

# Masculinity and Gender Representation in the Power Structure of Cilegon DPRD

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## Abstract

This study analyzes the dominance of masculinity within the power structure of the Cilegon City Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) during the 2024–2029 legislative period and its implications for gender representation and local public policy processes. The study is motivated by the continuing imbalance of gender representation within local political institutions despite the implementation of affirmative action policies promoting women's political participation in Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research employs document analysis and literature review techniques to examine the gender composition of the DPRD, the distribution of strategic institutional positions, and patterns of political power relations within the legislative institution. The study applies the concept of hegemonic masculinity developed by Raewyn Connell as the primary analytical framework to understand how masculine domination is reproduced within local political structures. The findings reveal that the institutional structure of the Cilegon City DPRD remains strongly dominated by men. Out of 40 legislative members, 36 members are male while women occupy only 4 seats, representing merely 10 percent of the institutional composition. In addition, all major strategic positions within the DPRD, including leadership positions and commission chairmanships, are occupied by men. This condition demonstrates that women's political representation remains limited not only numerically but also substantively through unequal access to institutional power and political authority. The study further finds that masculine domination is reproduced through political culture, patronage networks, institutional norms, and leadership perceptions that continue to privilege male political actors. Furthermore, masculine domination within the DPRD potentially influences regional policy-making processes by limiting the inclusion of gender perspectives within legislative discussions and institutional agendas. The limited involvement of women in strategic political positions may reduce institutional attention toward gender-responsive public policies and women's interests within regional governance processes. Overall, this study concludes that affirmative representation policies alone are insufficient to transform gendered power relations within local political institutions. Strengthening women's political representation requires not only increasing women's numerical participation but also expanding women's access to strategic political positions and transforming masculine political structures within local governance institutions.

## KEYWORDS

hegemonic masculinity, gender representation, local politics, DPRD, women in politics, Cilegon City.

## Introduction

Political representation is one of the fundamental principles in modern democratic systems, particularly in ensuring the inclusion of diverse social groups within political decision-making processes. In democratic institutions, representation is not only understood as the presence of elected representatives but also as the ability of different social groups to influence policy formulation and governance

Within this context, women's political representation has become an important issue in discussions concerning democracy, equality, and inclusive governance. According to Anne Phillips, the concept of politics of presence emphasizes that the presence of women in political institutions is essential because women possess distinct social experiences and perspectives that should be represented within political processes (Krook, 2009).

Globally, efforts to improve women's political representation have been carried out through various affirmative policies, particularly the implementation of gender quotas in legislative elections. Gender quota policies are considered important instruments for addressing structural barriers that historically limited women's participation in politics. Drude Dahlerup argues that gender quotas have become one of the most widely adopted strategies to increase women's representation in parliament across different countries (Dahlerup, 2006; Norris, 2004). In Indonesia, affirmative action policies regarding women's representation are regulated through electoral laws requiring political parties to nominate at least 30 percent women candidates in legislative elections. The implementation of this policy reflects the state's commitment to promoting gender equality within political institutions.

Despite these affirmative efforts, increasing the numerical representation of women in legislative institutions does not necessarily lead to equal access to political power within institutional structures. In many cases, women may obtain seats in parliament while strategic positions such as parliamentary leadership, commission chairmanships, and budgeting bodies continue to be dominated by men. This condition demonstrates that political representation involves not only descriptive representation but also access to institutional power. Mona Lena Krook explains that increasing the number of women in parliament does not automatically transform existing power relations because political institutions often remain embedded within masculine political cultures and elite networks (Aspinall, 2013; Hadiz, 2010; Haryanto, 2020).

The dynamics of women's political representation in Indonesia are also influenced by the characteristics of local political systems, which continue to be shaped by patronage networks and elite domination. Edward Aspinall explains that patronage practices remain central within Indonesian politics, particularly in political recruitment and the distribution of power within political institutions. Similarly, Vedi R. Hadiz argues that post-authoritarian local politics in Indonesia continues to exhibit oligarchic tendencies in which political power is concentrated among certain elite groups. Such political structures may create barriers for groups with limited access to political resources, including women.

