

## Women in local politics: Insights from Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Indonesia

### *Perempuan dalam politik lokal: Wawasan dari Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, Indonesia*

Alex Alex<sup>1</sup> , Nasiwan Nasiwan<sup>1</sup> , Abdillah Abdillah<sup>2</sup> , & Mutiah Haris<sup>3</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Department of Education, Pancasila, and Citizenship (PPKn), Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

<sup>2</sup>Center for Decentralization and Participatory Development Research, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Department of of Islamic Religious Education, Faculty of Islamic Religion, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar

Address: <sup>1</sup>Jalan Colombo Yogyakarta, Karang Malang, Caturtunggal, Kec. Depok, Kabupaten Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Jalan Bukit Dago Utara No.25, Dago, Kecamatan Coblong, Kota Bandung, Jawa Barat 40135, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Jalan Sultan Alauddin No.259, Gn. Sari, Kecamatan Rappocini, Kota Makassar, Sulawesi Selatan 90221, Indonesia

E-mail: alex.2020@student.uny.ac.id

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#### Abstract

Aceh is a region that is still strongly implementing Islamic law and a patriarchal political culture. The purpose of this study is to examine the dynamics of women's participation in local Acehese politics. This study uses a qualitative-exploratory method with a literature study on the dynamics of women's participation in local Acehese politics. The results of this study indicate that post-tsunami 2004 and the 2005 Helsinki MoU agreement had an impact on openness for Acehese women in the process of becoming members of the legislature, which is currently experiencing obstacles due to structural, socio-cultural, religious issues, ideology, and the dominance of local Aceh political party elites by men. This has greatly affected the representation of women in Aceh's politics-governance, even though during the 2009 to 2019 election year the representation of women in Aceh's politics-governance has experienced a fairly good trend of increasing. However, what is being pursued is not the number that increases every year, but the process of fulfilling women's political rights in Aceh. The conclusion of this study is the importance of holding a commitment to fight for women's rights so that they are accommodated in public policies that are sensitive to women's interests, not only as a complement to the quota for women's representation in politics-government.

**Keywords:** women in local politics; political involvement; democracy; Aceh Province

#### Abstrak

*Aceh merupakan wilayah yang masih kental menerapkan syariat Islam dan budaya politik patriarki. Tujuan studi ini untuk melihat dinamika partisipasi perempuan dalam politik lokal Aceh. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif-eksploratif dengan studi pustaka terhadap dinamika partisipasi perempuan dalam politik lokal Aceh. Hasil studi ini menunjukkan pasca Tsunami 2004 dan perjanjian MoU Helsinki 2005 berdampak pada keterbukaan bagi perempuan Aceh dalam proses menjadi anggota legislatif, yang saat ini mengalami hambatan karena adanya hambatan struktural, sosial budaya, isu agama, ideologi dan dominasi elit partai politik lokal Aceh oleh laki-laki. Hal ini sangat mempengaruhi keterwakilan perempuan dalam politik-pemerintahan Aceh, walau sepanjang tahun pemilu 2009 sampai 2019 keterwakilan perempuan dalam politik-pemerintahan Aceh mengalami tren peningkatan yang cukup baik. Namun yang dikejar bukan lah angka yang setiap tahun meningkat, tetapi tentang bagaimana proses pemenuhan hak-hak politik perempuan di Aceh. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah pentingnya memegang komitmen untuk memperjuangkan hak-hak perempuan agar terakomodasi dalam kebijakan publik yang peka terhadap kepentingan perempuan, tidak hanya sebagai pelengkap kuota keterwakilan perempuan dalam politik-pemerintahan.*

**Kata Kunci:** perempuan dalam politik lokal; keterlibatan politik; demokrasi; Provinsi Aceh

## Introduction

Political participation is understood as a prerequisite for the development of political quality (Huntington 1965, Friedgut 2014, Kassa 2015). Therefore, increasing women's political participation can help advance political development and improve the quality of life of women and children, considering they make up more than half of the world's population (Kassa 2015, Baker 2017, Paxton et al. 2020). Women and politics, two words that can be interpreted variously by anyone. There are two sides to the currency when it comes to women and political links. The first side sees no particular peculiarities in the role of women in politics (Segal 2015, Baker 2017, Paxton et al. 2020).

In politics, women and men are both political human beings who, when entered into political competition, will act to safeguard and defend their interests (Segal 2015, Baker 2017, Bailey 2018, Goldstein 2019). Politics is a world of fight and competition and he who is strong is the one who wins. Politics is the process of bargaining interests so who can bid at the right price is the one who gets the profit (Bari 2005, Bailey 2018, Goldstein 2019). In essence, there is no difference between women and men when entering politics as long as each has the ability to influence others to act as they wish (Segal 2015, Baker 2017, Bailey 2018, Goldstein 2019, Paxton et al. 2020).

