

POLITICAL STRATEGY OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN INCREASING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE BODY OF CIAMIS REGENCY FOR THE 2024–2029 PERIOD

Yoga Gustiadi^{1)*}, Arie Budiawan¹⁾, Asep Nurdin Rosihan Anwar¹⁾
Universitas Galuh Ciamis Jawa Barat, Indonesia¹⁾
*Email: yogagustiadi86@gmail.com**

Article History

Received: 17 July 2025

Accepted: 31 July 2025

Published: 31 August 2025

Abstract

This study aims to explore and analyze the political strategy of the Democratic Party in increasing women's representation in the legislative body of Ciamis Regency for the 2024–2029 period. The background of this research stems from the low level of female representation in the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of Ciamis Regency, which only reached 10% or 5 out of 50 members, despite national regulations mandating a 30% gender quota. This study adopts a qualitative approach with descriptive methods, using interviews, observations, and documentation as data collection techniques. The theoretical framework is based on Schroder's political strategy theory, which divides strategies into offensive and defensive categories. The findings indicate that the Democratic Party's offensive strategies involve electoral mapping, strengthening women's networks, and nominating influential female candidates. Meanwhile, its defensive strategies include voter segmentation, the formulation of gender-based campaign programs, and the protection of core voter bases. However, challenges persist in the form of limited female political resources, lack of internal party training, and weak financial support. Therefore, the Democratic Party needs to strengthen its cadre development, provide logistical support, and carry out sustained affirmative campaigns to achieve gender equality in local politics. This study contributes to the development of more inclusive and gender-responsive party policies.

Keywords: Political strategy, Democratic Party, women's representation, legislative, Ciamis.

A. INTRODUCTION

Women's participation in Indonesian politics, particularly in legislative institutions, remains an issue that requires serious attention (Nurcahyo, A., 2016). Although various affirmative policies have been implemented, such as a minimum 30% quota for women's representation in parliament, significant challenges remain in achieving balanced representation (Mardiyati S, 2025). One crucial element in championing this diversity is the role of political parties in providing space for women to participate in politics (Putranto, A., 2024).

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Women's involvement in politics has continued to increase over time (Nursyifa et al., 2023). One indicator is the increasing trend of women's representation in the legislature, particularly from the 1999 to the 2009 elections. In the 1999 election (9%), the 2004 election (11.8%), and the 2009 election (18%). This increase did not occur suddenly, but rather through a continuous struggle to realize everyone's right to equality and justice, one of which is through legislation that favors and affirms increasing women's representation.

Indonesia has enacted Law No. 68 of 1958 concerning the Ratification of the Convention on Political Rights of Women, which regulates the realization of equality (non-discrimination), guarantees equal rights to vote and be elected, and the opportunity to hold bureaucratic positions and participate in socio-political organizations. However, a significant increase in women's representation only occurred after the amendment to the 1945 Constitution, particularly Article 28H paragraph (2), which states that "Everyone has the right to receive facilities and special treatment to obtain the same opportunities and benefits in order to achieve equality and justice."

Recruitment of female legislative candidates within the Democratic Party relies heavily on the candidate's integrity, quality, and capacity (Gustiani et al., 2017). However, in practice, the Democratic Party recruits female candidates using various strategies, with the goal of gaining votes in the election to fill seats in the Ciamis Regency DPRD. The open proportional representation system tends to be disadvantageous for female candidates, as competition relies heavily on popularity and campaign resources, rather than capacity (Ayu, Dewi, Putri, & Wulandari, 2023). In reality, recruitment is ultimately based on candidates who are marketable and popular, namely charismatic figures with sufficient financial resources to fund their campaigns and parties.

Table 1. Number of Members of the Ciamis Regency Regional People's Representative Council 2009-2014, 2014-2019, 2019-2024, and 2024-2029

<i>Period</i>	<i>Number DPRD Members</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
2009-2014	50	45	5
2014-2019	50	45	4
2019-2024	50	46	4
2024-2029	50	45	5

Source: Ciamis Regency DPRD Secretariat, 2024

According to data from the Ciamis Regency DPRD Secretariat in 2024, women's representation across the four election periods remained low and tended to fluctuate. In the 2009-2014 period, there were 5 women out of 50 DPRD members, 4 in the 2014-2019 period, 4 in the 2019-2024 period, and 5 in the 2024-2029 period. Thus, the proportion of women's representation remains around 10%, far from the ideal quota of 30%. The 30% quota regulation has not had a significant impact on the quality of women's representation in

parliament. Many women are nominated solely to fulfill administrative requirements (Kontu & Pesak, 2025). Although gender quotas have been implemented, they often remain merely an administrative formality without any concrete support from political parties for female legislative candidates (Cahyowirawan, Maulana, Denisnawa, & Ummah, 2025).

