

## **Women's Leadership in the Party (Case Study: Grace Natalie's Leadership as Chair of PSI for the 2014-2021 period)**

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### **Article Info**

#### **Article history:**

Received: 18 March 2025

Publish: 30 March 2025

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#### **Keywords:**

*Women And Politics;*

*Political Participation;*

*Women's Representation;*

*Gender And Politics.*

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### **Abstract**

*Women's representation in politics is a form of women's participation in supervising every policy process so that the impact of the policy will be in accordance with gender-based interests. Women's representation in the process of formulating and determining policies is a concrete step to support the realization of justice and equality for women (Firman, 2018). In this context, women have a broad role in joining women's organizations and political parties to provide adequate space in channeling their aspirations. The lack of responsive gender policies makes the role of women in political contestation not yet encourage the level of representation in politics (Priandi & Roisah, 2019). The active role of women can be realized through participation by carrying out women's obligations as citizens, namely influencing the process of determining public policies through a representative mechanism that can accommodate women's interests (Rodiyah, 2016). This study seeks to find out whether there is an influence between female leaders in political parties (this paper focuses on PSI Indonesia) and the political participation of other female political party members.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Gender issues are a problem that has been around for a long time; therefore, it is also difficult to eliminate this social problem from society. These gender problems occur in all places, including in the political environment. For many years, an implicit expectation has been ingrained in women's and political literature of women representing women's interests when elected to parliament. This hope reflects the deep and sincere desire of many people in the international community including Indonesia to elect a more representative and fair government. This also includes disturbing challenges in the field where in politics, the definition of "women's politics" is a sensitive issue and assumes that women are a diverse group that requires different political responses to their concerns. Women as a real example that we can see, currently the political share that can be occupied by women in parliament is only 30%.

In the political process, political parties play a big role. Schattschneider said that political parties "invented" democracy from "little experiments in republicanism" (1942: 3) by drawing the masses into political life. Political parties are endemic to democracy. However, political parties are not part of the formal definition of democracy; The constitutions of most democracies also do not dictate the role of parties. Parties operate in areas regulated by law.

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Political parties remain the primary entity through which people can elect their representatives and are indispensable institutions for democratic politics and representation. The central functions of political parties in modern representative democracy are; to develop consistent government policies and programs (interest articulation function); to send requests from the community and aggregate them (interest aggregation function); to recruit, select and position people for positions in government and the legislature and to monitor and control the government (Catón 2007). Women's active role can be realized through participation by carrying out women's obligations as citizens, namely influencing the process of determining public policy through representative mechanisms that can accommodate women's interests (Rodiyah, 2016). The representation of women as legislators in the legislature always changes in each election period. In the 1999 elections there were 44 women who sat in the Indonesian Parliament, then it increased to 65 women in 2004, in the 2009 elections it again increased to 100 people and decreased in the 2014 elections to 97 women (Sucahyo, 2019). In 2019, 20.52 percent or 120 women DPR members were elected. The rise of women to occupy legislative seats cannot be separated from encouragement from parties as the initial door to political positions for party members.

This research seeks to find out whether there is an influence between female leaders in political parties (in this paper focusing on PSI Indonesia) and the political participation of other female political party members.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research focuses on the conditions and realities when women serve as party chairs and then relates it to whether women who sit as party chairs produce policies that focus on women or gender equality. In this article, we take a case example from the leadership of the women's political party PSI, namely the leadership of female general chairman Grace Natalie in 2014-2021. When you imagine that women occupy important positions in the structure of a party or organization, people who know this will automatically believe that this will have a positive impact on the level of gender equality in the organization or place where they hold that position.

The type of research used by the author is a qualitative descriptive type with a qualitative phenomenological study method. This qualitative type will try to describe and understand the topics in the research in detail, completely and based on facts.

Fitria Widiyani Roosinda et al. (2019) explains that qualitative according to Creswell is a form of procedure in research when you want to master human cases in the social era and then explain them in a series of words, sharing detailed information from trusted data sources.

Amir Hamzah (2020) explains that phenomenological studies according to Creswell are narrative studies that provide information about people's experiences or some people describe experiences related to concepts or phenomena (what they feel and how they deal with it). Phenomenological studies are an attempt to create a visible reality.

The use of descriptive research in this research is aimed at describing women's leadership in the PSI Indonesia party under the leadership of Grace Natalie.

The stages followed in this research are collecting data, analyzing data, interpreting data, and making conclusions based on the data that has been collected.