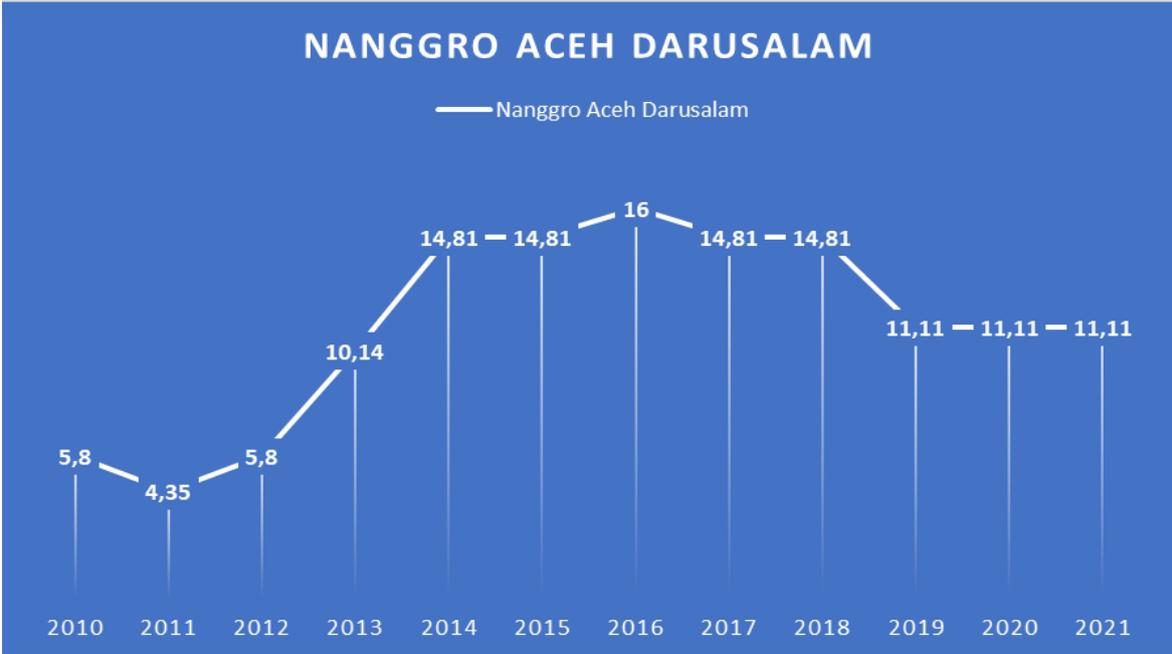
The other side sees that politics is the way to achieve prosperity for all the people consisting of women and men (Bailey 2018, Goldstein 2019). Politics is a means of achieving a better situation. In this lens, the world of politics must provide possibilities for every woman and man to contribute as much as possible (Segal 2015, Baker 2017, Bailey 2018, Goldstein 2019). The problem is the political world is still dominated by men, both representation and interests and perspectives (Bari 2005, Paxton et al. 2020). This similar political domain has not been a comfortable place for women, especially with the cultural and psychological aspects faced with intense politics (Bailey 2018, Goldstein 2019, Paxton et al. 2020). In order for balance to occur, politics must give certain actions (affirmative) to women as marginal entities in the political process (Seierstad & Opsahl 2011, Terjesen & Sealy 2016).

If we look at statistical data on the representation of women in politics in Indonesia, Aceh Province is still the lowest at 11.11% after the 2019 election, with East Nusa Tenggara Province the percentage of women's representation in politics at 58.82% to be the area with the highest percentage in Indonesia, followed by North Maluku with a percentage of 29.47%, Papua with a percentage of 28.47%, Central Kalimantan with a percentage of 38.04%, DI Yogyakarta with a percentage of 37.25%, and South Kalimantan with a percentage of women's representation after the 2019 Election is around 37.06% (BPS Nasional 2021). Figure 1 shows the level of women's political participation in Aceh province from 2010-2021.

The opportunity for women to enter the political field actually already exists and is allowed, but because of various factors, it is rare. The main factor is the stereotypical view that the political world in the social construction of women in women's public relations is not worthy of leadership because they are irrational women and rely more on their emotions (Wolff 2006, Astuti 2008, Risman 2018). This image became a stereotype about women being drawn into the public space including into the political space which eventually caused a lot of gender inequality in various sectors (Astuti 2008, Niron & Seda 2020). Another factor is that gender inequalities rooted in socio-culture result in fewer women achieving higher education than men. As a result, women do not have adequate knowledge and cannot take part in politics. In addition, the understanding of politics among women is also still low, considering that the world of politics is "owned by men," so society considers it unnecessary to give political understanding to women more seriously (Astuti 2008, Niron & Seda 2020).

