

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE SHADOW OF PATRIARCHY: POLITICS IDENTITY IN ACEH REGIONAL ELECTIONS 2024

Yazid Imam Bustomi, Fitria Susan Meliyana, Muizudin, Yuliana Kristianti

Department of Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies,

Department of Linguistics, Universitas Gadjah Mada,

yazidimambustomi@mail.ugm.ac.id, fitriasusanmeliyana@mail.ugm.ac.id,

muizudin@mail.ugm.ac.id, yulianakristianti@mail.ugm.ac.id

Abstrak

Demokrasi adalah salah satu cara untuk mencapai kesetaraan bagi setiap warga negara dan memiliki akses yang sama untuk menjadi pemimpin. Namun, hal ini tidak berlaku di Aceh, salah satu provinsi yang memiliki keistimewaan di Indonesia. Dalam kontestasi pemilihan kepala daerah, perempuan masih mendapatkan larangan secara masif dan kolektif atas nama ajaran agama dan budaya. Artikel ini memberikan tawaran penting dalam menyikapi fenomena ini. Dengan metode kualitatif dan pendekatan netnografi, persoalan tersebut dapat diberikan solusi. Pertama, perlunya redistribusi yang mengakomodir kebutuhan perempuan dalam mengakses dunia politik sehingga tidak ada lagi narasi bahwa laki-laki lebih baik dari perempuan dalam kepemimpinan. Kedua, pemerintah dan pemuka agama harus mengakui eksistensi perempuan dalam dunia politik untuk mengubah persepsi masyarakat dan memperbaiki struktur sosial yang selama ini menghalangi perempuan untuk mencapai kesetaraan partisipasi. Ketiga, konsep kesetaraan partisipasi yang menyatakan bahwa keadilan sejati hanya dapat dicapai jika perempuan memiliki akses yang sama baik secara materi maupun status sosial untuk berpartisipasi dalam politik tanpa adanya diskriminasi. Terakhir, promosi sebagai tangga sebelum menapaki ketiga elemen dalam teori Fraser di atas sangat penting karena promosi termasuk langkah awal untuk membangun kesadaran, legitimasi, dan pengakuan atas nilai perempuan sebagai pemimpin. Rekomendasi dari penelitian sebelumnya dari hasil paper ini adalah perlunya penelitian lanjutan dengan data yang lebih komprehensif dan analisis yang lebih mendalam dengan menggunakan teori-teori lain yang relevan agar fenomena ketidakadilan dalam konteks pilkada Aceh yang mengatasnamakan ajaran agama dan budaya hilang.

Kata Kunci: Ketidakadilan Sosial, Politik, Perempuan Aceh, Patriarki, Pemilihan Kepala Daerah

Abstract

Democracy is one of the ways to achieve equality for every citizen and to have the same access as a leader. However, this is not true with Aceh, one of Indonesia's privileged provinces. In the contestation of regional elections, women still get massive and collective prohibitions in the name of religious and cultural teachings. This article provides an essential offer in addressing this phenomenon. With qualitative methods and a netnographic approach, the issue can be given a solution. First is the need for redistribution that accommodates the needs of women in accessing the political world so that there is no longer a narrative that men are better than women in leadership. Second, the government and religious leaders must recognize the existence of women in politics to change people's perceptions and improve social structures that have prevented women from achieving equal participation. Third, the concept of participation parity states that true justice is only achieved if women have equal access to both material and social status to participate in politics without discrimination. Finally, promotion as a ladder before climbing the three elements in Fraser's theory above is vital because promotion includes the first step to building awareness, legitimacy, and recognition of the value of women as leaders. The recommendation of this study is the need for further research with more comprehensive data and in-depth analysis using other relevant theories so that the phenomenon of injustice in the context of the Aceh elections in the name of religious and cultural teachings disappears.

Keywords: Social Injustice, Politics, Acehnese Women, Patriarchy, Local Election

Introduction

As the only province implementing sharia (Islamic) regulations in Indonesia, Aceh has given rise to many social and political dynamics in upholding sharia values.¹ In the 2024 regional election contestation, the statement that women are haram as leaders in Aceh came to the surface again, after previously also happening in 2017.² The exclusion of women from the 2024 regional elections is legitimized based on the interpretation of religious teachings. This statement is still an ongoing debate in Acehnese society. Then this discourse is also strongly supported by social conditions that still adhere to patriarchal norms.³ The phenomenon of limiting Acehnese women's access to contributing to the political field brings us to the perspective that the relationship between politics, religion, and gender is very complex. The social injustice experienced by Acehnese women needs to be investigated in more depth as to why it continues and drags on until now. Having a new perspective or common thread regarding this incident in the future can minimize the prevention of women in political contestation in Aceh. So that political spaces no longer restrict women from getting involved just because they

misinterpret religious teachings and inherent social norms.

