



Power Moves in Politics: How Eddy Soeparno Conquered the 2024 Legislative Election in West Java III

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Abstract:

This study examines the political campaign strategies employed by Eddy Soeparno in the 2024 legislative election. The West Java III electoral district competes for 9 seats and includes the city of Bogor and Cianjur Regency. The research adopts a qualitative approach with a case study design and utilizes Peter Schroder's political strategy theory as the conceptual framework to analyse Eddy Soeparno's strategy, focusing on his use of both offensive and defensive strategies. The findings reveal that Soeparno's campaign was marked by a strong emphasis on emotional communication, issue segmentation, resource mobilization, reputation building, and strategic continuity. By focusing on tangible, long-term programs such as bore wells, solar-powered street lighting, and public facility revitalization, he successfully fostered trust and loyalty among voters. His ability to tailor campaign messages to address specific local issues, such as water scarcity in Cianjur and traffic congestion in Bogor, further enhanced his appeal. Additionally, Soeparno's commitment to maintaining volunteer networks and ensuring the continuation of social programs after the election demonstrated his dedication to long-term engagement. The study underscores the importance of emotional bonding and issue-specific strategies in modern political campaigns and highlights the integration of offensive and defensive tactics as crucial for electoral success. The findings suggest that political candidates should prioritize emotional connection with constituents, tailor campaigns to local contexts, sustain post-election engagement, and balance both offensive and defensive strategies for a more effective and lasting impact on voters.

Keywords: *offensive and defensive strategies; political strategy; legislative election; voter engagement; 2024 election*

Introduction

The 2024 Legislative Election (Pileg) in Indonesia is a crucial moment in the national political system (Jamil & Perdana, 2025). As political dynamics evolve, voters have become more intelligent and selective in choosing their representatives (Gao et al., 2025; Richerson et al., 2024). The increasing competition among legislative candidates makes campaign strategies a key factor in determining each candidate's success (Haime et al., 2022; Zittel & Nyhuis, 2021). Therefore, it is important to understand how politicians and political parties design effective strategies to attract voters' attention and win this competition (Dawson et al., 2023; Seeberg, 2022). According to official data from the General Election Commission (KPU), voter participation in the DPR RI Pileg reached 81.42% of the total Permanent Voter List (DPT) and Additional Voter List (DPK), with a total of 151,796,631 valid votes (Hafiez, 2024). This high participation rate indicates that despite political fatigue caused by the proximity of elections (presidential, legislative, and regional elections), Indonesian voters remain actively engaged in the democratic process (Hutabarat, 2024).

As political literacy increases, voters have become more selective in making their choices. In this context, campaign strategies that can build emotional connections with voters are crucial in winning their support (Grüning, 2022). The concepts of bonding and attachment play a significant role in building this connection (Au, 2025). Bonding refers to the emotional bond that forms between a candidate and the voter, strengthening loyalty and trust (Senior et al., 2024). Attachment, on the other hand, is a deeper emotional connection that leads to stronger and more sustained support (Barthwal et al., 2025). This attachment process can be strengthened through personal approaches and attention to voters' needs and aspirations (Vargas-Merino et al., 2025). This aligns with the attachment theory described by Gass (2022), which states that emotional attachment can enhance loyalty to objects or figures, in this case, the political candidates that voters support (Schofield, 2025).

Effective campaign strategies are not only about introducing the candidate but also about shaping a positive image, building credibility, and establishing strong emotional relationships with voters (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). Campaigns in the 2024 Legislative Election should emphasize creating a positive image of the candidate in the eyes of the public and garnering support to secure the highest number of votes (Lees-Marshment, 2020). An effective campaign not only influences voter decisions but also builds a strong relationship between the candidate and voters. According to Abdullah (Andi, 2021), political communication strategies in elections are seen as communication processes aimed at winning in political contests (Rani, 2023). Successful campaign strategies also require the selection of relevant issues that reflect the needs and expectations of the community (Strömbäck & Esser, 2017). These issues can range from economic problems to education and social policies that affect people directly. Voters tend to choose candidates who offer concrete solutions to the problems they face (Wojcieszak et al., 2020). Research by Haris and Azwar (2024) shows that community-based strategies can strengthen relationships between candidates and voters at the grassroots level (Sørensen, 2018). This approach is especially useful in areas with cultural, ethnic, and geographic diversity, where

campaign success depends on how well candidates can reach various segments of society (Gunther, Beck, & Voltmer, 2021).

