

## Women's Representation in Parepare's 2024 Election: Affirmative Action, Voter Perceptions, and Islamic Law

Dirga Achmad<sup>1</sup>, Astinah<sup>2</sup>, Azlan Thamrin<sup>3</sup>, Rustam Magun Pikahulan<sup>4</sup>, Muhammad Farham<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Constitutional Law Study Program, Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Law, IAIN Parepare, Indonesia; dirgaachmad@iainpare.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> Islamic Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah, IAIN Parepare, Indonesia; astinah@iainpare.ac.id

<sup>3</sup> Doctor of Philosophy in Syariah and Judiciary, Faculty of Syariah and Law, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Malaysia; 4241691@raudah.usim.edu.my

<sup>4</sup> Islamic Economic Law Study Program, Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Law, IAIN Parepare, Indonesia; rustamagunpikahulan@iainpare.ac.id

<sup>5</sup> Constitutional Law Study Program, Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Law, IAIN Parepare, Indonesia; farham53@gmail.com

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### Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of affirmative action and voter perceptions of women's representation in the 2024 Parepare City DPRD election from the perspectives of *fiqh siyasah* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. It employed mixed methods with an explanatory sequential design, integrating a voter survey, interviews with election administrators, political parties, and women legislative candidates, and documentary analysis. The findings indicate that the minimum 30% quota has not yet yielded substantive representation of women. Women accounted for only 24% of elected members, while several political parties did not consistently meet the quota in every electoral district. Downward rounding, weak party support, tokenism, limited campaign resources, and gender stereotypes were the principal barriers. Voter perceptions are shifting from identity politics toward performance-based politics, with capacity, integrity, track record, and tangible impact serving as the main considerations. From the perspective of *fiqh siyasah*, affirmative action constitutes *siyasah shar'iyah* aimed at realizing justice and public benefit. Regulatory reform, stronger cadre development, equal political support, and competency-based voter education are therefore required.

### Keywords

Affirmative Action; *Fiqh Siyasah*; Voter Perceptions; Women's Representation; *Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'Ah*

### Corresponding Author

Dirga Achmad  
IAIN Parepare, Indonesia; dirgaachmad@iainpare.ac.id

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Women's political participation is not merely a matter of fulfilling human rights; it is a crucial indicator of an inclusive and gender-equitable democracy (A. Y. B. Harahap, 2025). In Indonesia, efforts to promote women's political participation have been institutionalized through Law Number 7 of 2017



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concerning General Elections, which requires political parties to include at least 30% women in their lists of legislative candidates. Normatively, this policy is intended to address structural inequality arising from a patriarchal culture that has long marginalized women from public decision-making (R. Harahap et al., 2025). Nevertheless, despite the availability of a legal framework, implementation at the local level frequently encounters complex challenges, ranging from inconsistencies in technical regulations to resistance rooted in pragmatic political culture. (Rafly et al., 2025)

Affirmative action in Indonesia has been extensively studied; however, most scholarship remains confined to juridical-normative analysis at the national level or focuses on internal barriers within political parties (Sudarmanto et al., 2025). Rahma Ning Tias et al. (2023), for example, highlighted cultural barriers and the formalistic application of quotas but did not examine policy effectiveness in a specific local context. (Rahmadani & Saputra, 2025) Keisya Damayanti et al. (2024) found that quotas had not produced significant change because the surrounding social structure was unsupportive. M. Rizki Aula (2023) similarly emphasized that patriarchal culture and gender inequality remain major impediments to women's political representation in Indonesia despite the implementation of affirmative action. (Rizky, 2025) These studies, however, tend to approach the issue primarily from an institutional perspective and pay insufficient attention to political psychology, particularly how voters perceive and respond to the policy. In an open-list proportional electoral system, voter preferences are decisive in determining whether candidates are elected. (Damayanti et al., 2024)