Many scholars have studied identity and gender politics in Aceh and Indonesia. The study conducted by Rasyidin et al. states the lack of structural support to get women into the electoral college, plus the dominance of men on the political stage,⁴ which is slowly degrading women's position.⁵ Then studies from Kholifah and Saraini stated that there was discrimination against women in the implementation of sharia law.⁶ However, research also explains that many women struggle to gain equal access to social and political matters.⁷ A broad study on identity and gender politics in Indonesia was presented by Ibrahim⁸ and Sebastian & Afrianto⁹ argue that identity politics always leads to polarization. Moreover, patriarchal attitudes are still strongly supported by conservative Islamic thought.¹⁰

The research presentation above has illustrated the dynamics of identity and gender politics in Aceh but still tends to focus on normative aspects. The position of this research is to add to and fill the gaps in previous research by using Nancy Fraser's theory¹¹, especially the dimensions of Redistribution, Recognition, and

¹ F.A. Rani, Fikri, and Mahfud, "Islam And National Law: A Formal Legal Review on Sharia Laws in Aceh," *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum Dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 20, no. 1 (2020): 47–57, <https://doi.org/10.30631/alrisalah.v20i1.521>; M.A. Suma, R. Nurdin, and I.K. Umam, "The Implementation of Sharia in Aceh: Between The Ideal and Factual Achievements," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 20, no. 1 (2020): 19–48, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v20i1.14704>.

² Azmi Ramadhan and Faradilla Fadlia, "Pendapat Ulama Aceh Terhadap Isu Kepemimpinan Perempuan (Studi Kasus Illiza Sa'aduddin Djamal Dalam Kontestasi Pilkada Kota Banda Aceh 2017)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Fakultas Ilmu Sosial & Ilmu Politik* 3, no. 3 (2018).

³ M Khairunnas, Harmona Daulay, and T Ilham Saladin, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Aceh," *PERSPEKTIF* 11, no. 4 (2022): 1559–68.

⁴ R Rasyidin, F Aruni, and T Muzaffarsyah, "Political Orientation of Female Legislative Candidates in the 2019 Aceh Legislative Elections: A Study on Female Ex-Combatants in the Aceh Conflict," *International Journal of Advance Study and Research Work* 4, no. 1 (2022): 1–11.

⁵ Husni Mubarrak and Faisal Yahya, "Women in the Public Sphere and Religious Discourse Interpretation in the Post-Conflict Aceh," *Mazahib*, 2020, 195–218.

⁶ Siti Kholifah and Mustika Saraini, "Sharia Law in Aceh, Indonesia: Between Developing Gender Equality and Discrimination," *Пензенский Психологический Вестник*, no. 2 (2019): 15–24.

⁷ Rizkika Lhena Darwin, "The Power of Female Brokers: Local Elections in North Aceh," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 2017, 532–51.

⁸ I. Ibrahim, D. Haryadi, and N. Hidayat, "The Manipulation of Identity Politics in Indonesian Electoral Democracy Today: Between Regulations and Practices," *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development* 8, no. 7 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i7.4211>.

⁹ L.C. Sebastian and A.R. Arifianto, *The 2018 and 2019 Indonesian Elections: Identity Politics and Regional Perspectives*, *The 2018 and 2019 Indonesian Elections: Identity Politics and Regional Perspectives*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003031000>.

¹⁰ S. White et al., "Voting against Women: Political Patriarchy, Islam, and Representation in Indonesia," *Politics and Gender*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X23000648>.

¹¹ Nancy Fraser, "Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation," in *Geographic Thought* (Routledge, 2008), 72–89.

Parity of Participation, which offers a new perspective that has not been applied in the local context of Aceh. This was done to analyze women's obstacles in political contestation in Aceh. By formulating three questions: (a) What do Acehnese women experience the forms of social injustice in the 2024 regional election contestation? (b) why is identity politics based on religion and culture used to prevent women from becoming leaders in the 2024 Aceh regional elections? (c) what are the implications of religious and cultural-based identity politics in the Aceh regional elections? Hopefully, it will contribute to understanding aspects of identity politics that interact with gender construction to create social injustice.