Looking at the political context in Aceh where women's participation in politics is increasingly visible and open after the Helsinki peace agreement (see Figure 1), in 2021 the percentage of women's participation in politics in Aceh is at 11.11%, an increase compared to the previous years. After the 2004 tsunami and the 2005 Helsinki MoU in 2010 there was only 5.80% the percentage of women's participation in politics which continued to increase until 2016 with 16% although somewhat according to the 2019

election which was at 11.11%. This has encouraged the increasingly dynamic women’s movement in Aceh, although it is still in the category of the low percentage of women’s representation in politics in Aceh (Nivada 2015:68, Sutrisno 2016, Sari & Aminah 2020). It can be said that the post-conflict era was the era of the rise of the Acehnese women’s political movement. Nevertheless, the harsh world of practical politics that is often tinged with acts of violence and intimidation becomes an obstacle for female political actors in every political activity (Nivada 2015:68, Sutrisno 2016, Sari & Aminah 2020). As a post-conflict area, of course, acts of violence are still very vulnerable especially when it comes to the process of determining power in this case winning seats in parliament (Nivada 2015:68, Sutrisno 2016, Sari & Aminah 2020). Another factor that has an influence is that in the 2009 election there was no firm affirmative policy to ensure female political actors in obtaining superior positions in the list of legislative candidates (Nivada 2015:68, Sutrisno 2016, Sari & Aminah 2020).



**Figure 1.**  
 Percentage of Women’s Representation in Politics in Aceh 2010-2021  
 Source: Processed from National BPS (BPS Nasional 2021)

Departing from the experience of 2009, several civil society organizations both local and national levels again encouraged the policy of affirmation of a quota of 30% of women in the list of legislative candidates for each political party participating in the 2014 Election (Nivada 2015:68, Sutrisno 2016, Sari & Aminah 2020). This movement was also supported by female lawmakers from the 2009 Election (Astuti 2008:3-16, Nivada 2015:68, Sutrisno 2016, Sari & Aminah 2020). This movement then came to fruition with the Law. No.8 of 2012 which confirms that in the quota of 30% of women, it requires one female candidate from three consecutive candidates from the beginning in each election in 2014 (Sutrisno 2016, Sari & Aminah 2020).

Political parties that ignore this policy will be deprived of their rights as election participants in the constituency if they do not meet the quota. Affirmative action policies or gender quotas in increasing the representation of women in politics were first implemented ahead of the 2004 elections (Sari & Aminah 2020). This is marked by the inclusion of provisions regarding the nomination of women as much as 30% of the list of candidates for legislative members (candidates) of each party in Law No. 12 of 2003 concerning General Elections (Law No.12/2003). Then, in the run-up to the 2009 election, the affirmation policy was strengthened by the provisions in Law No. 2 of 2008 concerning Political Parties (Law No.2/2008) regarding at least 30% of women in management. The affirmation policy in the Election Law is also further strengthened in addition to having to meet the provisions of the number of 30% of women in the list of candidates, the placement of female candidates is also regulated by the

provisions that in three candidate names there is one female name (Law No.10/2008) (Niron & Seda 2020, Sari & Aminah 2020).

The Aceh Provincial Government Law (UUPA) was further strengthened by the passage of Qanun Aceh No.3/2008 concerning Local Political Parties participating in the DPRA and DPRK Member Elections. In the qanun regulated the management of local political parties and the nomination of legislators must pay attention to at least 30% of the representation of women and the provision becomes one of the conditions for registration of local political parties as election participants (Nivada 2015:68, Sutrisno 2016, Sari & Aminah 2020). With slightly different rules, it is not an exaggeration to say that Aceh has a different political dimension compared to other regions. The anatomy of Aceh's political differences is colored by the presence of the Local Political Party, the holding of different elections in terms of the selection of the Independent Election Commission (KIP) and Bawaslu Aceh, and still vulnerable acts of political violence. All these factors are obstacles and challenges for the involvement of Acehese women in the practical political sphere as political party cadres and to actively participate in the winning process in each election (Nivada 2015:68, Sutrisno 2016, Sari & Aminah 2020). This relates to the involvement of women to participate directly in elections and also looks at the representation of women after the 2014 general election (Nivada 2015:68, Sutrisno 2016).

When looking at the local political context in the 2009-2014 election in the Aceh People's Representative Council (DPRA) Aceh province, the involvement of women is not so massive, with only four people consisting of Yuniar (Golkar), Liswani (PAN), Nurlelawati (Golkar), and Nuraini Maida (Golkar). The percentage is only 5.8% of the representation of women in the Aceh parliament. This is largely influenced by the low political participation of women and the still strong patriarchal culture in which men tend to limit the political space of women (Nivada 2015:68, Sutrisno 2016). Based on the background above, this study aims to describe the dynamics of Aceh local politics in the involvement of women in local politics in the 2019 election, as well as explore socio-political changes in Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam after the 2004 Tsunami natural disaster and the Helsinki MoU in 2005 which brought influence on women's political participation in Aceh provincial politics.

