

## WOMEN IN PUBLIC SPHERE AFTER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC SHARIA IN ACEH

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### ABSTRACT

*This article discusses several activities intended for Acehese women after the implementation of Islamic sharia. Activities aimed at women in public spaces have an impact on the marginalization and narrowing of women's public spaces. This article also explicitly provides an overview and analysis of what actually happened to Acehese women so that it appears that there is a problem of the domination of male power over women based on religious, cultural, and political arguments. The purpose of this article is for the public to understand that the Aceh government has made policies aimed at women in the public sphere with the support of Wilayatul Hisbah, which has an impact on the marginalization of women. It is found that after the implementation of Islamic law in 2001 until now, in Aceh, there have been domestication of women with various regulations (qonuns) as well as text interpretations which are used as legitimacy by the power of conservative ideology on progressive understanding. This article makes Aceh a focus area. This article is based on the literature as a secondary source as well as interviews with experts.*

**Keywords:** Women, Domestication, Public Sphere, Islamic Law

### INTRODUCTION

Aceh in 2005 is Aceh which has changed from before the Tsunami. The application of Islamic law from 2001 to 2004 has greatly affected women's daily lives. The headscarf and the way to dress the Acehese people are regulated in the *qanuns* of Islamic law. Conflicts between GAM and the Aceh government and residents often occur (Afrianty 2017). However, after the 2005 Tsunami

hit Aceh, there were significant changes in people's lives. Many Acehnese people no longer question Islamic law and GAM.

The community members are busy reconstructing houses that were hit by the Tsunami waves, work affairs, and declining welfare. Social conflicts have decreased because they are no longer the primary concern of community members, especially between GAM and the government. After the transformation of GAM power from Malik Mahmud in 2005 to Zaini Abdullah, there was a power struggle to unite the GAM forces in Aceh, even though this was difficult to happen (Jones 2015).

However, the condition of women remains disadvantaged politically, economically, and culturally. In the public sphere, women are still unable to occupy an equal position with dominant men, have power and become a reference in decision making. Therefore, what is needed is not only for women to be in the public sphere but also for progressive thinking because of institutionalized conservatism's dominance. However, for women to be involved in decision-making, supportive, progressive, and affirmative political conditions are needed to become the power of civil society. This is because women are part of politics and religious power. Women are not only objects of political decisions of power (Sirry 2010).

In reality, in Aceh, women are an essential part of the "object of control" for implementing Islamic Sharia. Aceh women, in many cases, are marginalized. Sharia Perda policies tend to be characterized by policing from a male perspective. There is a close relationship between the Sharia Perda, which characterizes Aceh's specialty, and Acehnese women's experiences. This can be seen from the vital perspective of men in policing women through sharia qanuns. The forms of restraint are in the form of several mandatory hijab recommendations, prohibition of *khalwat*, prohibition of watching entertainment that displays genitals, separate class rules for men and women, prohibition of riding behind one's back while sitting facing the front, prohibition of wearing tight trousers (stretch) when members of the community. Entering government offices, prohibition of sitting at the same table without a mahram, prohibition of watching cinemas, concerts with mixed seating arrangements for men and women, and prohibition of watching films deemed inconsistent with sharia (Perempuan 2010, 10–13).

Such conditions have been going on since Aceh Province after enacting the Special Autonomy Law (Law Number 22/1999 on Regional Autonomy), which enforces several Regional Regulations of a local nature, for example, Aceh Qanun No. pervert), which indirectly leads to the regulation of the female body. The formal implementation of Islamic Sharia in various regions

is characterized by making women the target of sharia regulations, such as *khalwat* regulation (*qanun khalwat*). Women do experience a robust process of marginalization in many ways in their daily lives. Socializing, sitting, dressing, and traveling are also objects of the Special Autonomy Law.

## SHARIATISATION AND DOMESTICATION OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC SPHERE

Shariatization and Domes Regarding women's position in the public sphere, several countries with a majority Muslim population, such as Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Al-Jazeera, have made changes in interpreting sacred texts are considered to restrict or place women in the public sphere. This, of course, affects the reinterpretation of sacred texts and fiqh, which places women in a marginal or domesticated position. Therefore, it is necessary to re-examine the construction of Islamic sharia in Aceh of Women in Public Spaces (Cherif 2010).

Interpretation of sacred texts related to Islamic Law needs to be carried out by scholars because, in many cases, women cannot get full access to engage in public activities. Even for problems related to private matters, many women cannot get their rights to the fullest, such as marriage, dowry, and divorce. In terms of participation, women do not get the same opportunities as men. Likewise, in marriage, for example, the matter of dowry, the dominant role is men. Women only receive what is given from men. The saddest thing is the understanding that dowry is the money a woman buys to become his wife. This is, of course, related to issues of gender justice. The woman is entirely in the control of a man. Even though there have been many changes in understanding several texts, the facts on the ground still prove that marriage's dominant problem is the male party. This will be seen in the issue of inheritance (Shaughness 2009).