This research is built on three assumptions: first, gender injustice faced by women in Aceh in the political context still continues today. The practice of marginalizing and subordinating women is behavior that is contrary to the law. A healthy democracy should provide equal access to men and women, especially in decision-making; therefore, revealing and giving a middle ground and further recommendations is essential. Second, the use of identity politics based on religion is often used to justify the exclusion of women in political contestation. If you continue to practice this action, you will continuously indirectly perpetuate social injustice. Third, women's representation in the public sphere, especially in the electoral sector, is essential to ensure that women's voices are heard by the government. This covers the health, women's, child protection, and other sectors. This research uses qualitative methods with a netnographic approach to understanding the social phenomena that occurred in the Aceh regional elections.

The Local Identity Regional Politics in Indonesia

The word identity politics in Indonesia is no longer unfamiliar. In every national election and regional head election (*Pilkada*), this issue will always be raised as a powerful weapon in the contestation. As a country with ethnic, religious, racial, and intergroup diversity (*SARA*), Indonesian people often use this advantage as a mobilization tool for personal and group interests.¹² This phenomenon creates turmoil in society that can shake the stability of the country, especially when the incitement and divide and conquer are politically nuanced.¹³

Based on the view of Francis Fukuyama, identity politics is a step used to mobilize people based on their inherent similarities as humans. Be it from the aspects of religion, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation¹⁴. This is driven to get basic human needs, namely recognition and respect for their existence. From the perspective of Manuel Castells, identity politics is defined as a way applied by a group of people to fight for their interests or fight against the domination of the authorities using their identity. The identity can be based on religion, culture, or a particular ethnicity that they use as a tool to gain positional power within the community itself.¹⁵

Furthermore, Castells explains identity in three forms. The first is legitimacy identity, which means the identity created by the ruling group to maintain its power. Second, resistance identity is built on the idea of protecting oneself because one feels oppressed or marginalized. Third, project identity is often used to introduce new values from social phenomena.

If traced from before Indonesia's independence, identity politics has been applied

¹² Agusmawanda, "Political Primordialism on Local Election in Indonesia," *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research* 7, no. 7 (2018): 30–32.

¹³ Dzulfikar Ahmad, "Bingkai Sara Dalam Berita Politik: Analisis Framing Berita Pengangkatan Prabowo Sebagai Menteri Pertahanan RI," *Ganaya: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Humaniora* 4, no. 1 (2021): 40–53; Tiara Kharisma, "Konflik SARA Pada Pilkada DKI Jakarta Di Grup WhatsApp Dengan Anggota Multikultural," *Jurnal*

Penelitian Komunikasi 20, no. 2 (2017); Shiddiq Sugiono, "Fenomena Industri Buzzer Di Indonesia: Sebuah Kajian Ekonomi Politik Media," *Communicatus: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 4, no. 1 (2020): 47–66.

¹⁴ Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018).

¹⁵ Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (John Wiley & Sons, 2011).

in the context of resistance to colonization. Some of the resistance carried out by the natives used the Islamic religious identity “*jihad* resolution”¹⁶ or cultural identity such as the war on their behalf, the Javanese war, better known as the Diponegoro war.¹⁷ Then, the dynamics of identity politics during the New Order era were carried out by Soeharto to perpetuate his power in various ways to create pseudo-stability, which actually had a significant impact in multiple sectors.¹⁸ Furthermore, political identity during the reformation period was touted as the revival of politics in Indonesia. After Soeharto stepped down, there was freedom in various aspects, such as local, ethnic, and religious identities that were previously restricted and suppressed.¹⁹

After the reformation era until now, the dynamics of identity politics continue to occur. Some examples of significant cases that are relevant to be discussed in the next few years, especially in this study, are the DKI Jakarta elections in 2017. The use of religious issues during the campaign by Ahok drew a high response and turmoil in the community. With this incident, he was convicted of blasphemy.²⁰ Then, ethnic-based identity politics in West Kalimantan involved two prominent tribes, namely Dayak and Malay. The use of identity politics by the Dayak tribe is due to prolonged conflicts in the political world, where they are continually marginalized in the bureaucracy.²¹ After that incident, religious and ethnic-based identity politics also occurred again in the 2018 *Pilkada* in West Kalimantan, but people began to realize that identity politics was necessary. Therefore, they have reconciled and

started to understand that differences in political choices based on identity no longer need to be a problem to maintain harmony between communities.²²

The Social Injustice in Aceh Election Period

The election of regional leaders (*Pilkada*) is an event to get a leader who is committed to improving and fixing the region with a vision and mission, not to perpetuate dynastic politics that is only concerned with family and specific groups. However, the facts on the ground speak differently from the ideal. This political contestation should be a forum for fighting injustice to the people who have the right to obtain common welfare.²³ However, in Aceh, this five-year democratic party is inversely proportional to the primary goal. Acehese people still hold the perception that men are the best people to become leaders compared to women.