## Research Method

The method in this study uses a qualitative-exploratory method with a literature study (Creswell & Poth 2016) in exploring women's participation in local politics in Aceh. Against the backdrop of the still low rate of women's participation in local Aceh politics and Aceh's local socio-political changes after the 2004 Tsunami and the 2005 Helsinki MoU Agreement led to the openness of Aceh's local politics which so far has not had a significant effect on women's participation in Aceh's local politics. This study uses the theory of women's political participation from Bari (2005) which states that the pattern of women's political participation is influenced by: (a) political structures and institutions, (b) social and political discourse, and (c) socio-cultural and functional constraints that limit women's individual and collective agency in political engagement. The locus of this research is the province of Aceh, which was chosen by the researchers because Aceh is one of the provinces in Indonesia with a low percentage of women's participation in politics, below 30% of women's participation in politics.

This study will focus on exploring how the dynamics of women participate in local Acehese politics, as well as looking at local socio-political changes in Aceh after the 2004 Tsunami and the 2005 Helsinki MoU Agreement. This study collects data obtained from books, relevant literature, journal articles, government documents, and laws. Taken from the Google Scholar database in the 2010-2022 range with the keywords "Acehese women's political participation" through the tools Publish or Perish and Vosviewer as many as 520 articles were found. Then these were analyzed using an in-depth interactive interpretation technique (Miles et al. 2018), through collecting research data, reducing research data related to the research topic, presenting research data, and then drawing conclusions. Assisted by NVivo 12 pro tools as qualitative data analysis software (Woolf & Silver 2017) in managing existing data to get in-depth and best research results.

## Results and Discussion

### Political structures and institutions: Affirmative policies for women and Aceh local political parties

*Affirmative action* policies or gender quotas in order to increase the representation of women in politics were first implemented ahead of the 2004 elections (Seierstad & Opsahl 2011, Sutrisno 2016, Sari & Aminah 2020). This is marked by the inclusion of provisions regarding the nomination of women as much as 30% of the representation of the candidates of the legislature (candidates) of each party in Law No. 12 of 2003 concerning General Elections (Law No.12/2003). Then, in the run-up to the 2009 election, the affirmation policy was strengthened by the provisions in Law No. 2 of 2008 concerning Political Parties (Law No.2/2008) regarding at least 30% of women in management. The affirmation policy in the Election Law is also strengthened in addition to having to meet the provisions of the number of 30% of women in the list of candidates, the placement of female candidates is also regulated by the provisions that in three candidate names there is one female name (Law No.10/2008).

However, at the local level of Aceh, affirmative policies in political parties have been initiated in Government Regulation (PP) No. 20/2007 concerning Aceh Local Parties and the Law on Aceh Government in 2006 (Law No.11/2006) followed by Qanun Aceh No. 3/2008 concerning Local Political Parties in Aceh which also mentions the provision of 30% representation of women in government politics. Here are four lists of local Aceh parties in the 2019 Election, the four local Aceh parties are the Aceh Party, Aceh Regional Party, Nanggroe Aceh Party, and SIRA Party as responsible political institutions in representing community aspirations, community political education, and community mobilization in Aceh Local Politics (Dani 2018, Suryowati 2018). It can be found in the following Table 1.

**Table 1.**  
Aceh local party as participants in the 2019 election

No. Sort of Elections	Name of Political Party	Chairman
15	Aceh Party	H. Muzakir
16	SIRA Party	Muhammad Nazar
17	Aceh Regional Party	Jamaluddin, S.Pdi, MA
18	Nanggroe Aceh Party	Irwandi Yusuf

Source: Processed from various sources

In Aceh, the 2019 election was enlivened by the presence of four local parties. Along with 16 other national parties, the candidates for the legislature (Caleg) were fighting for votes for seats in the provincial parliament and 23 districts/cities throughout Aceh. This is one of Aceh's specialties in accordance with Law No. 11 of 2006 concerning the Government of Aceh, the fruit of Aceh peace. The existence of local parties is also accommodated by Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Selection (Election) and Law No. 2/2011 concerning Amendments to Law No. 2/2008 concerning Political Parties at the local level of Aceh. According to Akmal Abzal "As a Member of the Independent Election Commission" (cited in Dani 2018), the existence of local parties in Aceh is one of Aceh's privileges since the 2009 Election. There is nothing else similar in Indonesia. Therefore, an important task for local Aceh political parties in accordance with the affirmation policy in the Election Law and the Political Party Law meets the provisions of the number of 30% of women in politics-government including as a list of candidates, placement as a female candidate and as a management in political parties.

In the context of local politics in Aceh, the regional autonomy granted to Aceh as a special autonomy region also brings many changes and great opportunities not only for the implementation of decentralization that regulates the relations of the central and regional governments and more dynamic local political life and encourages opportunities for women in participating in practical politics and governance, this is an effort to increase the participation of various community groups including women, in organizing a new, more democratic social, political and economic life.