Table 2. Number of Members of the Regional Representative Council
By Political Party and Gender in Ciamis Regency

<i>No</i>	<i>Political Party</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
1	PKB	1	4	5
2	Gerindra	1	5	6
3	PDIP	-	7	7
4	Golkar	-	5	5
5	Nasdem	-	4	4
6	PKS	-	5	5
7	PAN	1	6	7
8	PBB	-	1	1
9	Demokrat	2	4	6
10	PPP	-	4	4

Source: Ciamis Regency DPRD Secretariat, 2024

Meanwhile, data per party shows that of the 10 parties in the Ciamis Regency DPRD, only the Democratic Party successfully fielded two women out of a total of six seats won. Despite this, the Democratic Party's realization of women's representation remains suboptimal (Hia E, 2025). A less inclusive internal recruitment process, limited financial support, and a lack of internal political education within the party are challenges that need to be addressed (Buana et al., 2021). The decline in the percentage of women's representation on the candidate list still indicates the party's weak awareness of the importance of women's roles in political decision-making (Fathoni, Ahmad, & Sipayung, 2024). Based on these conditions, the author is interested in further examining the strategies implemented by the Democratic Party to increase women's representation and analyzing the effectiveness of its offensive and defensive strategies in the 2024-2029 Ciamis Regency Legislative Election.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategy is a series of policies or actions continuously implemented by an organization to achieve specific goals based on the opportunities and threats faced in the external environment, as well as its internal resources and capabilities (Putri et al., 2022). According to Supratikno (2003), strategy can be understood as an anticipatory plan for the future. Marpaung (2000) also explains that strategy is the process of determining value choices and making decisions about resource utilization that are focused on the future.

Effendy (2007) emphasizes that strategy is essentially planning and management to achieve a goal. Meanwhile, according to Rangkuti (2009), strategy is a tool for objectively observing internal and external conditions to anticipate environmental changes. Therefore, strategy encompasses goals, policies, actions, and resource allocation designed to maintain existence and win the competition. Political strategy is a systematic plan and action to

achieve victory in an election contest. Schroder (in Ndarinu A, 2024) divides political strategy into two:

1. **Offensive Strategy:** a strategy for expanding markets and penetrating constituents. In a political context, this strategy is used to attract new voters, increase the support base, and expand the party's influence into underserved areas.
2. **Defensive Strategy:** a strategy to maintain a stable voter base. Parties focus on maintaining existing supporters, covering internal weaknesses, and maintaining voter loyalty.

Newman and Sheth (in Nursal, 2004) add four other types of political strategies:

1. Reinforcement strategy,
2. Rationalization strategy,
3. Inducement strategy,
4. Confrontation strategy.

Political parties are the primary vehicle in modern democracies for recruiting and channeling the people's aspirations, including the representation of specific groups such as women (Samosir, 2021). The Democratic Party, a nationalist-religious party founded in 2001, has been an active participant in various elections in Indonesia (Rencana et al., 2015). As a political institution, this party plays a crucial role in formulating internal policies regarding the 30% quota for women's representation on legislative candidate lists.

Affirmative action policies on women's representation are reflected in Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning Elections, which mandates a 30% quota for women on the list of legislative candidates and election organizers. Article 28H paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution provides a constitutional basis that everyone has the right to receive facilities and special treatment in order to obtain equal opportunities. However, in practice, many obstacles are faced, such as a patriarchal culture, limited resources for women, lack of political training, and the dominance of male elites in party structures. Women's representation stems from a still strong patriarchal culture, as well as the low commitment of political parties in facilitating women to advance as legislative candidates (Haryanto et al., 2024). The main obstacles to implementing gender affirmative action policies come from a patriarchal culture, weak commitment of political parties, and a lack of political education for women (Damayanti et al., 2024). Therefore, appropriate strategies and internal party policy support are important to increase women's representation in legislative institutions.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand phenomena in depth and comprehensively, particularly regarding the Democratic Party's political strategy to increase women's representation in legislative institutions in Ciamis Regency for the 2024–2029 period. Qualitative descriptive research is used to describe facts, data, and phenomena found in the field according to existing realities without manipulating variables.

The research location was Ciamis Regency, with the research period running from November 2024 to August 2025. During the research process, researchers collected data

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through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation studies. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven informants selected purposively. These were those holding strategic positions within the Democratic Party structure and directly involved in internal political processes, such as the Chairperson of the Honorary Council of the Ciamis Regency Democratic Party Branch (DPC), the DPC Secretary, the Chairperson of the Election Campaign Agency (Bapilu), members of the Democratic Party Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), and representatives of female legislative members and party cadres.