The persistence of male domination within political institutions can be analyzed through the concept of hegemonic masculinity proposed by Raewyn Connell. According to Connell (1995), hegemonic masculinity refers to a dominant form of masculinity that gains social legitimacy and functions to sustain gendered power relations. In political institutions, hegemonic masculinity is reflected through social constructions associating leadership, authority, and political competence with masculine characteristics such as assertiveness, rationality, and dominance. Consequently, men tend to receive greater legitimacy as political leaders compared to women. This perspective is relevant in explaining why legislative institutions continue to demonstrate masculine

domination despite the implementation of affirmative gender policies.

At the local level, regional legislative institutions play a strategic role in policy-making processes because they possess legislative, budgeting, and oversight functions toward local governments. Therefore, gender representation within regional legislatures becomes important because it may influence policy priorities and decision-making processes. According to Jane Mansbridge, the representation of marginalized groups within political institutions can shape policy outcomes because different social experiences produce different political priorities (Mansbridge, 1999; Wängnerud, 2009). Thus, women's representation in legislative institutions should not merely be understood symbolically but also substantively in relation to policy influence.

The Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of Cilegon City represents an important case for examining gendered power relations within local political institutions. As one of the major industrial cities in Banten Province, Cilegon possesses distinctive local political dynamics influenced by political elites, party networks, and local patronage structures. Although women have obtained representation within the DPRD, the distribution of strategic institutional positions remains largely dominated by men. Leadership positions, commission chairmanships, and other influential institutional roles continue to reflect unequal gender representation. This condition indicates that women's inclusion in legislative institutions has not necessarily transformed masculine power structures operating within local politics.

Several previous studies concerning women's political representation in Indonesia have primarily focused on descriptive representation, particularly the increasing number of women elected to parliament. Studies by scholars such as Elisabeth Prihatini demonstrate that women legislators in Indonesia continue to face structural barriers related to political networks, party structures, and masculine political culture (Prihatini, 2019; Zuhro, 2019). However, studies specifically examining how masculine domination operates within the institutional power structures of regional legislatures and how it influences local policy-making processes remain relatively limited, particularly at the city DPRD level. Therefore, there remains a significant research gap regarding the relationship between gender representation, institutional power distribution, and masculine domination within local political institutions.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to analyze the dominance of masculinity within the power structure of the Cilegon City DPRD and its implications for gender representation and local public policy-making processes (Sapiro, 1981; Suryakusuma, 2011). By employing the perspective of hegemonic masculinity developed by Connell, this study seeks to explain how gendered power relations are reproduced within local legislative institutions and how such structures affect women's access to strategic political positions (Subono, 2012; UN Women, 2023; Waylen, 1996). This study is expected to contribute to broader discussions concerning gender representation, local political structures, and inclusive governance within the Indonesian political context.

## Methods

This study employs a qualitative research method with a

descriptive approach to analyze the dominance of masculinity within the power structure of the Cilegon City Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) and its implications for gender representation and local public policy processes. A qualitative approach was selected because this study seeks to understand social and political phenomena in depth, particularly the operation of gendered power relations within local political institutions. According to John W. Creswell, qualitative research is appropriate for exploring social phenomena, institutional dynamics, and patterns of interaction that cannot be adequately explained through quantitative measurement alone (Creswell, 2014; Marsh & Stoker, 2010; Moleong, 2018).

This research focuses on the institutional structure of the Cilegon City DPRD during the 2019-2024 legislative period. The study specifically examines gender composition, the distribution of strategic institutional positions, patterns of political power relations, and their implications for public policy-making processes within the regional legislature (Budiardjo, 2008). The selection of the Cilegon City DPRD as the research object is based on the consideration that local legislative institutions play a strategic role in shaping regional policy directions while simultaneously reflecting broader local political dynamics and gender relations.