## Representation of women in politics-government in Aceh Province

Acehnese women in the past in the historical trajectory showed a tough character and an authoritative female figure who had glory (*izzah*) and a good Islamic commitment. This is an example for Acehnese women today. The existence of a prolonged conflict situation in Aceh, more or less has affected people's lives, and it is women/children who feel the most consequences. The opportunity to get education is low which results in weak human resources (HR) of women, so the contribution of women to play a role in the public, especially in the political field, is still lacking. It was only after the 2004 tsunami disaster and the Helsinki MoU signed on August 15, 2005 that the socio-political face of Aceh began to change. The change in political consensus is also increasingly visible. The role of women in the public, especially the political field, is increasingly open, marked by the emergence of local political parties that give birth to Acehnese female cadres have the spirit to fight and change (Fajriah et al. 2007, Nivada 2015:68, Sutrisno 2016).

In Aceh province the role of women in politics must be committed to Islamic teachings as an area that enforces Islamic sharia law to maintain Islamic teaching ethics in getting along and interacting with men, such as ethics of speaking, dressing, *hopi* or in other forms of political participation. Although in the Islamic tradition in Aceh limits women to enter politics, because of the rational motives of value and rational aimed from female politicians so that they become legislators with the aim of channeling organizational talents, fighting for women's aspirations in increasing the expansion of women's access in public areas through local regulations, and improving the social and economic status of the family (Nivada 2015, Sutrisno 2016, Sari & Aminah 2020).

Shown in Figure 2 will be explained the results of identification and analysis of previous research data obtained through Vosviewer with the keyword participation of women in politics by the google scholar database in the range of 2010-2022 as many as 520 articles based on research issuing networks, the results divide 8 (eight) clusters in the issuance as follows: (1) the first cluster related to the political process, political parties, political interests, problems, representation in local government, and women's empowerment. (2) The second cluster is related to contribution, gender equality, gender overrivalence, women's politic leadership, women's political representation, women's quota in elections. (3) The third cluster relates to civil society participation, democracy, gender differences in politics, violence in politics, political activity, women's attachment to politics, and women's political activities. (4) The fourth cluster relates to community involvement in politics, political life, public space, movement, and participation in women's equality. (5) The fifth cluster is related to economic development, political empowerment, youth, women's empowerment, and women's rights in politics. (6) The sixth cluster deals with feminism, the political system, women's access to politics, and the women's movement. (7) The seventh cluster deals with peacebuilding, power, political strategy, and women's organizations, and (8) The eighth cluster deals with the stabilization of decisions, elections, peace, and security for women in politics. Issuing this research on women's participation in politics is not simple, it is necessary to see it to be a serious thing, especially the participation of workers in politics in Aceh is still low.

Facts show that women's involvement in elections is very small nationally and locally in Aceh Province. Based on data obtained nationally, in the seat of the House of Representatives in the period 2004-2009 with a total of 550 members, there are only 61 people or about 11.09% of the representation of women in the House of Representatives. Then, in the period of 2009-2014, the total number of members of the House of Representatives was as many as 560 people with the number of female representation as many as 110 people or about an 18.04% increase from the previous period. However, the results of the election in 2014 showed a decrease in the number of women's representation in the House of Representatives to 17.32% or as many as 97 women when compared to the 2009 election (Nivada 2015, Sutrisno 2016, Sari & Aminah 2020).

Looking at the condition of women's representation in the Aceh parliament in the 2004-2009 election, there were four women or about 5.8% of the total 69 members of the Aceh Provincial Dpra. Then, in the period 2009-2014 the number of women elected to the DPR A seat of Aceh Province still remained stagnant, which amounted to only four people or about 5.8%. Meanwhile, in the 2014-2019 election, the



**Table 2.**  
Overview of the Phenomenon of Women’s Participation in Aceh’s Local Politics.

Phenomenon Review	A Case
<p>In the 2006 Pilkada in Aceh, Rosni and Tjut were two of the five women in Aceh Province who ran in the district/city elections. Another one, Illiza sa’aduddin Djamal, was the candidate for deputy mayor of Banda Aceh promoted by PPP. Rosni, a gender activist, ran with Suwanto NG from the independent path, while Tjut was paired with Nyak Ali Umar, promoted by a coalition of parties (PKS, PDIP, Merdeka Party, PNBK, and PPD). In Aceh’s Pilkada, this year is a “new bud” (Teuku Kemal Pasha’s term in “National Elections and Democracy”) in Aceh’s political journey. There are 260 regional head candidates in Aceh who are competing supportively for the governor’s seat and 18 regent/mayor seats. Of this number, there were only 5 women (about 1.92%) who took part in the Tanah Rencong Democratic Party. The number of voters throughout Aceh reached 2.6 million of the 4.1 million population of Aceh.</p>	<p><b>Representation and Space for Women’s Political Participation in Aceh.</b></p>
<p>Banda Aceh City Qanun No. 7 of 2002 which regulates the election procedure for Geucik (village head), Article 8 paragraph (1) also specifies the requirements to become a Geucik. There are fourteen requirements that must be met by Geucik candidates, One of the requirements to become a Geucik is to be able to become a prayer priest. Meanwhile, in Islamic law, from the perspective of the general public, only men can become prayer priests for women and men, while women have limited opportunities to become Geucik because they are hampered by the requirements to become prayer priests.</p>	<p><b>Women’s Representation and Participation in Public Policy in NAD Based on Banda Aceh Qanun Law no. 7 of 2002.</b></p>