In addition to interviews, researchers also conducted direct observations of the Democratic Party's political activities and dynamics, particularly those related to the recruitment, campaign, and training of female cadres. The documentation collected included election results, legislative candidate lists, the party's organizational structure, and regulations governing women's representation quotas in legislative institutions. The collected data was then analyzed through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by sorting relevant information according to the research focus. Afterward, the data was systematically organized in narrative form to facilitate interpretation. The final stage was drawing conclusions, formulated as answers to the research questions.

The focus of this research refers to Schroder's theory of political strategy, which divides strategies into two categories: offensive and defensive strategies. Offensive strategies involve efforts to expand the regional base and penetrate constituents through mapping regions and voter groups, while defensive strategies include voter segmentation and formulating campaign promises aimed at positively impacting public welfare. With the approach and methods used, this research is expected to provide a complete picture of the political strategy implemented by the Democratic Party in an effort to encourage increased female representation in the Ciamis Regency DPRD for the 2024-2029 period.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study found that the Democratic Party's political strategy to increase women's representation in the Ciamis Regency legislative body for the 2024–2029 period has not been fully implemented optimally. This is evident in the current political reality, where the number of female legislators in the Ciamis Regency Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) is only 5 out of a total of 50 council members, or approximately 10%. This number falls short of the ideal quota of 30% female representation as mandated by national legislation. Of the five female legislators, two are from the Democratic Party: Yulianti from Electoral District 2 and Hj. Hakimah from Electoral District 5. Although the Democratic Party is committed to promoting gender representation, its implementation still faces various structural and cultural challenges.

Based on the analysis of the implemented strategies, it was found that the Democratic Party implemented a political strategy that refers to two main approaches as outlined by Schroder: offensive and defensive strategies. The party's offensive strategy includes expanding its regional base by recruiting potential female figures with influence in society, as

well as mapping female constituents and voter groups sympathetic to gender equality issues. Furthermore, the Democratic Party nominates female figures known for their charismatic character, strong educational backgrounds, and strong social support from local communities. This strategy aims to increase the competitiveness of female legislative candidates amidst the dominance of male candidates.

Meanwhile, a defensive strategy is implemented by maintaining a loyal voter base for the party and its female candidates. This strategy is realized through voter segmentation based on social and cultural backgrounds, as well as strengthening campaign programs that emphasize issues of welfare, education, family finances, and women's empowerment. During the campaign, female legislative candidates are also directed to promise concrete programs that address the needs of their constituents, particularly women in their respective electoral districts.

However, the implementation of this strategy still faces several major obstacles. First, the Democratic Party's internal recruitment process remains limited and not fully inclusive of female cadres. Data shows that of the 50 prospective legislative candidates nominated by the party, only 15 are women. Second, many female candidates face limitations in campaign funding. The lack of logistical and financial support from the party makes it difficult for them to compete fairly with male candidates, who generally have greater resources. Third, internal political education for female cadres remains very limited. Training, briefings, and political mentoring are not conducted on a continuous basis, thus limiting women's capacity to compete in political contests.

These findings reinforce previous research that suggests that political parties play a crucial role in the candidacy, selection, and support processes for women in elections. Parties with a strong commitment to gender equality should not simply focus on fulfilling administrative quotas but also encourage the development of competent female cadres ready to compete on equal terms.

Thus, it can be concluded that the Democratic Party's political strategy to increase women's representation in the Ciamis Regency Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) has been implemented through both offensive and defensive approaches, but its implementation has not been fully effective. Efforts are needed to strengthen cadre development, logistical support, and ongoing internal political development so that women's representation is not just a quota formality, but is truly realized substantively in local legislative structures.

E. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Democratic Party's political strategy to increase women's representation in the Ciamis Regency legislative body for the 2024–2029 period has been implemented through two main approaches: an offensive strategy and a defensive strategy. The offensive strategy involves expanding the regional base, constituency mapping, and nominating influential female figures. Meanwhile, the defensive strategy is pursued through

integrated voter segmentation and gender-based campaigns that target the needs of the community, particularly women.

Although conceptually, this strategy has been designed, its implementation has been suboptimal. This is reflected in the low representation of women in the Ciamis Regency Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), which only reaches 10%, or 5 out of 50 seats. The Democratic Party has only managed to nominate two female legislators. The main obstacles faced are the party's inclusive internal recruitment process, limited financial support for female candidates, and weak internal political education, which should be a means of strengthening the capacity of female cadres.

To optimize the strategy of increasing women's representation, the Democratic Party needs to continuously strengthen the process of developing women's political cadres, including providing training, mentoring, and opportunities for female cadres to actualize themselves at all levels of the party structure. Furthermore, the party needs to guarantee equal logistical and financial support for female legislative candidates, ensuring they have equal competitiveness in elections. Finally, a real commitment from party elites is needed to make women's representation not merely an administrative quota, but part of the effort to realize an inclusive and representative democracy.

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