In the context of the 2024 Legislative Election, more personal and direct approaches, such as house visits or social activities, have proven effective in building closer relationships with voters (Baum, Szaszi, & Thijssen, 2023). Alsamarei (2023) states that direct interactions, including physical contact like handshakes, can create emotional bonds that strengthen influence and increase attachment and trust (Geise, 2023). The candidate's image, which includes professionalism, integrity, and leadership abilities, also plays a crucial role in political campaigns. Managing a candidate's image through social media and consistent branding helps build stronger connections with voters (Alhaimer, 2023), which in turn strengthens the chances of winning the election (Hirsch, 2024).

However, one of the significant challenges faced by legislative candidates is optimizing the use of social media and information technology to capture voters' attention, especially in this digital era (Allcott, Gentzkow, & Yu, 2021). Today's voters are increasingly selective and critical in choosing their representatives. They not only base their decisions on popularity or the candidate's fame but also consider their track record, vision, mission, and ability to understand and address existing issues (Fujiwara, 2021). On the other hand, the phenomenon of money politics also poses a problem in the Legislative Election, where some candidates rely on money politics and neglect direct interaction with the community (Al-Hamdi, 2025). This can undermine the public's understanding of the true meaning of the democratic process and blur their understanding of the duties and responsibilities of a legislative member (Le, 2024).

Previous studies highlight that campaign strategies significantly affect electoral success in Indonesia. For instance, Qodir (2020) emphasizes that political parties increasingly rely on identity politics to mobilize voters, particularly by exploiting religious and cultural symbols. While this approach has short-term mobilization benefits, it often deepens polarization and does not always build sustainable political trust. In contrast, Sihombing and Haryanto (2022) show that the use of digital political communication through social media platforms has transformed campaign dynamics by enabling broader reach and more interactive engagement with voters. However, these studies have limitations: Qodir (2020) does not address the integration of emotional bonding and personal approaches in campaign strategies, while Sihombing and Haryanto (2022) focus heavily on digital media without analyzing its interaction with traditional grassroots strategies.

This study aims to fill the research gap regarding winning strategies in the 2024 Legislative Election with a case study on PAN candidate Eddy Soeparno. This research is essential to provide new insights into how the campaign strategy run by Eddy Soeparno, particularly in political communication, can influence the results of the 2024 election. This study is also expected to provide recommendations for other candidates on how to design more effective campaign strategies and address challenges arising from technological advancements and changes in voter behavior. This research is expected to contribute to the literature on political campaigns in

Indonesia and serve as a reference for the development of political strategies in the future.

Method

This study adopted a qualitative approach within the constructivist paradigm, applying research concepts aligned with real-world conditions. The research employed a case study method to explore specific phenomena in their real-life context in depth. This method focused on cases related to the research topic to gain a comprehensive and detailed understanding. According to Flick & Hunziker (2022; 2024), case study research allows exploration of phenomena in real-world environments by collecting rich and diverse data through techniques such as interviews, observations, documentation, and secondary data analysis. This approach helped to understand the context, background, and interactions among variables influencing the phenomenon under study. The study utilized two types of data sources, with primary data consisting of interview results with Eddy Soeparno, providing direct insights into the subject matter. This study adopted a qualitative approach within the constructivist paradigm, applying research concepts aligned with real-world conditions. The research employed a case study method to explore specific phenomena in their real-life context in depth. This method focused on cases related to the research topic to gain a comprehensive and detailed understanding. According to Flick & Hunziker (2022; 2024), case study research allows exploration of phenomena in real-world environments by collecting rich and diverse data through techniques such as interviews, observations, documentation, and secondary data analysis. This approach helped to understand the context, background, and interactions among variables influencing the phenomenon under study. The study utilized two types of data sources, with primary data consisting of interview results with Eddy Soeparno, providing direct insights into the subject matter.

Results and Discussion

In the context of winning the legislative election, the political strategy employed by Eddy Soeparno reflects a structured, adaptive, and contextual approach. Based on in-depth interviews and analyzed through Peter Schroder's theoretical framework, it was found that the strategies used reflect two main approaches: emotional communication building and issue segmentation based on local needs. These two approaches align with contemporary political communication strategy models that emphasize the importance of social attachment and the relevance of messages to the political audience.