This study addresses this gap by offering an interdisciplinary analysis that combines constitutional law and social psychology. Its central concern is the marked disparity between statutory norms and technical regulations, particularly General Elections Commission (KPU) Regulation Number 10 of 2023, which applies downward rounding when calculating the quota for women candidates (Utami et al., 2024). Technically, this practice reduces the minimum number of women who must be nominated, especially in electoral districts with few available seats, thereby undermining the very purpose of affirmative action (Pratama et al., 2025). This phenomenon was evident in the 2024 election for the Parepare City Regional House of Representatives (DPRD), where preliminary data indicated high levels of party non-compliance with the quota in individual electoral districts. Women accounted for only 24% of elected members, still well below the ideal target of 30%. (*Pemilu 2024 Daftar Caleg Terpilih Di Seluruh Indonesia*, n.d.)

Beyond regulatory barriers, field evidence indicates the presence of violence against women in politics (VAWP), whereby women are often positioned merely as "complements" or extensions of male political power. The problem is exacerbated when the public perceives the quota policy as a mere formality. This study, therefore, argues that the limited success of affirmative action does not stem solely from women's lack of political interest but from a potent combination of half-hearted regulation, party

pragmatism, and voter rationalities that have not been fully captured in previous research.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of affirmative action in the 2024 Parepare City DPRD election and to analyze its influence on voter perceptions of women's representation and leadership. More specifically, it assesses the extent to which affirmative policy promotes women's representation at both the nomination and election stages and identifies the factors that determine the success or failure of its local implementation.

The study also examines voters' assessments of women's capacity, integrity, and suitability as public representatives, including the possible persistence of gender stereotypes in electoral choices. In addition, it is expected to contribute to improving affirmative-action policy, strengthening political education, enhancing women's political capacity, and developing a more inclusive, participatory, and gender-equitable local democracy.

## **2. METHODS**

This study employed a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, in which the collection and analysis of quantitative data were followed by qualitative inquiry (Sugiyono, 2021). This design was selected to provide a comprehensive account of the effectiveness of affirmative action, the level of women's representation, and voter perceptions of women legislative candidates in the 2024 Parepare City DPRD election. (Atikah et al., 2024)

The quantitative approach measured voters' knowledge, acceptance, and assessments of women's representation and leadership. Data were collected through questionnaires administered to Parepare City residents registered as voters in the 2024 election. Respondents were selected using proportionate stratified random sampling based on electoral districts and voters' social characteristics. The instrument used a Likert scale with indicators covering knowledge of the women's quota, acceptance of women's leadership, gender stereotypes, candidate track records, integrity, policy programs, and electoral orientations. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics appropriate to their characteristics. (Subagyo & Kristian, 2023)

The qualitative approach was used to deepen the quantitative findings through interviews with election administrators, political party officials, women legislative candidates, women DPRD members, community leaders, academics, and religious figures. Supporting data were obtained through documentary analysis of laws and regulations, candidate lists, vote results, and political party documents. Qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, categorization, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was assessed through source and technique triangulation (Rezeki et al., 2025). The quantitative and qualitative findings were then integrated at the interpretation stage to evaluate the effectiveness of affirmative action. The Islamic legal analysis employed the perspectives of

fiqh siyasah and maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, particularly the principles of justice, equality, public benefit, and the protection of women's dignity.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Regulatory Distortion: From Normative Aspirations to Covert Marginalization

The regulatory mapping undertaken in this study reveals three mutually reinforcing levels of normative misalignment that undermine the effectiveness of affirmative action in Parepare City. First, there is a disparity between Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, which requires 30% women's representation, and KPU Regulation Number 10 of 2023, which applies downward rounding in calculating the quota for each electoral district. Mathematically, downward rounding disadvantages districts with a small number of seats (*Pemilu 2024 Daftar Caleg Terpilih Di Seluruh Indonesia*, n.d.). For example, in a four-seat district, 30% of 4 equals 1.2, which rounds down to 1 woman, whereas rounding up would require 2 women. Although this practice appears technical and neutral, it substantially reduces the intended quota by up to 50% in certain districts. (*Kpu Kota-Parepare - Penetapan Hasil Pemilu Anggota Dprd Kota Parepare Tahun 2024*, 2024)