The form of social injustice in the 2024 Aceh regional election is the re-emergence of anti-women narratives in politics. This collectively declared injustice arises from the interpretation of religious teachings, which then transforms into a culture amid society. Spiritual leaders do this. Within seven years, the same narrative was still used to prevent women from becoming leaders in Aceh. In a country that adheres to a democratic system, political space should be opened widely for every citizen,

¹⁶ Jafar Ahmad, “Analisis Keberhasilan Resolusi Jihad Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Dalam Perjuangan Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia,” *Ishlah: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin, Adab Dan Dakwah* 4, no. 1 (2022): 93–110.

¹⁷ Vira Maulisa Dewi, “Pangeran Diponegoro Dalam Perang Jawa 1825-1830,” *SINDANG: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah Dan Kajian Sejarah* 2, no. 2 (2020): 147–58.

¹⁸ Henk Schulte Nordholt, “Renegotiating Boundaries: Access, Agency and Identity in Post-Soeharto Indonesia,” *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-En Volkenkunde* 159, no. 4 (2003): 550–89; John Musa Renhoard, “Politik Identitas Era Orde Baru Di Indonesia Memasuki Era Reformasi,” *Societas Dei: Jurnal Agama Dan Masyarakat* 6, no. 1 (2019): 115.

¹⁹ Chang-Yau Hoon, *Chinese Identity in Post-Suharto Indonesia: Culture, Politics and Media* (Apollo Books,

2011); Kathryn Robinson, “Citizenship, Identity and Difference in Indonesia,” *RIMA: Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 48, no. 1 (2014): 5–34.

²⁰ Saiful Mujani, “Religion and Voting Behavior: Evidence from the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election,” *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 58, no. 2 (2020): 419–50.

²¹ Taufiq Tanasaldy, “Politik Identitas Etnis Di Kalimantan Barat,” *Politik Lokal Di Indonesia*, 2007, 461–90.

²² Alif Alfi Syahrin et al., “Kerukunan Masyarakat Multikultural Pasca Kontestasi Politik Identitas Saat Pilkada Gubernur Kalimantan Barat Tahun 2018,” *Harmoni* 22, no. 1 (2023): 117–42.

²³ L. Vinjamuri and J. Snyder, *Law and Politics in Transitional Justice, Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 18, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-122013-110512>.

specially women²⁴. The campaign to corner women under the pretext of religious norms in order to maintain hierarchy will make women increasingly excluded from politics and strengthen the patriarchal structure in society.²⁵ Thus, social justice will be difficult for people who want equal rights and access to politics.

Then, the next injustice is that the narrative is massively disseminated both on social media and in everyday life. The sheet containing the cleric's fatwa is pasted at every quarter of the red light, complete with opinion-mongering sentences that discredit women. Referring to the view of Jacques Ellul, the narrative is propaganda that cannot be dismissed, especially since the spread is not only at one point, which directly forces the recipient of the message to accept it as the truth²⁶. The use of social media is also a step to create an "illusion of reality" for women.²⁷ This makes them continue to be positioned as part of implementing religious teachings. For Antoni Gramsci, the spread of narratives that discredit women is a form of cultural hegemony, where the dominant group uses religious authority to strengthen patriarchal ideology.²⁸ So that there will continue to be a normalization of the phenomenon of discrimination in everyday life.²⁹

In the context of the 2024 Aceh regional elections, the injustice against women as leadership candidates reflects the maldistribution of political opportunities and resources. According to Nancy Fraser³⁰, realizing social justice requires integrating two main aspects:

redistribution and recognition. Patriarchy perpetuated through religious and cultural interpretations restricts women from equal political participation with men. In this case, redistribution involves creating policies that allow women to access equal opportunities, such as political education.³¹ In this case, women are educated to increase their capacity and capability in anything related to the political world.³² So that they can be equal to or even exceed men in the leadership sector, this step is a way to eliminate the narrative of women losing in politics just because they are women, not because they are incompetent or because of religious interpretations.