Data collection in this study was conducted through document analysis and literature review. Document analysis involved collecting and examining various official institutional documents related to the organizational structure and political composition of the Cilegon City DPRD. These documents include data concerning the composition of DPRD members, leadership structures, commission structures, institutional apparatus, and strategic positions occupied within the legislature. In addition, this study also utilized secondary data obtained from regional government reports, official DPRD publications, electoral reports, statistical data, and media coverage related to local political dynamics and women's political representation in Cilegon City (Denzin, 1978).

The literature review process was conducted by examining various academic sources relevant to gender representation, local politics, hegemonic masculinity, and political institutions. The study uses books, journal articles, previous research findings, and policy reports to strengthen the theoretical and analytical framework of the research. Several previous studies regarding women's political representation in Indonesia, local oligarchic politics, and masculine political culture were also used as analytical references in understanding the empirical findings of this research.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis techniques. The analysis process was carried out through several stages, including data reduction, data categorization, interpretation, and analytical conclusion drawing. The data were categorized based on several analytical indicators, namely: (1) gender composition within the DPRD, (2) distribution of strategic institutional positions, (3) patterns of masculine dominance within political structures, and (4) implications for public policy-making processes. Through this analytical process, the study aims to identify patterns of gender inequality and institutional power relations operating within the Cilegon City DPRD (Connell, 1995; Lovenduski, 2005).

This study employs the concept of hegemonic masculinity developed by Raewyn Connell as the primary analytical framework. Connell (1995) explains that hegemonic masculinity refers to a dominant form of masculinity that gains legitimacy within social institutions and functions to maintain unequal gendered power

relations. In the context of political institutions, hegemonic masculinity can be reflected through leadership norms, political recruitment patterns, institutional cultures, and the unequal distribution of political power between men and women. By applying this perspective, this study seeks to explain how masculine domination is reproduced within the institutional structure of the Cilegon City DPRD and how such domination affects women's political representation and access to strategic political positions.

To ensure data validity, this study applies source triangulation techniques by comparing information obtained from official institutional documents, academic literature, government publications, and media reports. According to Norman K. Denzin, triangulation is important in qualitative research to strengthen the credibility and reliability of research findings. Through this process, the study seeks to produce a more comprehensive and credible analysis regarding masculine dominance and gender representation within local legislative institutions.

## Result and Discussion

### Overview of the Cilegon City DPRD and Gender Composition

The Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of Cilegon City is a regional legislative institution that performs legislative, budgeting, and oversight functions toward the local government. As a local political institution, the DPRD plays a strategic role in determining the direction of regional public policy while simultaneously serving as an arena for the distribution of political power at the local level. Within the context of representative democracy, the composition of DPRD members becomes important to analyze because it reflects the representation of various social groups, including gender representation within political decision-making processes.

The gender composition of the Cilegon City DPRD during the 2019–2024 legislative period indicates that women remain underrepresented compared to men. Although affirmative action policies concerning a minimum 30 percent quota for women candidates have been implemented within the Indonesian electoral system, women's representation in the Cilegon City DPRD still demonstrates significant gender imbalance within local political structures. This condition indicates that the formal increase in women's political participation has not necessarily been accompanied by substantive representation within regional legislative institutions.

Table 1. Gender Composition of the Cilegon City DPRD (2024–2029)

Gender	Number of Members	Percentage
Male	36	90%
Famale	4	10%
Total	40	100%

Source: DPRD Cilegon Website

Based on Table 1, the gender composition of the Cilegon City DPRD during the 2024–2029 legislative period demonstrates a significant imbalance between male and female representation (DPRD Kota Cilegon, 2025). Out of a total of 40 legislative members, 36 members are male, representing 90 percent of the institutional composition, while women occupy only 4 seats or approximately 10 percent of the total membership. This condition indicates

that women’s political representation within the Cilegon City DPRD remains substantially lower than male representation and is still far below the 30 percent affirmative representation target promoted within Indonesia’s electoral regulations.