Documentary data from the Parepare City Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) show that, of the 14 political parties contesting the election, nine parties (64.3%) failed to meet the 30% quota in at least one electoral district, relying on the downward-rounding rule as legal cover (Mesra, 2026). Although Bawaslu exercised oversight, no firm and proportionate sanctioning mechanism was available: non-compliant parties were not disqualified but merely received administrative warnings or recommendations for correction. In practice, the regulatory incentives were therefore weak, and parties prioritized internal interests - power, patronage, and kinship - over substantive compliance with affirmative action. (Mesra, 2026)

Second, a gap exists between national regulations and local technical implementation. Although the national KPU has issued gender-responsive nomination guidelines, the Parepare City KPU's implementation has focused more heavily on formal administrative matters, such as document inspection and electoral-district data verification, than on substantive advocacy or education for parties on the urgency of high-quality women's representation (Mardhiah et al., 2024). Interviews with Parepare KPU officials indicated that the principal priority was to "maintain the neutrality of the election management body"; consequently, gender advocacy was marginalized and regarded as exceeding the institution's mandate. This institutional bias reflects what Krook and Norris term "the implementation gap," which arises when formal rules are not supported by strong institutional commitment to achieving policy objectives. (Taqwa et al., 2024)

Third, no post-nomination mechanism exists for monitoring the performance of elected women legislators. Current electoral regulations contain no provision linking the effectiveness of affirmative action to the substantive parliamentary performance of women legislators (Muzaffarsyah et al., 2025). Consequently, there is a disconnect between the normative objective - increasing women's representation to promote gender-responsive policymaking - and operational reality, in which women legislators are not assessed on whether they actively advocate gender issues. In Parepare City, monitoring of the six elected women legislators' performance, including their initiation of gender-responsive local regulations or advocacy on maternal and child health, has been minimal (Vasandani et al., 2022). As a result, the policy's substantive benefits remain largely invisible to the public.

The findings show that political parties in Parepare City have not collectively adopted a systematic and sustainable model of women's cadre development. Instead, the recruitment of women legislative candidates remains ad hoc and reactive, responding to KPU regulations only once every five years and frequently relying on "emergency mobilization" shortly before candidate registration closes (Guterres & Dewi, 2025). In-depth interviews with party officials indicated that the principal motivation for nominating women was to "fulfill regulatory obligations" rather than to "develop high-quality women leaders." A representative of a major party stated, "We must have 30% women, but the important thing is that the party does not lose votes." This statement illustrates the marginal position assigned to the gender agenda within party strategy. (Prasetyo et al., 2025)

The consequences of this pragmatism are evident in three dysfunctional patterns of women's nomination in Parepare. First, women are assigned non-strategic list positions and treated as merely symbolic nominees. Analysis of the KPU candidate list shows that, of 42 women nominated across five electoral districts, 28 (66.7%) were placed fourth or lower, even though positions one to three are considered to offer a substantially higher probability of election in the open-list proportional system, particularly in districts allocating three to five seats (Fitriyah, 2025). In some extreme cases, women were placed last on the district list, a practice locally described as nominating "symbolic candidates" or "obligatory candidates": they were nominated not to win but merely to satisfy regulatory requirements. This reality demonstrates that parties consciously separate their seat-winning ambitions, reserved for priority male candidates, from administrative compliance, assigned to women candidates. (Rizky, 2025)