In addition to redistribution, Fraser emphasizes the importance of recognition to overcome misrecognition, which is the denial or humiliation of the identity of certain groups. In the case of Aceh, narratives that discredit women based on religious teachings are a form of misrecognition that perpetuates women's subordination. Recognition requires a cultural change that respects women as equal individuals in public life, including politics,³³ by deconstructing patriarchal norms that limit their roles. This includes the elimination of gender stereotypes, reinterpreting inclusive religious teachings, and creating a public discourse highlighting women's contributions to politics and community development.³⁴ Thus, recognition changes people's perceptions and corrects the

²⁴ S. Verba, K.L. Schlozman, and H.E. Brady, *Political Equality: What Do We Know about It?*, Social Inequality, 2004.

²⁵ Herdin Arie Saputra, Dyah Mutiarin, and Achmad Nurmandi, "Analisis Wacana: Partisipasi Perempuan Dalam Politik di Indonesia Tahun 2018-2019," MUWAZAH: Jurnal Kajian Gender 12, no. 1 (2020): 89–110.

²⁶ Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (Vintage, 1965).

²⁷ Novi Indah Sari, "Politik Simulacra Dalam Ekstasi Media Sosial Di Indonesia," *Ad-Dariyah: Jurnal Dialektika, Sosial Dan Budaya* 1, no. 1 (2020): 40–51.

²⁸ Antonio Gramsci, "Selections from the Prison Notebooks," in *The Applied Theatre Reader* (Routledge, 2020), 141–42.

²⁹ Peter Ives, *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci* (Pluto Press London, 2004).

³⁰ Fraser, "Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation."

³¹ D. Beshiri and E. Puka, "The Political Culture of European Women in the Twenty-First Century," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 13 SPEC. I (2014): 120–25, <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n13p120>.

³² Z. Mukarom, "Political Communication Strategies to Increase the Opportunity of Women's Political Representation in Indonesian Parliament," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 23, no. 1 (2022).

³³ Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (Routledge, 2014).

³⁴ Naila Kabeer, "Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment," *Development and Change* 30, no. 3 (1999): 435–64.

social structures that have prevented women from achieving equal participation.

Religious, Cultural, And Identity Politics as Women Leadership A Tool to Prevent Acehese's

In the dynamics of Aceh's local politics, religious identity, which is then closely tied to culture, is used to maintain existing hegemony, especially in relation to women. The prevention of women becoming leaders is inseparable from the wrong interpretation of the Qur'anic text by a charismatic cleric. He is Abu Syekh Hasanoel Bashry, better known as Abu Mudi. The phrase women are prohibited from becoming leaders was delivered in 2016 on his YouTube channel, MUDI TV. By presenting Surah An-Nisa verse 34 about "men are leaders over women," he makes the interpretation that women who run for leadership (in the context of politics) have committed a sin. Not only that, but he also added that anyone who is involved in winning women in politics is equally sinful. Even if later elected, the person who inaugurates them is also immoral.

Narratives from charismatic religious figures like Abu Mudi quickly spread to various corners. As the leader of an Islamic boarding school, he has many followers who can spread his opinions in addition to those uploaded on social media. On the other hand, he is a high-ranking official in a local Acehese party who serves as Chairman of the Nashihin Assembly in the *Adil Sejahtera* Party based on Islamic ideology. His opinion, which indirectly favors men in the elections, then uses existing narratives on social media by repackaging and giving patriarchal editorials that scapegoat women. Thus, there was a reaction from some ordinary people who participated in the anti-women in leadership campaign.

In several opinions on social media, people used the same pattern when asked about women becoming leaders. Razali said that in the household alone, the leader is a man, let alone in the state aspect, where this narrative is in line with An Nisa verse 34 and the interpretation conveyed by Abu Mudi above. As for the extreme opinion conveyed by Mawardi that, this country will be damaged if led by women. Meanwhile, from the point of view of millennial society, when asked about the same issue, the answer is neutral. Both men and women may become leaders as long as the contribution they commit to is clear. Tarifa, for example, stated that many female leaders today are more creative and more responsive to information than men in general. Likewise, Nanda argues that if the vision and mission offered are better than those of male candidates, there is nothing wrong with voting for women.