## 3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1.1. RESEARCH RESULT

### 1.1.1. POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDONESIA

In its most basic form, a political party is an organized group whose members share a common worldview and core beliefs. The goal of these organizations is to carry out their goals through the acquisition of political power and taking political positions, usually through the use of constitutionally permitted tactics. According to Carl J. Friedrich (1941), a political party is "a stably organized group of people with the aim of seizing or maintaining control of the government for their party leaders and, based on this control, to provide party members with ideal and material benefits." According to RH Soltau (1967), a political party is defined as a more or less organized group of citizens, who act as a political unit, and who, by using their power to vote, aim to control the government and implement their general policies. Meanwhile, RH Soltau (1967) stated that a political party is a group of citizens who act as a political unit.

Rusadi Kantaprawira (1999) defines political parties more clearly and in detail. "A political party is a human organization in which there is a division of tasks and officers to achieve a goal, has an ideology, has a political program as a means of implementation or a more pragmatic way of achieving goals according to short to long term stages and has the characteristics of a desire for power.

Experts and scientists in the field of politics have reached a consensus regarding what a political party is, and they all agree that politics is an organized body of citizens working towards a common goal. This shows the importance of political parties as a method for people to create organizations to channel their goals, goals that are ultimately achieved by the goals of political parties. To have a say in how their government is run, citizens can join political parties. Today, political parties are commonplace in our society. Political parties are an important aspect of our political system but cannot operate alone. He came from a long-lived line of ancestors, although his birth was not ancient. To some extent, political parties can be seen as a very recent development in human history, much younger than state institutions. Additionally, in contemporary countries, new political parties have emerged. Political parties are essential to the functioning of modern democratic political systems. Ideally, political parties should serve to energize and strengthen the people, to represent specific interests, to facilitate the peaceful resolution of differing viewpoints, and to ensure an orderly transition of power. Furthermore, Jimly Asshiddiqie (2022) explains that the function of political parties is also very important in state activities, which is usually formulated as follows: first, a means of communication and absorption of political aspirations; second, a means of socialization or political education; third, means of political recruitment; and fourth, a means to regulate or reduce conflict in society.

Jimly Asshiddiqie is of the opinion that an organization called a political party always: first, has political ideals which are formulated in the Party Constitution which is usually called the Articles of Association and described in the form of an activity program; secondly, according to the provisions of the Law (UU), political parties must be legal entities; third, have an unlimited mass of members with a periodic management structure; fourth, have a hierarchical organizational structure from top to bottom, starting from the national level or from the special provincial level to the lowest level; fifth, the aim of fighting for

aspirations to influence people's policies which are expected to be able to carry out and make political party members successful as they aspire; and sixth, especially by participating in general elections or nominating candidates in general elections who have won the voters' votes.

### 1.1.2. PSI INDONESIA JAKARTA REGION

Universally, the concept of political parties is a mechanism for citizens to establish organizations to achieve their goals, which are then achieved through political functions, which is very important. There are five main roles played by political parties. Functions include: expression of interest and consolidation; interest education; flower renewal; interest recruitment; and resolution of conflicts of interest. There is a relationship between these tasks, and they significantly influence the expectations and enthusiasm of party supporters (Efriza, 2019).

The Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI) was founded on November 17 2014 by a group of youth consisting of entrepreneurs, activists, students and young professionals. This party carries the ideology of social democracy which is expected to be able to provide solutions to various social and political problems in Indonesia. One of PSI's main focuses is to create equality in all fields, be it in terms of economics, gender, education and others. This party fights for the creation of fair and decent jobs and providing equal opportunities for all levels of society. In this case, PSI pays special attention to the informal sector and female workers.

PSI also supports women's rights by recruiting more women to cadres and consistently rewarding ideas that contribute to gender issues. Apart from that, PSI also pays attention to environmental issues through improving renewable energy technology. In addition, PSI is committed to implementing the principle of transparency in all matters. They emphasized that every decision taken must be based on accurate data and strong arguments. However, PSI can still be considered a relatively new party. Therefore, they still need to expand their networks and support to gain wider public support. In this case, PSI also needs to increase its delays in the field of political coordination and party organization. No less important, PSI also needs to maintain solidarity within the party. In a small party, it is key to maintaining stability and can be a strategic partner for other parties. In this case, PSI can learn from other parties to strengthen the solidarity of party cadres.

As a newcomer party, PSI has shown their enthusiasm in contributing to supporting democratization and social progress in Indonesia. PSI needs to continue to develop their vision and platform to gain wider support and increase political participation among society by fighting political blindness in Indonesia.