Second, women candidates receive inadequate logistical and capacity-building support. Focus group discussions revealed that they often received campaign-fund allocations that were not comparable to those provided to priority male candidates, faced difficulty accessing party volunteer networks, and received minimal mentoring from party officials on effective campaign strategies (D et al., 2025). One woman candidate in a highly competitive district stated, "I was nominated in fourth position and was only told where to submit my report. I was never informed about any thematic

campaign. The party focused only on candidates in positions one to three." This disparity is not merely an issue of fairness; it creates tangible competitive inequality, requiring women candidates to work harder with fewer resources to reach positions comparable to those of men (Rahmadani & Saputra, 2025). In Phillips's analysis of substantive representation, such conditions create an "unequal playing field" that reinforces the stigma that women are less capable of competing in politics. (G.T, 2025)

Third, women are instrumentalized within dynastic politics. Documentary analysis of elected candidates reveals a concerning pattern: of the six women ultimately elected to the Parepare City DPRD, three (50%) had close family relationships with local political figures or party officials, as wives, daughters, or sisters of former DPRD members or party officials (Hasna & Arindita, 2025). This phenomenon reflects what the literature describes as dynastic democracy or familial politics, in which women's representation serves to perpetuate particular family power rather than diversify women's political representation (R. Harahap et al., 2025). A less visible consequence is that women without family backing face greater psychological and structural barriers in local politics. Interviews with non-dynastic women candidates indicated that they encountered stronger gender stereotypes - "Women should devote themselves to household affairs; why enter politics?" - than women connected to local elites, who often benefited from "family legitimacy" that strengthened their credibility.

These party pathologies demonstrate that affirmative action has not yet transformed the fundamental internal processes of political parties. Institutionalizing substantive women's representation requires internal party reforms comprising: (1) a sustainable cadre-development system with quota targets at every level of membership; (2) standardized leadership training for women; (3) transparent, competency-based mechanisms for determining list positions; and (4) equitable campaign-fund allocation. Without such reforms, the quota will remain a mere administrative formality.

### **3.2. Voter Perceptions: From Traditional Gender Bias to Rational Performance-Based Politics**

One of the study's most significant findings is a paradigm shift in voter rationality in Parepare City. Based on a multiple linear regression analysis of 200 voter respondents, the empirical model produced the following equation:

$$Y \text{ (Voter Perception)} = 3.116 + 1.429X_1 + (-3.113)X_2 + (-0.987)X_3 + 7.304X_4$$

The model yielded  $R^2 = 0.416$ , explaining 41.6% of the variance, and an F-statistic of 34.777 (Sig. 0.000), indicating simultaneous significance. The partial t-tests showed that only  $X_4$  and  $X_2$  were statistically significant.

**Table 1. Summary of Regression Results on the Effects of Determinants on Voter Perceptions of Women's Representation**

| Variable                           | B      | t      | Sig.  | Result          |
|------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----------------|
| (Constant)                         | 3.116  | 0.381  | 0.704 | -               |
| X <sub>1</sub> Regulatory Clarity  | 1.429  | 1.379  | 0.169 | Not Significant |
| X <sub>2</sub> Party Practice      | -3.113 | -3.113 | 0.002 | Significant (-) |
| X <sub>3</sub> Election Management | -0.987 | -0.945 | 0.346 | Not Significant |
| X <sub>4</sub> Tangible Impact     | 7.304  | 7.304  | 0.000 | Significant (+) |

R = 0.645; R<sup>2</sup> = 0.416; F-statistic = 34.777 (Sig. 0.000)

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024

The interpretation of these data provides important insights into local voter behavior. The three principal findings are as follows:

### 3.2.1. Dominance of the "Tangible Impact" Variable (X<sub>4</sub>): Performance Politics Supersedes Identity Politics

The regression coefficient for X<sub>4</sub>, 7.304, is substantially larger than that of the other variables - almost twice the absolute value of the negative X<sub>2</sub> coefficient. In Parepare, this indicates that voters no longer view women's representation primarily as a matter of identity or abstract justice, but as an instrumental question: "Do women legislators bring tangible improvements to my life?" When asked qualitatively what motivated them to support women candidates, most respondents (74%) cited "performance and concrete programs" rather than the more normative considerations of "gender justice" or "women's representation." (Tias et al., 2023)

