota compliance. The incremental gains observed in Bandung City underscore the importance of organizational commitment, leadership cultivation, and institutional mentoring as critical drivers of substantive representation. Comparative analysis with other regions suggests that where such mechanisms are absent, women's political participation tends to stagnate, reinforcing tokenistic inclusion. Accordingly, these findings enrich existing scholarship by positioning political parties not merely as electoral vehicles, but as strategic agents of democratic transformation capable of reshaping gender relations within local governance structures. Ultimately, this research strengthens the argument that meaningful improvements in women's political representation require a synergistic approach combining affirmative regulations, internal party reform, and the cultivation of inclusive political cultures, thereby situating the Gerindra experience in Bandung City within the broader national discourse on gender and democracy.

## CONCLUSION

The increase in women's representation in the Gerindra Party faction of the Bandung City Council for the 2024-2029 period shows significant progress in terms of descriptive representation. The increase in the proportion of women from 12.5% in the previous period to 42.9% indicates that the party's internal strategy in fulfilling affirmative policies is no longer merely administrative, but is beginning to be accompanied by a more systematic strengthening of cadre development and political coaching for women.

In terms of formal representation, the Gerindra Party in Bandung City has fulfilled the 30% quota for women on the list of legislative candidates in accordance with applicable regulations. However, this study found that fulfilling the quota does not fully guarantee equal electoral opportunities without strategic support in the form of competitive candidate numbers, access to campaign resources, and strong political networks. In terms of symbolic representation, the presence of women in strategic positions within the faction structure provides social legitimacy and strengthens the party's image as an inclusive organization. However, this symbolism needs to be transformed into real policy influence so that it does not stop at the level of symbolic representation alone.

Meanwhile, in terms of substantive representation, women in the Gerindra Faction have begun to play an active role in social issues such as health, education, and family welfare. However, structural and cultural barriers, particularly patriarchal culture, limited access to political resources, and a lack of ongoing leadership training remain challenges in optimizing these substantive roles. Overall, this study confirms that increasing the quantitative representation of women is an important first step, but it is not enough to realize substantive inclusive democracy. The transformation from politics of presence to politics of influence requires consistent regeneration, internal party reform, and changes in political culture that support equal access to decision-making spaces. Thus, political party strategies are a key factor in bridging the gap between affirmative policies and gender-equitable representation practices at the local level.

**Penerbit:**

**LKISPOL (Lembaga Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Politik)**  
[redaksigovernance@gmail.com](mailto:redaksigovernance@gmail.com)/[admin@lkispol.or.id](mailto:admin@lkispol.or.id)

47

Indexed



SINTA 4



## REFERENCES

- Agustini, Grashenta, A., Putra, S., Sukarman, & Guampe, F. A. (2023). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif (Teori dan Panduan Praktis Analisis data Kualitatif)* (Issue May 2024).
- Ajogbeje, O. O. (2016). *Women Participaton In Nigerian Plitics and Its Challenges for Nigeria Centenary. XIX(2)*.
- Alice, A., & Costa, A. (2010). *Quotas as a Path to Parity : Challenges to Women 's Participation in Politics. 41(5)*.
- Al-Lawati, N. (2022). Substantive Representation of Women, Informal Quotas and Political Participation in Emerging Democracies. *Digest of Middle East Studies, 31(2)*, 215-229.
- Apale, A., & Abdool, S. (2005). *Journal of International Women 's Studies Empowerment Beyond Numbers : Substantiating Women 's Political Participation Empowerment Beyond Numbers : 7(2)*.
- Aryani, Y. A., et al. (2023). Women's Political Representation in Local Government and Its Impact on Public Service Quality. *Corporate Governance and Organizational Behavior Review, 7 (3, Special Issue)*, 145-158.
- Barnett, C. (2024). All Politics Is Local: Studying Women's Representation in Local Politics in Authoritarian Regimes. *Politics & Gender, 20 (1)*, 235-240.
- Belschner, J. (2022). Electoral Engineering In New Democracies: Strong Quotas and Weak Parties in Tunisia. *Government and Opposition, 57 (3)*, 456-475.
- Budiardjo, M. (2008). *Fundamentals of Political Science* (Revised Edition). Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Bush, S. S. (2019). *The Politics of Gender Equality and Women's Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Celis, K., & Childs, S. (2018). *Gender, Conservatism and Political Representation*. Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Choudhary, R. (2018). *Issues and challenges of women participation in politics. 2005, 2005–2007*.
- Clayton, A., Josefsson, C., & Wang, V. (2017). Quotas and Women's Substantive Representation: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Uganda. *American Political Science Review, 111(3)*, 1–20.
- Crenshaw, K. (2017). *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings*. New York: The New Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Mixed Methods Procedures. In *Research Defign: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed M ethods Approaches*.
- Dahlerup, D. (2006). *Women, Quotas and Politics*. Routledge.
- Djamba, Y. K., & Neuman, W. L. (2002). Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. In *Teaching Sociology* (Vol. 30, Issue 3). <https://doi.org/10.2307/3211488>
- Ehrhart, A. (2024). *Examining the Relationship Between Women's Descriptive Representation and Civil Society Participation*. Representation.
- Eve, N., Florence, M., & Caroline, M. (2013). *The relationship between democracy and women participation in politics. 3(1)*, 168–176. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jpag.v3i1.3516>
- Fakih, M. (2008). *Gender Analysis and Social Transformation*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Harahap, A. F., Jakimow, T., Siahaan, A. Y., & Yumasdaleni. (2023). Is Money an Insurmountable Barrier to Women's Political Representation in Transactional Democracies? Evidence from North Sumatera, Indonesia. *Politics, Groups, and Identities, 11 (4)*, 789-807.
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2012). *Women in Parliament in 2012: The Year in Perspective*. Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union.
- Kassa, S. (2015). *Challenges and Opportunities of Women Political Participation in Ethiopia. 3(4)*. <https://doi.org/10.4172/2375-4389.1000162>