Communication Strategy: Building Emotional Bonding

Peter Schroder emphasizes that effective political communication in campaigns does not just focus on delivering information but also on creating an emotional relationship between the candidate and the constituents. This emotional connection forms the foundation of voter loyalty, especially in modern politics, which is increasingly pragmatic and skeptical of political promises. This strategy is strongly

reflected in Eddy Soeparno's approach, where he actively visits communities, reaching up to six locations per day during the socialization phase. These visits are not merely campaign routines but demonstrate his commitment to directly engage with the people, observe real conditions on the ground, and show authentic concern for the problems faced by the citizens.

Furthermore, involvement in social programs based on real needs, such as the construction of bore wells in Cianjur, which faces a clean water crisis, and the revitalization of public facilities such as sports fields and communal toilets in Bogor, strengthens public perception of his concern and physical presence as a candidate. These programs are designed to provide long-term benefits, further strengthening the emotional bond and trust the public places in the candidate. Such an approach is termed "attachment-based political engagement" in Schroder's theory, referring to political engagement based on psychological and social attachment between voters and candidates. This has proven effective in reducing political apathy because the public feels recognized and actively involved even before the candidate is elected.

Issue Segmentation and Differentiation Strategy

Political communication strategy not only touches on emotional aspects but also must be relevant to the real needs of society. Peter Schroder (2003) explains that one of the main elements in modern political strategy is the ability to segment audiences based on social and geographical characteristics and tailor the political narrative specifically to the needs and expectations of the community in the region. This is known as tailored political message delivery. In practice, Eddy Soeparno demonstrates a deep understanding of the socio-geographical characteristics of his electoral districts, namely Cianjur Regency and Bogor City, which have significant structural and cultural differences. In Cianjur, an agricultural area, the main issues faced by the community are limited irrigation, access to clean water, and inadequate street lighting. In response, Eddy initiated the bore well program and solar-powered street lights, which have been greatly appreciated by the villagers.

Meanwhile, in urban Bogor, the dominant issues are traffic congestion, poor drainage systems, and limited public spaces suitable for children and families. Eddy adjusted his campaign message by advocating for improvements in public green spaces and neglected community fields. Campaigns on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook were also directed toward addressing urban issues that are closely related to the daily lives of the citizens. The differentiation of messages based on region reflects the sharpness of political segmentation strategy, as it not only delivers programs in general terms but also positions Eddy as a contextual solution for the people's needs. In other words, the strategy used is not a "one-size-fits-all" approach but is highly customized to local contexts, strengthening the connection between the candidate and his constituents.

Organizational Strategy and Resource Mobilization

According to Schroder (2003), the success of a political campaign is highly influenced by the effectiveness of organizing and mobilizing resources. This includes not only campaign funds but also volunteers, team structures, and political

communication technologies. Within this framework, a professional political campaign adopts a managerial approach, not just relying on personal spontaneity. Eddy Soeparno applied this strategy by establishing an organized and sustainable campaign structure. He employed professional political consultants responsible for managing public communication, designing campaign materials, and coordinating between volunteer teams. This demonstrates an institutionalized campaign strategy, where campaign practices are managed like a modern organization with control systems, task divisions, and targets. Moreover, Eddy advanced a strategy that combines both "air campaign" and "ground campaign" approaches, such as:

- 1) Using social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook as cost-effective digital campaign tools to reach young voters and urban communities.
- 2) On the other hand, forming loyal local teams, not temporary or seasonal, but long-term collectives. This strengthens political cohesion at the grassroots level.

The planned use of these resources not only makes the campaign more efficient but also creates sustainable political institutions rather than fleeting electoral movements.

Reputation and Representational Strategy

According to Peter Schroder (2005), reputation is a political asset built through consistent real actions. Reputation should not rely solely on image or perception but must be based on "embedded credibility building," meaning reputation grows through real, repeatable actions that can be verified by the public. This strategy is strongly reflected in Eddy Soeparno's approach, where he builds political reputation based on concrete work rather than rhetorical promises. For example:

- 1) He implemented programs like bore well construction, public facility improvements, and a 24-hour free ambulance service before officially assuming office as a member of the parliament.
- 2) His consistent physical presence in his constituencies, even outside of campaign periods, demonstrates that he is not just a seasonal politician but a permanent representative of the local community.
- 3) These social actions show continuity and honesty in his politics, which fosters both emotional and rational trust among the public.

This approach successfully created a strong reputational capital, which, in Schroder's framework, becomes a pillar in maintaining voter loyalty and confronting political attacks from opponents.