Interview evidence supports this interpretation. A woman voter from Soreang Urban Village stated, "I vote for a legislator who can improve roads, assist fishers, and strengthen integrated health posts. I do not care whether the candidate is a man or a woman; what matters is performance." This statement reflects what Heider and Kelley describe as rational causal attribution: voters link their electoral decisions to observable outcomes rather than to dispositional or ideological factors. (Juan, 2022)

This finding indicates that conventional theories of gender perception or political stereotyping may be increasingly outdated among urban, educated voters with better access to information. Modern voters in Parepare, particularly those with at least an upper-secondary education (80% of the sample), have matured within an era of decentralization and competitive democracy and therefore demand performance-based rather than ideological accountability. (Santos et al., 2025)

### **3.2.2. The Negative Effect of Party Roles ( $X_2$ ): The Boomerang Effect of Tokenism**

The coefficient for  $X_2$ , -3.113 (Sig. 0.002), is both negative and statistically significant. This result indicates that voters' positive perceptions of women's representation decline as they become more aware of how parties actually manage women candidates (Faakye, 2025). Conversely, positive perceptions are higher when party involvement is less visible. In other words, low-quality party involvement produces a boomerang effect: parties that should function as transformative actors instead become instruments that discredit the agenda of women's representation.

Qualitative data reinforce this interpretation. During focus group discussions, many voters stated that they had decided "not to vote for women candidates again" after observing women legislators in the previous period who were "no different from men in terms of corruption" or "merely party puppets without an independent voice." Voters developed learned cynicism - fatigue and pessimism resulting from repeated negative experiences. Consequently, they no longer extend the benefit of the doubt to new women candidates but assess them with the same skepticism applied to male candidates. (Muhammad & Elmayanti, 2025)

This phenomenon is consistent with social theories explaining that public perceptions of a policy or group may become negative when implementation reveals an excessive gap between promises and reality. In Parepare, parties promise to "empower women through nomination," yet women candidates often receive inadequate support, are assigned non-strategic list positions, and are used to advance dynastic interests (Arsieh & Septian, n.d.). Informed voters can recognize this gap and consequently develop distrust not only toward political parties but also toward women candidates in general - an ironic unintended consequence of poorly implemented affirmative action. (Yanlua et al., 2025)

### **3.2.3. Insignificance of the Regulatory ( $X_1$ ) and Electoral Management ( $X_3$ ) Variables: Limitations of the Top-Down Approach**

The non-significance of  $X_1$  (Regulatory Clarity) and  $X_3$  (Implementation by Election Management Bodies) conveys an important message about the limitations of top-down approaches to shaping public perceptions. Although the KPU has issued guidelines, conducted public outreach, and promoted the importance of women's representation, this information has not been internalized by individual voters. Three factors may explain this outcome: (1) the social distance between the KPU's formal, legalistic institutional discourse and the everyday language of local voters; (2) selective information processing, whereby voters trust direct observation and personal experience more than government outreach that may be perceived as biased; and (3) information saturation, as conflicting messages on social media drown out official communications from election management bodies.

The practical implication is that affirmative-action outreach cannot rely solely on top-down communication through official institutions. A more grassroots, dialogical strategy that resonates with local values is required. Given Parepare City's strong religious social base and Muslim-majority population, communication on women's representation may be more effective when conveyed through religious leaders and Islamic values that recognize women's rights and responsibilities in public governance, rather than solely through a discourse of "gender justice" that may be perceived as Western or secular.

A holistic analysis of regulatory dynamics, party institutions, and voter perceptions shows that affirmative action currently operates within a narrow and incomplete paradigm. The existing model focuses on nomination quotas and is therefore input-oriented, implicitly assuming that increasing the number of women on the final candidate list (DCL) will automatically improve their electoral success and performance. The Parepare case demonstrates that this assumption is incorrect.