Religious leaders have great power and influence in controlling society by taking principles or footing.³⁵ Thus, the movement operates through formal structures and discourses that shape how people think and act.³⁶ In this case, patriarchal interpretations of religion not only reinforce male dominance but also create social "truths" that limit women's roles.³⁷ The spread of narratives or what can be called black campaigns through social media and religious figures shows how power operates to shape subjects who submit to certain norms. Thus, this hegemony will continue if no counter-discourse breaks the thinking.

To get out of the trap of religious and cultural identity politics, religious leaders should be involved in supporting gender in the public sphere as a form of recognition of their existence. If they, religious leaders, build anti-women narratives derived from gender-biased religious interpretations, it is a form of misrecognition where women are placed as "inappropriate" to be

³⁵ J. Fox and S. Sandler, "The Question of Religion and World Politics," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 17, no. 3 (2005): 293–303, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0954655090929165>.

³⁶ Mitchell M Dean, "Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society," 2009; Michel Foucault,

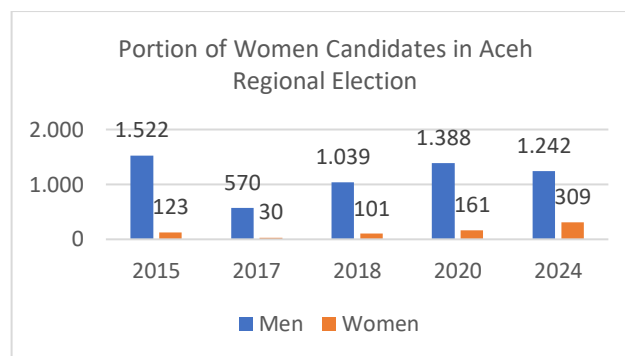
Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977 (Pantheon, 1980).

³⁷ Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

leaders.³⁸ This misrecognition reinforces the marginalization of women, not only in the political sphere but also in broader social life.³⁹ Fraser emphasizes that changes in the mindset of society, including the reinterpretation of religious teachings in an inclusive manner, are needed to enable women to fully participate in politics without stigma or cultural barriers.⁴⁰

Women Against Identity Politics and Cultural Norms in Aceh Regional Election

The culture of women's subordinate position is still deeply rooted in Aceh, especially when elections take place.⁴¹ Responding to this phenomenon did not make women accept the situation; instead, they made increasingly massive movements. There was a surge in the participation of female candidates in political contestation from 2015-2024. For the regional elections in 2024, there were only four women. Among them are Afrida and Nurhayati, who are candidates for regent and deputy regent of Simeulue. Illiza Saaduddin Djamal and Meutia Apriani respectively nominated themselves as mayor of Banda Aceh and deputy mayor of Langsa. Although not significant.⁴² However, the data has shown that Acehnese women have made an effort against the patriarchal culture.⁴³ The data also reveal that the strength of Acehnese women lies not only in quantity but also in the courage to fight against the cultural dynasty that has hegemonized Acehnese women.



Source: Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (this data was accessed from [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) on 5 November 2024)

The representation of Acehnese women based on the data above illustrates that there are structural and cultural barriers to candidacy in the political sector. Meanwhile, the Indonesian government targets a quota of 30% to overcome gender inequality.⁴⁴ The government's step in making this regulation is to fulfill the representation of women's issues advocated by women themselves, not taken care of by men. However, again, there is research that states that political parties comply with the regulation only administratively without actually giving them adequate redistribution.⁴⁵ The encounter of these phenomena has provided a clear picture that Indonesia is still not free from the colonial paradigm that continues to position women below men.

Although the rejection of women to become leaders is often associated with religion, Illizah's reason as a candidate for mayor of Banda Aceh to continue to advance and fight back is very simple, namely that there is no Islamic law that explicitly prohibits women from participating in politics, let alone becoming leaders. This

³⁸ Fraser, "Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation."

³⁹ Charles Taylor, "Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition," Princeton UP, 1994.

⁴⁰ Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition?: A Political-Philosophical Exchange* (verso, 2003).

⁴¹ Inayatillah, "Acehnese Women In Public Spaces: Theirmovement And Political Participation," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 11, no. 1 (2023): 117–36, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v11i1.823>.

⁴² Nicky Aulia Widadio, "Pilkada Aceh: Perempuan Dibilang 'Haram' Jadi Pemimpin, Syariat Atau Politik

Praktis?,"

<https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/c1ml75j109jo>, November 15, 2024.