Anticipation and Sustainability Strategy

One common weakness in electoral politics is the short-term focus that is solely concentrated on the campaign period. Schroder critiques this and offers a sustainability strategy as an alternative approach, which involves building consistent, relevant, and future-oriented political representation. This strategy is clearly reflected in Eddy Soeparno's commitment to maintaining 80-85% of his volunteer teams in Bogor and about 60% in Cianjur, which had been formed since 2017. These teams were not dissolved after the election but continued to be empowered for social and advocacy activities in their communities. This serves as proof of a long-term

approach, positioning political campaigns as part of community development rather than a short-lived quest for power.

- 1) Additionally, programs like:
- 2) 24-hour ambulances for the public,
- 3) Strengthening local volunteer communities, and
- 4) Facilitating village infrastructure development, are all designed to continue even outside of the campaign period.

This strategy ensures that Eddy Soeparno remains relevant and socially-political in the midst of society, ultimately strengthening his image as a true representative of the people. The strategies above are not separate but form an integrated political communication system. In practice, emotional communication strengthens loyalty, while issue segmentation enhances relevance. This combination shapes a campaign strategy that is adaptive, intelligent, and responsive to local political realities. Eddy Soeparno successfully positioned himself not only as a politician but also as a representative who is present and empathetic. He capitalized on moments and social gaps when other parties had not yet actively engaged, entering early and building long-term connections, which ultimately proved effective in gaining voter support.

Offensive Political Strategy

According to Peter Schroder's (2013) political strategy theory, the offensive strategy is a campaign approach used by candidates or political parties to attract new voters, expand support, and build a superior image compared to political opponents. The hallmark of this strategy lies in the explicit effort to highlight flagship programs, credible track records, and self-imaging as change agents offering new hope and concrete solutions to societal issues.

Highlighting Flagship Programs and Self-Image

Eddy Soeparno implements this offensive strategy by emphasizing real programs that are relevant to the needs of the community in his electoral district. Instead of merely making political promises before the election, Eddy shows a concrete track record by initiating various social initiatives long before the campaign period begins. This serves as a testament to his commitment to the community and helps build political trust early on.

Some of the flagship programs that are part of Eddy's offensive strategy include:

- 1) Bore well construction in Cianjur to address the ongoing clean water crisis that has long been a complaint among the local population.
- 2) Solar-powered streetlights (PJU) in remote villages, highlighting his sensitivity to security and accessibility issues.
- 3) Revitalizing sports fields and public facilities in densely populated areas of Bogor, aimed at creating viable social spaces for urban residents.

With this approach, Eddy not only sells ideas but also implements solutions before being elected, portraying himself as a working leader rather than just a talker. This aligns with Schroder's "benefit-driven appeal" in the offensive strategy, which

emphasizes that voting for the candidate will yield direct and significant benefits for the community.

Differentiating Campaign Themes Based on Regional Segmentation

Eddy Soeparno's offensive strategy is also marked by his ability to craft campaign themes that vary and align with the local characteristics of each area in his electoral district. This reflects a tailored political messaging approach, where political communication is adjusted to the needs, issues, and local identity.

In Bogor City and Regency, the key issues emphasized by Eddy include:

- 1) Traffic congestion as a daily problem for urban residents.
- 2) Drainage and flooding that often disrupt economic and social activities.
- 3) Lack of public spaces, especially for children and community groups.

To address these issues, Eddy proposed and began to implement improvements in public parks, local drainage systems, and basic infrastructure with an ecological approach. Meanwhile, in Cianjur Regency, the focus of the strategy is on rural-agricultural issues, such as:

- 1) Limited irrigation and clean water access, directly affecting agriculture.
- 2) The need for fertilizer subsidies to maintain agricultural productivity.
- 3) Insufficient village infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and health facilities.

By crafting campaign narratives specific to each region, Eddy demonstrates a deep understanding of the local context and provides solutions that are not generic but contextual and targeted. This differentiation of issues strengthens the offensive strategy as it reinforces Eddy's position as a candidate ready to work, not just campaign.

Two Subcategories of Offensive Political Strategy The offensive political strategy is not singular but consists of two main complementary approaches: market expansion strategy and market penetration strategy. Both are campaign tactics aimed at maximizing political support by expanding the voter base and breaking through the psychological or socio-political barriers that have limited the candidate's connection with certain voter groups. These strategies are evident in Eddy Soeparno's campaign in the Bogor-Cianjur electoral district.