Improving effectiveness requires policy reconstruction through an integrated, multistage model that focuses not only on quotas but also on the following dimensions:

- a. **Input Stage: Regulatory Reform and Party Cadre Development.** The downward-rounding mechanism should be removed from KPU regulations and replaced with upward rounding to ensure the minimum 30% quota is applied consistently across all electoral districts. Regulations should also provide incentives for parties that conduct high-quality cadre development for women candidates, such as vote bonuses or reduced administrative requirements. Sanctions for non-compliant parties must be firm, including disqualification of candidate lists or reductions in campaign funding. Without such incentives and disincentives, parties are unlikely to change their behavior.
- b. **Process Stage: Campaign Assistance and Monitoring.** Election management bodies (KPU and Bawaslu) should strengthen their advocacy and capacity-building functions rather than limiting themselves to administrative tasks. Measures should include campaign-strategy workshops for women candidates, facilitation of access to local media, and real-time monitoring of discriminatory campaign practices, including VAWP and gender stereotyping in advertisements. Civil society organizations may be involved as partners in monitoring and advocacy.
- c. **Output Stage: Performance Monitoring and Accountability.** After the election, a system should monitor the performance of women legislators in terms of gender-responsive legislative initiatives, participation in commissions relevant to women's issues, and accountability to their constituencies. Monitoring results should be published transparently so that voters can observe the tangible effects of women's representation on local policy.

- d. Outcome Stage: Evidence-Based Political Education.** Because the data show that voters respond to tangible impacts, political education campaigns should focus on concrete evidence: "Ms. X helped 500 families obtain access to clean water"; "Ms. Y secured dedicated funding for a maternal and child health clinic in Community Unit (RW) 3." Measurable performance narratives are likely to be more persuasive than normative slogans about "gender justice."

This integrated model is consistent with Phillips's call to "move beyond numerics": it is insufficient merely to count how many women are present; the more important question is whether they possess genuine agency, capacity, and voice in decision-making. Implementing this multistage model requires cross-stakeholder coordination and a long-term commitment extending beyond a single electoral cycle.

### **3.3. Affirmative Action and Women's Representation from the Perspectives of Fiqh Siyasah and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah**

Affirmative action for women's representation is a legal instrument designed to correct structural inequality in the political system. In the 2024 Parepare City DPRD election, the minimum 30% quota for women did not fully produce ideal representation. Women accounted for only 24% of those elected, demonstrating a continuing gap between normative provisions and political reality. The existence of a quota on candidate lists, therefore, does not automatically ensure women's election. The effectiveness of affirmative action cannot be measured solely by the number of women nominated; it must also be assessed through their positions on candidate lists, party support, access to campaign resources, voter acceptance, and realistic opportunities to secure legislative seats. (Wahyudi, 2023)

From the perspective of fiqh siyasah, affirmative action may be understood as part of siyasah shar'iyah: public policy established by the government to realize social benefit and prevent injustice (Syahdiyono, 2022). The state has the authority to adopt policies that provide protection and opportunity to groups facing structural barriers. A quota for women is therefore not a form of preferential treatment that contradicts justice, but a corrective measure intended to balance access to political participation (Anggraini, 2024). When women have long confronted patriarchal culture, limited political networks, leadership stereotypes, and the dominance of male elites, formally identical treatment may simply preserve existing inequality (Saputra & Muzakkir, 2024). Justice in fiqh siyasah does not always require uniform treatment; it requires rights and opportunities to be allocated proportionately in light of the conditions faced by different groups.