## 3.2. DISCUSSION

Women's representation in politics is a form of women's participation in overseeing every policy process so that the impact of policies will be in accordance with gender-based interests. Representation of women in the process of formulating and determining policies is a concrete step to support the realization of justice and equality for women (Firman, 2018). In this context, women have a broad role in joining women's organizations and political parties to provide adequate space to channel their

aspirations. The lack of responsive gender policies means that the role of women in political contestation has not yet increased the level of representation in politics (Priandi & Roisah, 2019).

Women's active role can be realized through participation by carrying out women's obligations as citizens, namely influencing the process of determining public policy through representative mechanisms that can accommodate women's interests (Rodiyah, 2016). The representation of women as legislators in the legislature always changes in each election period. In the 1999 elections there were 44 women who sat in the Indonesian Parliament, then it increased to 65 women in 2004, in the 2009 elections it again increased to 100 people and decreased in the 2014 elections to 97 women (Sucahyo, 2019). In 2019, 20.52 percent or 120 women DPR members were elected.

The rise of women to occupy legislative seats cannot be separated from encouragement from parties as the initial door to political positions for party members.

### **3.2.1. FREEDOM OF WOMEN MEMBERS IN POLITICS IN THE PSI POLITICAL PARTY**

Being in a male-dominant sphere can be one of the driving factors for stagnation in a woman's development and can also be a place that is prone to gender inequality. Based on information obtained by informants from female members of Central PSI, Sis Milen said that PSI during Grace Natalie's position as chairman at that time was a party that had provided comfort to their female members. For example, he said that female members are permitted not to take part in party activities while they are menstruating or what we usually know as menstrual leave. Apart from that, he also stated that Grace Natalie is a figure who is very pro-women and also cares about women's protection.

"The policy that I feel is pro-women is that he really upholds the protection of women and children. He once shared a story that he often helps to advocate for women and child protection issues. Then he takes menstrual leave, so for example PSI is having activities. Then suddenly I have a stomach ache because of my period. It's really okay if I can't take part in these activities."

It cannot be denied that something as simple as menstrual leave is still often ignored by other parties or workplaces as a whole. *The* assumption that menstruation is a natural thing that every woman experiences means that people generally don't care much about it, making menstruation an excuse to give female party members a day off. Based on statements and interviews with Sis Milen, the PSI Party with a female leader is a party that cares about the welfare of its female party members regardless of their membership position based on the structure.

During the leadership period of one of the male leaders of PSI at the DKI Jakarta regional level, which was held by Michael Victor or who was familiarly called Bro Mike by PSI Jakarta members, based on the results of interviews conducted with former PSI Jakarta member Bro Haqi, he said that in PSI there was a special division that was formed specifically to handle female party members. The party members referred to in this context are universal and not only women who hold positions in the core management of the PSI Jakarta party. The women's division is called the "women and children bureau".

During Bro Mike's leadership at PSI Jakarta, there was a case where a female member of the PSI Jakarta party experienced sexual harassment. In this case, there was no physical harm to the victim, however, PSI Jakarta, as a place where the female members carried out their activities and where the sexual harassment occurred, then took steps to alleviate the psychological harm to the female party members by trying to make PSI Jakarta a safer party and more concerned about cases that had the potential to harm its female members. As a result of this sexual harassment case, a sexual violence guidebook emerged. This book applies to all female members of the PSI Jakarta party regardless of their position in the party. PSI Jakarta also offers legal assistance to female party members affected by cases of sexual harassment and clearly does not try to cover up cases of sexual harassment that occur. The guidebook explains in detail what cases can be said to be cases of sexual harassment and can be followed up accompanied by PSI Jakarta.

What is interesting about this example of the women's and children's bureau program is that under the leadership of the head of the women's party, it can be seen that the bureau has not yet become a program for all PSI regions. Attached from the official PSI website, only DPW PSI NTT was officially announced as having a Women's and Children's Empowerment Bureau.

**Figure 1.1 Announcement of the presence of the Women's and Children's Empowerment Bureau at DPW PSI NTT**



The assumption that the dominance of men in the political sphere can lead to high GAP which can lead to high gender inequality is also refuted by statements from members of the PSI Jakarta party. Sis Milen said that there was nothing that made her feel that there was inequality or gap between men and women at PSI. In carrying out their duties as party members, there is no distinction between feminine or masculine work. She said that even as a woman, she was still entrusted and able to work in the field where field work in our society's thinking is still identified as work that seems masculine. From a man's perspective, Bro Haqi also expressed his opinion that PSI is a party that has a high standing *gender balance* in general in the management and running of the party. He then gave an example of composition *gender balanced* in one of the PSI areas, namely PSI Jakarta, where the current party chairman is a woman, the treasurer is also a woman. PSI South Jakarta is also the same, where the deputy chairman and treasurer are women while the chairman and secretary are men. From this composition, it is clear that there is a balance between 2 men and 2

women in the strategic positions of PSI Central Jakarta and South Jakarta as an example given by Bro Haqi.