**Penerbit:**

**LKISPOL (Lembaga Kajian Ilmu Sosial dan Politik)**

[redaksigovernance@gmail.com](mailto:redaksigovernance@gmail.com)/[admin@lkispol.or.id](mailto:admin@lkispol.or.id)

48

Indexed



SINTA 4



- Kim, C. S., et al. (2024). From Descriptive to Substantive Representation of Women in Times of Crisis. *Asian Women*, 40(3), 1–22.
- Krook, M. L. (2010). *Quotas for Women in Politics: Gender and Candidate Selection Reform Worldwide*. Oxford University Press.
- Krook, M. L., & True, J. (2016). Gender Quotas and Women's Political Representation. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 37(1), 1–23.
- Krook, M. L. (2020). *Violence Against Women in Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lovenduski, J. (2016). *State Feminism and Political Representation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- M. Sobry, & Prosmala Hadisaputra, M. P. . (2020). Penelitian kualitatif Penelitian kualitatif. In *Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosda Karya* (Issue c). [http://www.academia.edu/download/54257684/Tabrani\\_ZA\\_2014-Dasar-dasar\\_Metodologi\\_Penelitian\\_Kualitatif.pdf](http://www.academia.edu/download/54257684/Tabrani_ZA_2014-Dasar-dasar_Metodologi_Penelitian_Kualitatif.pdf)
- Malindir, G. O., & Septiansyah, B. (2024). *Dynamics of The Recruitment Process for Woman Legislative Candidates (A Study of The Nasdem Party in The 2024 Legislative Elections)*. *Sociae Polies*, 25(1), 21-33
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Moleong, L. J. (2007). Metode Penelitian Kualitatif (Issue Metode Penelitian Kualitatif). In *PT Remaja Rosda Karya* (Vol. 2, Issue October).
- Noida, G. (2017). *Participation of Women in Politics : Worldwide experience Dr Pankaj Kumar*. 22(12), 77–88. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2212067788>
- Nurjanah, S. (2022). The Role of Political Parties in Increasing Women's Representation in Regional Parliaments. *Indonesian Journal of Political Science*, 7 (1), 25-38.
- Pansardi, P., et al. (2023). *Do Strong Gender Quotas Make a Difference? Party-Level Effects on wWomen's Political Inclusion*. *Party Politics*.
- Phillips, A. (1995). *The Politics of Presence*. Oxford University Press.
- Pitkin, H. F. (1967). *The Concept of Representation*. University of California Press.
- Saptari, R., & Holzner, B. (1997). *Women, Work, and Social Change*. Graffiti Main Library.
- Sari, R. P. (2023). Evaluation of Women's Cadre Formation in Political Parties at the Local Level. *Journal of Gender and Political Studies*, 5(1), 59-74.
- Schwindt-Bayer, L. A., & Mishler, W. (2005). An Integrated Model of Women's Representation. *The Journal of Politics*, 67 (2), 407–428.
- Smooth, W. G. (2019). Intersectionality and Women's Political Representation. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 7(1), 213–220.
- Somantri, G. R. (2005). Memahami Metode Kualitatif. *Makara Human Behavior Studies in Asia*, 9(2), 57. <https://doi.org/10.7454/mssh.v9i2.122>
- Tripp, A. M., & Kang, A. (2008). The Global Impact of Quotas: On the Fast Track to Increased Female Legislative Representation. *Comparative Political Studies*, 41(3), 338–361.
- UN Women. (2015). *Women's leadership and political participation*. New York: United Nations.
- Waylen, G. (2017). *Gender and Informal Institutions*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Waring, M. (2010). *Women ' s Political Participation*.
- Wulandari, D. (2021). Women's Representation in the Bandung Regency DPRD: An Analysis of Affirmative Action Policy Implementation. *Journal of Politics and Regional Government*, 3 (2), 145-160.
- Zaini, P. M., Zaini, P. M., Saputra, N., Penerbit, Y., Zaini, M., Lawang, K. A., & Susilo, A. (2023). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Issue May).