⁴³ James C Scott, "Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance," *Yale University P*, 1985.

⁴⁴ Widdy Yuspita Widiyaningrum, "Partisipasi Politik Kader Perempuan Dalam Bidang Politik: Sebuah Kajian Teoritis," *JISIPOL| Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 4, no. 2 (2020): 126–42.

⁴⁵ Artanti Paramesti et al., "Perbandingan Kuota Keterwakilan Perempuan Di Parlemen Pada Pemilu 1999 & 2019," *Jurnal Studi Gender Dan Anak* 11, no. 01 (2024): 51–69.

happens, of course, only because of conservative interpretations that are used to limit women's space for movement. Referring to the opinion of An-Na'im, Islamic law, which is based on the Qur'an and Hadith, must be understood in a modern context.⁴⁶ If we borrow the thoughts of Nurcholis Madjid, then progressive Islam must be the framework for deconstructing patriarchy in interpreting verses in the context of the Aceh elections.⁴⁷ Because Islam never limits women in the public sphere, including in political contestation. Furthermore, gender-based discrimination is not in accordance with the principles of justice adopted by Islam.⁴⁸

Actually, the restriction of women to become leaders in Aceh is the result of modern construction, not traditional construction. If we look back, Aceh has been led by four women for a long span of six decades.⁴⁹ It was recorded that Aceh experienced its golden era when it was led by Sultanah Safiatuddin (1641-1675), and one of the factors was getting support from influential ulama. With this fact, it is clear that women in the past were not only accepted as leaders but also had high capabilities in leading, even though there were many challenges in the process.⁵⁰ This historical narrative should strengthen the position of women to participate in politics in the modern era. However, the reality is inversely proportional, where influential Acehnese clerics

instead spread narratives that prohibit women from becoming leaders.⁵¹

By putting forward the concept of participation parity, Fraser points out that true justice is only achieved if women have equal access to both material and social status to participate in politics without discrimination⁵². However, the phenomenon that occurs in Aceh, if only implementing the theories of redistribution, recognition, and participation parity, is not optimal enough to counter the norms of patriarchy and political identity, both of which are based on religion and culture in achieving social justice. Redistribution of political and economic resources is often only enjoyed by sure elites,⁵³ while recognition of diverse identities, especially women and marginalized groups, is still limited.⁵⁴ In addition, the active participation of the wider community, especially from vulnerable groups, is often hindered by patriarchal structures and exclusive political cultures.⁵⁵ This suggests that the three dimensions of justice proposed by Nancy Fraser remain a significant challenge in the context of local politics in Aceh.

Therefore, I offer "Promotion" points as a ladder before climbing to those three elements. Because promotion includes the first step to building awareness, legitimacy, and recognition of the value of women as leaders, this promotion effort must involve many parties. The government

⁴⁶ Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, *Islam and the Secular State: Negotiating the Future of Sharia* (Harvard University Press, 2008).

⁴⁷ Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam: Doktrin Dan Peradaban* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2000).

⁴⁸ Madjid Nurcholish, "Islam Kemodernan Dan Keindonesiaan," *Bandung: Mizan*, 2008.

⁴⁹ Subkhana Adzim Baqi, Muhammad Aziz, and Sri Windari, "Pola Kepemimpinan Sultanah Aceh Dalam Pengembangan Ilmu Pengetahuan 1641-1699 M: The Leadership Pattern of the Sultanah of Aceh in the Development of Science 1641-1699 M," *Journal of Islamic History* 2, no. 1 (2022): 48–62.

⁵⁰ C. Riezal et al., "The Tracing Engagement and Support of Abdurrauf As-Singkili in the History of Sultanah Safiatuddin's Leadership in Aceh Sultanate (1641-1675)," *Multidisciplinary Science Journal* 6, no. 7 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2024116>.

⁵¹ Widadio, "Pilkada Aceh: Perempuan Dibilang 'Haram' Jadi Pemimpin, Syariah Atau Politik Praktis?"

⁵² Fraser, "Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation."

⁵³ R. Boucekine, P.G. Piacquadio, and F. Prieur, "A Lipsetian Theory of Voluntary Power Handover," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 168 (2019): 269–91, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2019.10.010>; D. Mejia and C.-E. Posada, "Populist Policies in the Transition to Democracy," *European Journal of Political Economy* 23, no. 4 (2007): 932–53, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2007.03.001>.