Apart from the influence of Grace Natalie who cares about the welfare and protection of women, PSI Jakarta party members are also considered to have a big influence in creating a party environment that is friendly to women.

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Apart from the influence of Grace Natalie who cares about the welfare and protection of women, PSI Jakarta party members are also considered to have a big influence in creating a party environment that is friendly to women.

### **3.2.2. Power of Women Party Members in Leadership Positions; Grace Natalie**

Grace Natalie is an inspirational and influential leader in the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI) Jakarta. Since being appointed Chair of PSI Jakarta in 2015, Grace has led her party with strong leadership and expanded the reach of PSI's influence in Jakarta. Grace has a strong vision for Indonesia and also for PSI. He aims to fight for justice, equality and unity among all citizens. He considers that the vision of social democracy is the basis for every action of PSI Jakarta. This Minang-blooded leader also really values community participation in politics. She believes that people's active participation in politics must be supported by providing sufficient education about democracy and their rights in political choices. Grace also shows her leadership through concrete actions. He leads an initiative to help children in Jakarta who experience difficulties in gaining access to education, by providing access to skills teaching and tutoring. Through this action, Grace and PSI Jakarta show their support for equal and sustainable education.

However, Grace Natalie's leadership is not free from criticism. There are several parties who doubt his competence as a party chairman, especially regarding his strategy in encouraging party growth and increasing public support. Apart from that, several critics also accused Grace of starting to distance herself from segments of the country that supported PSI and widening the gap between the party elite and the support base. Despite the criticism that has exposed her work, Grace Natalie remains an important figure at PSI Jakarta. His inspirational leadership and strong vision in fighting for social democracy and supporting public participation in politics is like a slap in the face for other parties to further strengthen the people's base, expand networks and fight for the people's interests more broadly.



Apart from her figure who cares about women, due to the relatively fast momentum where Grace Natalie only became Acting Chairperson following the resignation of Michael Victor from the position of chairperson, based on the information obtained there have been no significant activities specifically for women and impactful for women. This was then followed by the change of chairman again to Elva Qolbina, making Grace Natalie's leadership period relatively short considering that the only position she held was PLT Chairman.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, several important points can be concluded regarding women's representation in politics, especially in the context of the Indonesian Solidarity Party in DKI Jakarta:

1. The Role of Political Parties in Encouraging Women's Representation: Political parties, including PSI, have a crucial role in encouraging women's representation through inclusive recruitment and nomination mechanisms. PSI has demonstrated its commitment by setting a minimum quota of 40% for female legislative candidates, as well as providing support in the form of training and provision to increase the capacity of female candidates. However, challenges such as cultural barriers, internal competition, and limited resources are still the main obstacles for women in achieving political positions.
2. PSI Policies and Practices in Supporting Female Candidates: PSI has implemented several pro-women policies, such as menstrual leave and the formation of a special bureau to handle women and children's issues. This policy shows the party's efforts to create a friendly environment for women. However, implementation of this policy has not been evenly distributed across all PSI regions, and further efforts are still needed to ensure that the policy is accessible to all female candidates.
3. 3. Influence of Women Leaders in PSI: Grace Natalie's leadership as Acting Chair of PSI Jakarta has had a positive impact in creating a party environment that is more inclusive and cares about women's issues. However, his short leadership period limited the long-term impact of the policies he promoted. Female leadership such as Grace Natalie also shows that the existence of female leaders can influence the participation and representation of other women in political parties.
4. 4. Challenges and Recommendations: The main challenges faced by female candidates at PSI include cultural barriers, internal competition, and limited resources. To overcome this challenge, PSI needs to strengthen affirmative action policies, increase financial and logistical support for female candidates, and ensure that pro-female policies are implemented evenly throughout the region. In addition, PSI needs to continue to develop training and mentorship programs to increase the capacity of female candidates, as well as strengthen networks and public support to ensure the success of female candidates in elections.

Overall, this research shows that although PSI has made significant efforts in encouraging women's representation, there is still room for improvement and improvement in ensuring that women can participate equally in politics.

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