A normative basis for women's political participation can also be found in Qur'an 9:71 (al-Tawbah), which describes believing men and women as allies who enjoin what is right and prevent what is wrong (Mappiati et al., 2024). The verse indicates that social and public responsibilities are not assigned exclusively to men. Women likewise possess the moral, intellectual, and social capacity to participate in

the management of public affairs. Their involvement in legislative institutions may therefore be understood as fulfilling a public responsibility to articulate community interests, oversee government, and formulate policies oriented toward the public good. (Anggraini, 2024)

From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, affirmative action is closely connected to the protection of human dignity, justice, and social welfare. Women's representation in legislatures can strengthen the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) through health policy, the protection of women and children, and violence prevention (Iqbal et al., 2023). It is also related to the protection of progeny (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) through stronger family policies, children's education, and maternal welfare. Furthermore, women's participation in budgeting and economic policymaking can help protect property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), particularly for low-income families, women-headed households, and vulnerable groups. Women's representation thus has direct relevance to the realization of public benefit, the primary objective of Islamic law. (Sudarto, 2021)

Nevertheless, the fact that women constituted only 24% of those elected indicates that affirmative action in Parepare City still faces substantive problems. One major issue is the tendency of political parties to treat women merely as a means of satisfying administrative requirements. Women may appear on candidate lists without receiving strategic list positions, logistical support, political education, or equal access to campaign networks (Diana & Rohman, 2021). This condition is inconsistent with the principle of *al-'adālah* because political opportunities have not been distributed fairly. Downward rounding in quota calculations may also reduce the number of women in electoral districts with few seats. From a *maqāṣid* perspective, a policy that formally recognizes women's rights while, in practice, reducing their opportunities for representation does not fully embody public benefit. (Fatona & Rohmah, 2023)

Voter perception is also essential to evaluating the effectiveness of affirmative action. In an open-list proportional system, candidates' electoral success is largely determined by public votes. The stereotype that political leadership is more appropriately exercised by men can obstruct political justice. Islamic law assesses a person's suitability based on trustworthiness, capacity, integrity, and the ability to serve the public good, rather than solely on sex. Political education should therefore encourage the public to evaluate candidates according to competence and track record. (Yamani, 2025)

Accordingly, affirmative action has strong legitimacy in *fiqh siyasah* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as an instrument for correcting political inequality. Its success, however, cannot end with fulfillment of the nomination quota. The policy must be implemented through fair recruitment, stronger capacity for women, protection from political violence, equal party support, and changes in voter perceptions (Umah, 2025). Meaningful women's representation is part of the broader effort to realize justice, public benefit, and governance that is more responsive to all segments of society.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Affirmative action in the 2024 Parepare City DPRD election was not fully effective in achieving substantive representation of women. Although Law Number 7 of 2017 established a minimum quota of 30% women on legislative candidate lists, implementation continued to face regulatory inconsistencies, weak political party commitment, and limited support for women candidates. The downward-rounding mechanism in KPU Regulation Number 10 of 2023 potentially reduced the number of women candidates, particularly in electoral districts with few available seats. This problem is reflected in the fact that women accounted for only 24% of members elected to the Parepare City DPRD. At the same time, most political parties did not consistently meet the quota in every electoral district. Therefore, compliance with the nomination quota did not automatically produce effective women's representation in the legislature.

Voter perceptions further demonstrate that women's electoral success is increasingly determined by capacity, integrity, track record, policy programs, and tangible benefits delivered to the public. The analysis shows that tangible policy impact was the variable most strongly influencing voter perceptions, whereas party implementation had a negative effect when women's nomination was merely symbolic. This finding indicates a shift from identity politics toward performance-based politics. Political parties must therefore move beyond placing women on candidate lists and provide sustained cadre development, campaign support, access to resources, and equal participation in decision-making.

From the perspectives of *fiqh siyasah* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, affirmative action is legitimate as a form of *siyasah shar'iyah* intended to realize justice, equality, and public benefit. Women's representation can help protect life, progeny, property, and human dignity. Affirmative policy should therefore be directed toward meaningful representation through regulatory reform, stronger capacity for women, protection from political violence, voter education, and oversight of women legislators' performance. Through these measures, women's representation can make a tangible contribution to an inclusive and equitable local democracy oriented toward the welfare of society.

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