The limited representation of women in the DPRD reflects that affirmative action policies implemented within the Indonesian political system have not yet fully addressed structural gender inequality in local political institutions. Although women formally possess opportunities to participate in electoral politics, the political structure at the local level continues to be dominated by men. This imbalance may be influenced by various factors, including masculine political culture, unequal access to political networks, party recruitment mechanisms, and patronage-based political systems that tend to favor male political actors.

According to Drude Dahlerup, quota policies can increase women’s participation in elections but do not automatically eliminate structural barriers embedded within political institutions (Dahlerup, 2006). Similarly, Edward Aspinall explains that local political dynamics in Indonesia remain strongly influenced by patronage networks and elite domination, which often disadvantage groups with weaker political access, including women (Aspinall, 2013).

From the perspective of hegemonic masculinity proposed by Raewyn Connell, the dominance of male legislators within the Cilegon City DPRD reflects broader gendered power relations operating within political institutions. Connell (1995) argues that hegemonic masculinity functions by normalizing male dominance within positions of authority and leadership. In political institutions, leadership is frequently associated with masculine characteristics such as authority, assertiveness, and political control, causing men to be perceived as more legitimate political actors compared to women.

Furthermore, the low number of women legislators potentially affects the inclusion of gender perspectives in regional policy-making processes. According to Jane Mansbridge, the representation of marginalized groups within political institutions is important because different social experiences influence policy priorities and institutional agendas (Mansbridge, 1999). Therefore, the underrepresentation of women within the Cilegon City DPRD may contribute to the limited institutional attention given to women’s issues and gender-responsive public policies within local governance.

#### Distribution of Strategic Positions in the Cilegon City DPRD

In addition to being reflected in the composition of legislative members, male domination within the Cilegon City DPRD is also evident in the distribution of strategic institutional positions. Strategic positions within the DPRD play an important role because they are closely related to political decision-making processes, institutional agenda control, and the distribution of influence in legislative and regional budgeting processes. Therefore, the distribution of strategic positions becomes an important indicator in examining the extent to which women obtain access to substantive political power within regional legislative institutions.

Based on the institutional structure of the Cilegon City DPRD for the 2024–2029 legislative period, most strategic positions continue to be dominated by men. Leadership positions within the DPRD, commission chairmanships, and important positions within legislative bodies are generally occupied by male legislators rather than women.

This condition demonstrates that women’s representation within legislative institutions is not automatically followed by equal distribution of political power within institutional structures.

*Table 2, Distribution of Strategic Positions in the Cilegon City DPRD (2024-2029)*

Strategic Position	Gender
Chairperson of DPRD	Male
Vice Chairperson I	Male
Vice Chairperson II	Male
Chairperson of Commission I	Male
Chairperson of Commission II	Male
Chairperson of Commission III	Male
Chairperson of Commission IV	Male

Source: DPRD Cilegon Website

Based on the [table 2](#), above, all major strategic positions within the institutional structure of the Cilegon City DPRD are occupied by men. No women hold positions as DPRD leaders or commission chairpersons during the legislative period. This condition demonstrates that women not only experience limitations in numerical representation but also face restricted access to political positions possessing significant influence over institutional decision-making processes.

According to Mona Lena Krook, women’s representation in parliament cannot be measured solely through the number of seats occupied by women but must also be assessed through women’s access to leadership positions and substantive political power within political institutions (Krook, 2009). In many cases, women may successfully enter parliament, yet the internal power structures of political institutions continue to preserve male domination in strategic positions. This demonstrates that gendered power relations continue to operate within institutional power distribution.