Source: Processed from BPS Aceh Province (BPS Provinsi Aceh 2021) and Zakina (2010)

Based on Table 2, the representation of women in Indonesian politics is minimal in terms of quantity, it must be acknowledged, even though Indonesia was once led by a woman. The participation of women in the NAD Pilkada is a portrait of the reality of gender and politics as one of the echoes of the many variables of women’s emancipation. Barriers that may occur to women make Qanun have the potential to discriminate against women. A closer reading of these local regulations shows that even if a regulation is created with gender neutrality in mind, its continued elaboration or practice results in discrimination. This interpretation also shows that, with the enactment of local regulations, local patriarchal values have the potential to strengthen and narrow public space for women. The trigger for the closure of the public space is because the representation of women is influenced by social, cultural, and religious values.

The decline in women’s involvement in Aceh government politics is an important record for Aceh’s local political parties. One of the agendas that is being designed and applied is to realize a dialogue forum for women with their representatives in the Council. In the Aceh Party, for example, the agenda to open a forum between the party’s women’s groups and DPRA members is an important mechanism considering the presence of female representatives from the PA party in the DPRA. Another thing that is done is an effort to continuously invite many women to be actively involved in the management of the party, including inviting women who struggled in the field during the conflict. In addition, the agenda to include gender issues in policy in the party is worth noting considering that local parties are still minimal in the representation of women in the management. Serious things are also done by the women elected in the Aceh parliament to be committed in making changes to the electoral system to make it better, wherein regulations that put women in a good electoral system will affect the achievement of 30% female representation in the future. Then, the role of women to occupy positions in the Budget Agency becomes the most important thing to contribute to women. Parliamentary women must also be active in



gender inequalities rooted in socio-culture result in fewer women achieving higher education than men (Azuh 2015, Bayeh 2016). As a result, women do not have adequate knowledge and cannot take part in politics. In addition, the understanding of politics among women is also still low, considering that the world of politics is “owned by men,” so society considers it unnecessary to give political understanding to women more seriously (Astuti 2008, Prihatini 2019, Niron & Seda 2020).

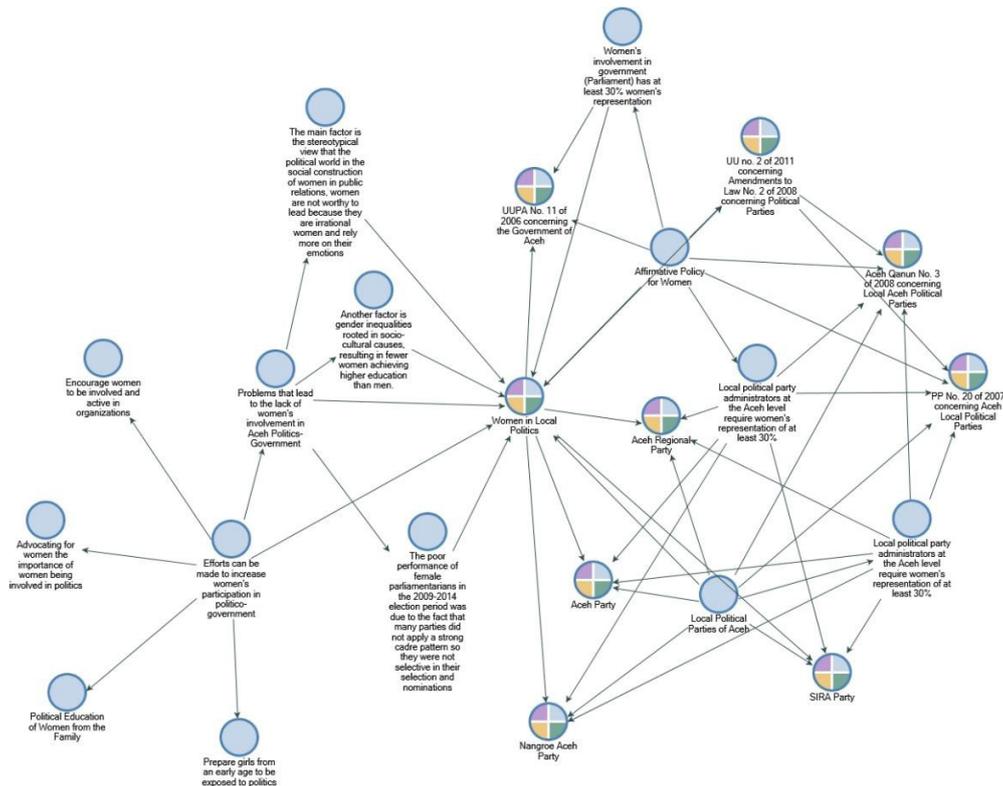
Aceh province is a religious area that applies Islamic sharia law that regulates the socio-political life of its people as one of the regions with special autonomy (Salim 2004, Abubakar 2021). Although Islamic tradition in Aceh restricts women from entering politics (Harber 2019, Elizarni 2020) because of the rational motives of value and rational aimed at female politicians they become legislators with the aim of channeling organizational talents, fighting for women’s aspirations in increasing the expansion of women’s access to public areas through local regulations, and improving the social and economic status of families (Elizabeth 2017, Muafiah 2019, Malik et al. 2021). In addition, the presence of women in the realm of practical politics which is evidenced by the representation of women in parliament is an absolute condition for the creation of a culture of public policy making that is friendly and sensitive to the interests of the community. Tanpa represents women in parliament in sufficient numbers, so the tendency to put the interests of other groups at the center of public policy decision-making will be difficult in the weir.