⁵⁴ A. Laurah, *Margins Within the Marginalised: Violence and Access to Justice of Lesbians, Bisexual and Queer Women in Africa, Sustainable Development Goals Series*, vol. Part F2684, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75953-7_14.

⁵⁵ N. Lari, M. Al-Ansari, and E. El-Maghraby, "Challenging Gender Norms: Women's Leadership, Political Authority, and Autonomy," *Gender in Management* 37, no. 4 (2022): 476–93, <https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-06-2021-0159>; M. Lombe and M. Sherraden, "Inclusion in the Policy Process: An Agenda for Participation of the Marginalized," *Journal of Policy Practice* 7, no. 2–3 (2008): 199–213, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15588740801938043>.

must campaign for the regulation of a maximum 30% quota that must be met in parliament.⁵⁶ This promotion indicates that the government is opening up as many opportunities as possible for women. Then, the promotion must be carried out by religious leaders. People who also significantly influence society.⁵⁷ Shady states that the involvement of religious leaders has a vital role in changing social norms. Moreover, patriarchal ones will continue to perpetuate social injustice if there are no reasonable steps to prevent that phenomenon.⁵⁸

The promotion offered in this study includes and accommodates the three elements provided by Nancy Fraser to overcome social injustice. The first is the Promotion of Redistribution. By promoting the success of female leaders in Aceh's history, such as Sultanah Safiatuddin, redistribution begins by giving women equal access to material and symbolic resources. This paves the way for modern women to occupy strategic positions without facing gender discrimination. The second is promotion for recognition. Raising the narrative of the success of women leaders in the Aceh Sultanate as part of a history that must be respected provides respect for women's identity. Recognition of women's roles in politics and history ensures that patriarchal stereotypes can be countered with historical evidence. Third is Promotion for Representation. This Promotion also serves as a basis for fairer political and public representation. By building awareness through historical narratives, modern women will see themselves as an integral part of decision-making in society.

Promotion, in the context of Fraser's theory, acts as a catalytic mechanism that connects the three elements of social justice. Reinforcing the narrative of women's leadership in the Aceh Sultanate paves the way toward power redistribution, identity recognition, and inclusive political representation for women in the modern context. As such, the promotional points offered

in this research will make new contributions to Fraser's theory.

Conclusion

From the explanation and discussion presented in this research, it was found that the social injustice that occurred in the contestation of the 2024 Aceh regional election was caused by several things. First, there is an interpretation containing a conflict of interest over the verses of Al-Qu'ran by a cleric with a strong power relationship. Second, the discrediting narrative of women obtained from the religious figure was then repackaged by the community and disseminated both on social media and orally. So, patriarchal values are still deeply rooted in Aceh. However, Acehnese women do not remain silent about the injustice they experience. Their movement has become more massive, with a surge in every election over the past ten years to fight the stigma against them. This phenomenon indicates that the strength of Acehnese women lies not only in quantity but also in the courage to fight against the cultural dynasty that has hegemonized them.

This study also provides evidence that in the Acehnese context, the redistribution, recognition, and parity of participation offered by Nancy Fraser are not enough to fight the social injustice experienced by Acehnese women in the 2024 elections. There needs to be a "promotion" in the three elements to complement them to be maximized and directed. However, in its implementation, it still has to involve several parties, such as the government and religious leaders, because these two aspects have a decisive role in the wider community. Thus, this study also contributes to the field of religion, state, and society.

Finally, this study still has weaknesses and limitations due to the limited and insufficient data. This is followed by a theoretical analysis

⁵⁶ Widiyaningrum, "Partisipasi Politik Kader Perempuan Dalam Bidang Politik: Sebuah Kajian Teoritis."

⁵⁷ E. Lewin, E. Bick, and D. Naor, *Comparative Perspectives on Civil Religion, Nationalism, and Political Influence, Comparative Perspectives on Civil Religion,*

Nationalism, and Political Influence, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-0516-7>.

⁵⁸ S.N. Shady, "Territory and the Divine: The Intersection of Religion and National Identity," *West European Politics* 45, no. 4 (2022): 744–66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2021.1884458>.

that focuses only on Nancy Fraser's theory of injustice. So, this study also suggests further research with other theoretical approaches to answer how to fight and stop social injustice that is always in the shadow of patriarchy. Especially when the democratic party has started running, this case will not continue to drag on in every upcoming election and be able to change the cultures made by modern construction, as well as the dominance of conflicts of interest by certain groups built on the wrong interpretation of religion

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