Male domination in strategic positions within the Cilegon City DPRD can be understood through the perspective of hegemonic masculinity proposed by Raewyn Connell. Connell (1995) explains that hegemonic masculinity operates through social legitimacy that positions men as the primary actors within public power structures. In political institutions, leadership positions are often associated with masculine characteristics such as authority, control, assertiveness, and political capability, which are culturally perceived as more closely attached to men than women. As a result, men tend to receive greater legitimacy in occupying strategic political positions.

In addition to masculine political culture, the distribution of strategic positions is also influenced by internal party mechanisms and local elite political networks. Vedi R. Hadiz explains that local politics in Indonesia continues to demonstrate oligarchic tendencies in which power distribution is largely controlled by certain political elites. Under such conditions, access to strategic positions is often determined by political proximity, patronage networks, and internal party power structures that are generally more accessible to men.

The dominance of men in strategic positions within the DPRD potentially influences institutional priorities and policy directions. When political leadership structures are dominated by men, women’s perspectives and experiences risk becoming underrepresented in legislative, budgeting, and policy oversight processes. According to Jane Mansbridge, the presence of women in political leadership positions is important because it can broaden the representation of groups that have historically been marginalized within political processes.

Overall, the distribution of strategic positions within the Cilegon City DPRD demonstrates that masculine domination is reflected not only in the numerical composition of legislative members but also in the institutional distribution of political power. Women continue to possess very limited access to strategic positions that shape policy directions and political decision-making processes at the regional level. This condition indicates that local political structures continue to reproduce power relations that position men as the dominant actors within regional political institutions.

#### The Dominance of Masculinity in Local Power Structures

The dominance of masculinity within the Cilegon City DPRD is not merely reflected in the numerical superiority of male legislators or the concentration of strategic positions among men, but also in broader institutional power structures that shape political interactions, leadership patterns, and decision-making processes. Masculinity within political institutions operates as a cultural and structural system that legitimizes male domination while simultaneously marginalizing women's political roles and influence. Consequently, political institutions often reproduce unequal gender relations through institutional norms, political culture, and patterns of power distribution.

Within the context of local politics, masculine domination is frequently embedded in political practices that associate leadership, authority, and political competence with characteristics socially constructed as masculine. Political leadership is often linked to assertiveness, authority, firmness, and control, which are culturally perceived as attributes more naturally possessed by men. As a result, male political actors tend to receive stronger legitimacy and broader political acceptance compared to women within political institutions.

According to Raewyn Connell, hegemonic masculinity refers to a dominant form of masculinity that gains social legitimacy and functions to maintain unequal gender relations within social institutions. In political institutions, hegemonic masculinity operates by positioning men as the primary holders of authority and political influence. This dominance is maintained not only through formal institutional structures but also through cultural norms and political practices that normalize male leadership while limiting women's political participation and influence.

The institutional structure of the Cilegon City DPRD demonstrates how masculine domination continues to shape local political power relations. The overwhelming dominance of male legislators, combined with the absence of women in major strategic positions, reflects that political power within the institution remains concentrated among male political actors. Such conditions indicate that women's participation within the legislature remains largely symbolic rather than substantive because women possess limited access to positions that significantly influence institutional agendas and political decision-making processes.

The dominance of masculinity within local political structures is also closely related to patronage politics and elite political networks that continue to characterize Indonesian local politics. Edward Aspinall explains that patronage politics in Indonesia often relies on networks of power, loyalty, and political resources that are predominantly controlled by political elites. Within such systems, access to political influence is strongly shaped by personal networks and elite relations that tend to favor male political actors. Consequently, women frequently encounter greater structural barriers in accessing political

authority and institutional leadership.

Similarly, Vedi R. Hadiz argues that local political structures in post-authoritarian Indonesia continue to exhibit oligarchic characteristics in which power is concentrated within certain elite groups. In such political environments, institutional power distribution often reflects existing social hierarchies, including gender hierarchies that privilege male domination. As a result, women's political representation may increase numerically without fundamentally transforming institutional power relations.