Evaluation of the role of women in the Sutrisno Parliament (2016) in the 2009-2014 election showed a performance that had not been good. Women in the legislature have not provided new breakthroughs for women (Niron & Seda 2020). The poor performance of female lawmakers from 2009 to 2014 was due to the large number of parties that did not implement a strong cadreization pattern so that they were not selective in networking and nominations. The impact of those who sit in parliament is only a complement in parliament as a fulfillment of the women’s quota that has been provided (Nivada 2015, Niron & Seda 2020, Sari & Aminah 2020). Matland’s research (2005) mentioned that women’s fatigue and aspirations will not be able to be accommodated by incompetent women sitting in the Regional Parliament.

Therefore, as stated by Rothstein (2019), the quality of government is seen from the quality of recruitment of political actor candidates so it is important to do the right networking by political parties in encouraging female political actors to sit in parliament. In a simple conclusion, the research of this problem is due to the still weak commitment of each element such as political parties, local figures, and women figures in the issue of women’s participation in politics-government to represent women’s rights in the public space, which is accommodated in public policy to be sensitive to women’s interests. This condition can be seen in Figure 4 which focuses on the relationship between Aceh Local Policies, Aceh Local Parties, Affirmative Women in Aceh Local Politics, and the challenges faced.

If factors that influence the weakness of women’s representation in fighting for women’s rights in local politics were identified through several previous studies, it’s due to the still strong patriarchal practice of some male parliamentarians (Elizabeth 2017, Harber 2019, Elizarni 2020). Then, the existence of factors that influence the work of women in parliament related to religion, traditions/culture and government policies is also a trigger for the lack of work of the role of parliamentary women in fighting for women’s rights in Aceh (Elizabeth 2017, Harber 2019, Muafiah 2019, Elizarni 2020). In addition, the weak initiative of the women themselves in parliament is suspected to be one of the loopholes women do not do much, act and retire in parliament (Harber 2019, Muafiah 2019).

Another thing that may be an obstacle to the lack of parliamentary work in Aceh is the lack of support from civil society, intense organizations in the women’s movement, the media and academics in assisting female council members in escorting to be more targeted and continuing to fight for women’s rights (Buchanan et al. 2012, Harber 2019, Elizarni 2020). Therefore, the government and local political figures of Aceh need to commit together to improve the quality of local politics in political contestation in Aceh and have an impact on improving the quality of national democracy. By conducting its programs; focus on gender-sensitive activities so that Acehnese women can participate more in politics and can realize maximum gender justice.



**Figure 4.**  
Network factors that influence women's involvement in Aceh politics-government  
Source: Processed through NVivo 12 Pro (2022)

Finally, the representation of women in the Aceh parliament amounted to 12 people as a result of the 2014-2019 election and greatly gave new hope. They should be able to influence all forms of rules and policies that do not favor women to be used as policies that are very influential to women. The way is to show a strong commitment to be serious through concrete actions against all forms of rules that favor women by fighting for the basic needs inherent in a woman. Furthermore, participation from all Acehnese people is needed to care about increasing women's capacity and also maintaining women's rights both in the public and domestic spheres (Sutrisno 2016, Priandi & Roisah 2019).

The decrease in the percentage of women's involvement in post-election 2019 politics at 11.11% which in the 2014 election at 14.81% was due to women in the process of becoming legislators experiencing obstacles, among others, are described as the main factors and other factors include the existence of structural, socio-cultural barriers, religious issues, ideologies and the domination of political party elites by men for women in Aceh Province. Especially regarding the recruitment process for candidates and members of the DPRA as one of the important stages in the participation of the community in politics. To improve the quality of local Aceh politics in accelerating the realization of gender-equitable welfare in Aceh province in accordance with the laws and regulations that require the representation of women in politics by 30%.