Market Expansion Strategy

The market expansion strategy is a systematic effort to reach previously untapped voter segments or areas that are not traditional electoral bases. In practice, this is marked by the candidate's decision to focus on a new district and build a political identity that fits local needs. Eddy Soeparno chose to run in the Bogor-Cianjur district, a region geographically and sociologically different from his personal or historical roots. Despite his connections to Cirebon through his father's origins, Eddy strategically selected Bogor-Cianjur, as the people now focus less on the candidate's origin and more on tangible action and the emotional connection built through social work.

Some forms of market expansion strategy implemented by Eddy include:

- 1) Hiring professional political consultants to strategize communication, image creation, and voter segmentation.

- 2) Targeting grassroots voters, particularly those who have been overlooked by mainstream politicians.
- 3) Tailoring campaign messages to accommodate the aspirations of new voters, including those who are apathetic or lack strong political affiliation.

Within Schroder's framework (2013), this strategy reflects an effort to expand the electoral base by creating a positive image and an approach based on local needs, where voters are guided to see the candidate as a new solution, not just a symbol of a certain party or group.

Market Penetration Strategy

Unlike market expansion, which focuses externally, market penetration strategy focuses on internal reinforcement. It aims to break through the psychological or ideological barriers of opponent voters and attract swing voters. Eddy Soeparno acknowledged that the Bogor-Cianjur district was not a strong base for PAN, as the party had failed to secure a seat there in previous elections. Therefore, the approach used had to be aggressive yet smart, emphasizing personal branding, relationship strengthening, and issue adaptation to create effective penetration into communities with established political preferences.

The specific forms of this strategy in Eddy's campaign include:

- 1) Direct socialization through visits to key polling stations, community meetings, and religious dialogues in mosques as spaces for social and spiritual interaction.
- 2) Distribution of campaign materials like leaflets and banners, though limited in quantity, were designed to showcase the candidate's credibility and social sensitivity.
- 3) The use of social media as an "air campaign," with platforms like Facebook and Instagram, is personalized based on local issues in each district.

In Schroder's (2013) perspective, this strategy is a form of political message and social relationship penetration, aimed at winning over swing voters and breaking through resistance to new political options. It relies on the candidate's personal qualities, such as communication skills, integrity, and sincerity in interactions, to overcome voter resistance.

Defensive Political Strategy

Although not formally an incumbent, Eddy Soeparno began applying defensive strategies after being successfully elected in the previous term. This is evident in his efforts to:

Maintain Volunteer Team Networks

- 1) The Bogor team remained intact at 85% since 2017.
- 2) The Cianjur team maintained 60%, demonstrating success in building internal loyalty.

Eddy built team solidarity through regular joint activities (recesses, holidays, social programs), making volunteers feel valued and part of the change. This strategy maintained stability in the winning structure and strengthened the loyal base.

Maintain Program and Communication Consistency

- 1) Long-term programs such as the 24-hour ambulance, bore wells, and solar-powered street lights were sustained even after taking office.
- 2) Direct community engagement outside campaign periods as a form of continued representation.

This aligns with Schroder's (2013) defensive strategy of maintaining the voter base by ensuring consistent communication and successful real-world programs. Eddy Soeparno applied a hybrid strategy, combining both offensive and defensive strategies in balance:

- 1) Offensive to attract new voters, highlight flagship programs, and capture a district without a seat.
- 2) Defensive to maintain volunteer and voter loyalty and ensure continuity of programs.

This reflects what Schroder calls a hybrid strategy in modern political campaigns—a blend of expanding support and deepening emotional attachment with voters.

Conclusion

The 2024 legislative election highlighted the effectiveness of a well-rounded and adaptable campaign strategy, exemplified by Eddy's blend of offensive and defensive tactics. By combining emotional communication, issue segmentation, resource mobilization, reputation building, and strategic continuity, he engaged constituents across the diverse socio-geographical landscape of Bogor-Cianjur. His focus on long-term, tangible initiatives like bore wells, solar-powered street lighting, and revitalized public facilities fostered trust and loyalty, while tailoring messages to local issues such as water scarcity and traffic congestion strengthened voter relevance. Sustained investment in volunteer networks and ongoing social programs reflected a model of political engagement that extends beyond election cycles, consistent with Schroder's attachment-based political engagement theory emphasizing emotional bonds in campaigns. Future research could explore how these integrated strategies affect voter behavior over multiple election cycles and assess their applicability across different regions and political contexts to further refine context-sensitive and sustainable campaign models.

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