Masculine domination within political institutions also influences institutional culture and patterns of political interaction. Political institutions dominated by men often develop organizational cultures that are less inclusive toward women's participation and leadership. Informal political negotiations, elite networks, and decision-making processes are frequently shaped by masculine political norms that may exclude or marginalize women from central political processes. Consequently, women legislators may experience difficulties in building political influence despite formally holding legislative positions.

According to Joan Acker, institutions are not gender-neutral structures because organizational systems often reproduce gender inequality through norms, practices, and power relations embedded within institutional processes (Acker, 1990; Scott, 1986; Tong, 2009). In the context of the Cilegon City DPRD, institutional structures and political practices appear to reinforce male domination by positioning men as the primary actors within legislative power structures (Eisenstein, 1984; Pateman, 1988). This condition demonstrates that gender inequality within political institutions is not solely the result of individual factors but is also structurally embedded within institutional systems.

Furthermore, the dominance of masculinity within local political institutions may discourage broader women's political participation. When political leadership continues to be dominated by men, women may perceive political institutions as spaces that are difficult to access and less supportive of women's leadership aspirations. This condition potentially contributes to the persistence of low female political participation and limited regeneration of women political leaders at the local level.

Overall, the dominance of masculinity within the Cilegon City DPRD reflects broader structural inequalities operating within local political institutions. Masculine domination is reproduced through institutional structures, political culture, elite networks, and leadership norms that continue to privilege male political actors over women. Although women formally possess representation within the legislature, their limited access to strategic political power demonstrates that gender equality within local political institutions remains substantively constrained.

#### Implications of Masculine Dominance on Public Policy

The dominance of masculinity within the institutional structure of the Cilegon City DPRD has broader implications for regional public policy-making processes. Political institutions are not merely arenas for political representation but also institutions that determine policy priorities, budget allocation, and the direction of regional development. Therefore, the unequal distribution of political power between men and women may influence the extent to which gender perspectives are incorporated into public policy formulation and implementation.

The limited representation of women within the DPRD, particularly in strategic leadership positions, potentially reduces women's influence in determining legislative agendas and policy priorities. In legislative institutions dominated by men, policy-making processes often reflect

masculine political perspectives and priorities, while issues specifically related to women's interests and gender equality may receive less institutional attention. Consequently, policies concerning women's empowerment, gender equality, child protection, maternal health, and social welfare risk becoming less prioritized within regional political discussions.

According to Jane Mansbridge, the presence of women within political institutions is important because women bring different social experiences that may shape policy preferences and institutional priorities. Therefore, women's underrepresentation within political decision-making structures may contribute to the limited integration of gender-sensitive perspectives in public policy processes. In this context, descriptive representation becomes closely connected to substantive representation, particularly regarding whose interests are prioritized within political institutions.

The dominance of masculine political culture may also influence how policy issues are framed and discussed within legislative institutions. Political discussions dominated by male actors frequently prioritize issues related to economic development, infrastructure, industrial expansion, and political stability, while social issues concerning gender inequality and women's welfare may receive comparatively less emphasis. Although such policy priorities are not inherently problematic, the absence of balanced gender perspectives may produce development policies that insufficiently address the diverse needs and experiences of different social groups.

Within the context of Cilegon City as an industrial region, development policies are often strongly oriented toward economic growth and industrial investment. However, without sufficient gender representation within political decision-making structures, policies may inadequately address the social impacts of industrialization on women and vulnerable groups. Issues such as women's labor conditions, access to healthcare, social protection, and gender-based violence may receive limited institutional attention when women's voices remain marginalized within legislative processes.

According to Anne Phillips, democratic representation should not only focus on numerical inclusion but also ensure that marginalized groups possess meaningful opportunities to influence policy outcomes (Phillips, 1995; Young, 2000). In this regard, the dominance of masculinity within the DPRD potentially limits the inclusiveness of regional governance because policy-making processes remain heavily influenced by male-centered political perspectives and institutional priorities.