Therefore, encouraging women to dare to appear and have the willingness to participate in politics so that women's rights can be fought for if she holds public office. To win elections for women, it is necessary to make various efforts in increasing the participation of women in politics, including through: (a) Political Education from the family, (b) Encouraging engagement in the organization, (c) Advocacy of the importance of women involved in politics, (d) Preparing girls from an early age to get to know politics. But in the ethics of Islamic sharia rules that apply in Aceh Province, the reform era became an era of political dilemma in gender equality for women who wanted to enter politics, especially in the openness of local politics in Aceh.

Post-Tsunami 2004 and the 2005 Helsinki MoU agreement, in Aceh it became a challenge for Acehese women to participate in politics. In line with Fauziyah (2015) and Prastiwi et al. (2018), women's participation in the reform era experienced a political dilemma between the demand for 30% representation of women in politics, channeling women's interests and the ability to survive for women in politics in the face of the onslaught of patriarchal culture which is still strong. This requires a commitment for each actor for the local government, local Aceh political figures, and female politicians together to improve the quality of local politics with gender equality in Aceh's local political contestations, which will have an impact on improving the quality of national democracy in Indonesia.

## Conclusion

Although the involvement of women in Aceh's local political process is less than expected from the total national percentage, after the 2019 election in Aceh, the percentage of women's representation has decreased. This will more or less affect democracy and gender justice in local politics in Aceh. At every national socio-political level in Indonesia, women find themselves under-represented in political decision-making, and Acehese women are no exception. This is a challenge for Acehese women who want to be active in local politics in Aceh province by paying attention to: First, Aceh province is a religious area that applies Islamic sharia law which regulates the socio-political life of its people which is different from most regions in Indonesia; Aceh's local political parties are also responsible for the different colors of local politics in the province of Aceh. Although the Islamic tradition in Aceh restricts women from participating in politics, due to the rational and valuable motives aimed at women politicians they become members of the legislature with the aim of channeling organizational talent, fighting for women's aspirations in increasing the expansion of women's access in the public sphere through local regulations, and improving the social and economic status of the family;

Second, policy support to encourage women's representation in politico-government is contained in Law no. 2/2011 concerning Amendments to Law Number 2 of 2008 concerning Political Parties. At the Aceh local level, there are affirmative policies in political parties that have been pioneered in Government Regulation (PP) Number 20 of 2007 concerning the Aceh Regional Party and the 2006 Aceh Government Law (UU. 3 of 2008 concerning Local Political Parties in Aceh, although in some interpretations in the patriarchal spirit of local Aceh policies, this becomes another challenge for female politicians to participate in local Aceh political contestations).

Finally, women in the process of becoming members of the legislature experience obstacles, among others, the existence of structural, socio-cultural, religious issues, ideology and domination of the elite of political parties by men. The role of Acehese women in politics must be committed to the teachings of Islamic ethics, the importance of holding a commitment to fight for women's rights so that they are accommodated in public policies that are sensitive to women's interests, not only as a complement to the quota for women's representation in parliament. Specifically regarding the recruitment process for candidates and members of the Aceh People's Representative Council (DPRA) in the mission of fighting for women's aspirations in increasing the expansion of women's access in the public sphere through regional regulations, and improving women's socioeconomic status.

Therefore, it is necessary to encourage women to have the courage to appear and have the sensitivity to participate in the world of politics so that women's rights can be fought for if they occupy public positions from the results of general elections. (a) Political education from the family; (b) Encouraging involvement in the organization; (c) Advocating the importance of women being involved in politics; (d) Preparing girls from an early age to be exposed to politics. But in the ethics of Islamic sharia rules that apply in Aceh Province, the reform era became an era of political dilemma in gender equality for women who wanted to enter politics, especially in the openness of local politics in Aceh.

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## Author Biographies

**Alex Alex** is a Masters's Student in the Department of Citizenship Pancasila Education (PPKn), Faculty of Social Sciences, "Yogyakarta State University", Indonesia. His research interest is related to Political science studies, Islamic movements, and Ethnic Identity Politics in Local Political Contests.

**Nasiwan Nasiwan** is a lecturer at Yogyakarta State University, interested in political science studies, Islamic movement, political education, and political parties.

**Abdillah Abdillah** is a Researcher at the Center for Decentralization & Participatory Development Research, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran. Bandung, and Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar. His research interests relate to Ethnic Identity Politics in Local Political Contests, Rural Local Government, Agency Dynamics of Local Government, Local Self-Government, and Government Relations Patterns.

**Mutiah Haris** is a Young Researcher at Dealings Foundation Institute, Indonesia and. Her research interests relate to Women in Local Politics, Rural Local Government, Agency Dynamics of Local Government, Local Self-Government, and Government Relations Patterns.