Furthermore, the absence of women in strategic political positions may weaken institutional advocacy for gender-responsive policies. Women legislators who possess limited institutional authority may encounter difficulties in influencing legislative agendas, budget negotiations, and policy discussions dominated by male political elites. Consequently, even when women are formally represented within legislative institutions, their ability to substantially influence policy outcomes may remain constrained by broader institutional power structures.

The implications of masculine domination are not limited to policy substance but also affect broader democratic inclusiveness within local governance. Political institutions that continue to marginalize women's participation may weaken public perceptions regarding equal political opportunities and democratic representation. In the long term, such conditions may discourage women's political participation and reinforce the perception that political leadership remains a

predominantly masculine domain.

According to Joan Acker, institutional structures often reproduce inequality through organizational norms and power relations that appear neutral but systematically privilege dominant groups. Within the Cilegon City DPRD, masculine domination appears to shape institutional priorities and political processes in ways that continue to privilege male political actors and perspectives. As a result, gender inequality becomes institutionally reproduced through both formal and informal political mechanisms.

Overall, the dominance of masculinity within the Cilegon City DPRD has significant implications for regional public policy processes and democratic inclusiveness. The unequal distribution of political power between men and women potentially limits the incorporation of gender-sensitive perspectives within policy-making processes and reinforces broader patterns of gender inequality within local governance structures. Therefore, strengthening women's substantive political representation becomes important not only for achieving gender equality but also for promoting more inclusive and representative regional governance.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the power structure of the Cilegon City DPRD during the 2024–2029 legislative period continues to reflect strong masculine domination within local political institutions. The gender composition of the DPRD indicates significant inequality, where male legislators dominate the institution with 36 members or 90 percent of the total legislative seats, while women occupy only 4 seats or 10 percent of the institutional composition. This condition shows that women's political representation in the Cilegon City DPRD remains substantially below the 30 percent affirmative representation target promoted within Indonesia's electoral framework.

The study further reveals that masculine domination is not only reflected in numerical representation but also in the distribution of strategic institutional positions. Major leadership positions within the DPRD, including the chairpersonship and commission leaderships, continue to be entirely occupied by men. The absence of women in strategic political positions demonstrates that women's representation within the legislature remains limited at the substantive level because women possess restricted access to institutional authority and political decision-making processes.

Using the perspective of hegemonic masculinity proposed by Raewyn Connell, this study finds that masculine domination within the Cilegon City DPRD is reproduced through institutional structures, political culture, elite political networks, and leadership norms that continue to privilege male political actors. Masculine political culture associate political leadership and authority with characteristics socially constructed as masculine, causing men to receive stronger legitimacy within political institutions compared to women.

The findings also indicate that masculine domination within local political institutions has broader implications for regional public policy-making processes. The limited representation of women, particularly in strategic leadership positions, potentially reduces the inclusion of gender perspectives within legislative discussions, budgeting processes, and policy formulation. Consequently, issues related to women's interests and gender equality may receive limited institutional attention within regional governance.

Overall, this study concludes that the implementation of affirmative representation policies has not yet fundamentally transformed gendered power relations within local political institutions. Women's political representation in the Cilegon City DPRD remains constrained not only numerically but also structurally through unequal access to political authority and institutional leadership. Therefore, efforts to strengthen women's political participation should not merely focus on increasing the number of women legislators but also on expanding women's access to strategic political positions and transforming masculine political structures

within local governance institutions.

This study contributes to discussions concerning gender representation and local politics by emphasizing that gender inequality within political institutions must be understood not only through descriptive representation but also through institutional power relations and political structures that shape access to political authority. Future studies are expected to further examine the relationship between gender representation, political institutions, and policy outcomes in local governance contexts across different regions in Indonesia.

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