Even the problems of women in Indonesia, including in Aceh, are also related to transgender (queer) problems as part of society. Transgender issues in Indonesia, including in Aceh, are not unreal. They are real but often get unequal treatment from actors who enforce Islamic law (Davies 2010). Transgender (queer) is seen as a group of people who are "less perfect," even though they are God's creatures who were both born on earth. They are part of the diversity of society in Islam. The diversity of the people of Aceh should get the attention of government officials. The state is not allowed to treat its citizens in a discriminatory manner. Based on religious reasons, however.

Women become subordinate to men. The rights to file for divorce were also lost. In the matter of polygamy, women also experience a very powerless position. A divorce suit is considered as "belonging to men," not women. The issue of

polygamy is a daily problem in Indonesian Muslim communities, including in Aceh (Nurmila 2009). Nurmila clearly explained that many women were polygamous because of the issue of male sexual desire, not because of fundamental reasons such as the permission of a wife who had pregnancy problems, chronic illness so that she could not conceive, and other religious reasons. Men practice polygamy often without the knowledge of their first and second wives. Women refuse to be polygamous, so they choose divorce (Nurmila 2009, 108–12). Here scholars in Muslim countries have reinterpreted Islamic law as applied in society. This is also done in Aceh because some women's problems have become marginal due to the wrong interpretation of Islamic sharia. After all, men feel authoritative. (Cherif 2010, 114).

The issue of women has become a concern of many Muslim scholars because it is an important issue. If it is not paid attention to, it will foster conflict between Islamists and progressives in understanding sharia. Important issues regarding women can affect the family, society, and the regulations to be established in society. The Muslim community, especially women, become citizens who experience discrimination on religion-based regulations. Even though there was a tug of war about political interests. As happened in Iran, the problem of the headscarf, Tunisia, Al-Geria, is full of political power interests. Something like that can happen in Muslim countries like Indonesia. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate a progressive understanding of Islamic sharia with society's needs (Moghadam 2003).

Changes in the interpretation of Islamic sharia, which are interesting to note, are matters relating to the perspective on Islamic sharia in economics, sociology, history, and political science studies. This is related to women's position in having their rights as women, which are sometimes less accommodated in the public sphere. Many studies and researches reveal that the essence of women's problems is connected to economic problems, the influence of religious understanding by elites and politicians to affect society at large. Women are influenced by their position in public organizations and employment opportunities. Public opinion is awakened that women activists are less obedient to religion and justice regarding their rights as citizens. From all views like this, it is clear that men's perspective (point of view) is affected by gender bias in seeing women. This is detrimental to women's rights in the public sphere (Mesquita dan Downs 2005).

We can pay attention to Islamic sharia's main objectives implemented in Aceh after the political reform in 1998, which took place since 2001, namely when Special Autonomy was implemented until now. The government of Abdurahman Wahid (Gus Dur) gave a "gift of Islamic sharia" to Aceh as a

political gift to dampen the desire for independence and separation from Indonesia (Ichwan 2013; Kloos 2013). Presumably, enforcement of Islamic sharia in Aceh, as a form of resistance against the central government that is considered infidels, not sharia run correctly (Ichwan 2013).

The implementation of Islamic sharia has several objectives; first, Islamic sharia as a solution to the conflict between Aceh and the Jakarta (Central) government. The central government implemented Islamic sharia as an independent policy obtained by Aceh due to economic exploitation, human rights violations, politics, and natural resources. Islamic Sharia is also a concern for the central government in the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) to demand Aceh's independence. Second, the implementation of Islamic sharia in Aceh is expected to reduce the horizontal social conflicts. Conflict due to criminal problems such as rape, prostitution, and drunkenness. Therefore, Islamic sharia is implemented to maintain public morality in Aceh so that there is no deviation of power and deviant behavior from society. Islamic Sharia is applied to create justice and create good relations between the center and the regions (Aceh). Third, Islamic sharia is implemented because it adopts original elements from the Acehnese people with a religion that the people of Aceh believe. This is because, objectively, Aceh is a province with a majority Muslim population (98.2%) of the total population of Aceh (Abubakar 2005, 129).

Regarding the implementation of Islamic law, unfortunately, there are differences between sharia enforcers and ordinary people who are the object of sharia targets. The implementation of Islamic sharia is a concern of many scholars because of frequent deviations between ideal goals and practice. Contradictions over the implementation of Islamic sharia are a particular problem in Aceh (ICG 2006).

In terms of the implementation of Islamic sharia, it is not only happening in Indonesia. It has also occurred in Sudan, Morocco, Tunisia, and Malaysia as a global phenomenon of Islamism since the Iranian Islamic revolution. Since the 2000s, Islamism has grown to Indonesia as a movement of *Islamic Populism*. It is political than many scholars engaging (Hadiz 2016). In Indonesia, a Muslim country in the world, discussion on Islamic Law is very popular.

The discussion on the defense of Islamic sharia by Muslim scholars has been quite intensive. Of the total Muslim population countries in the world in 45 Muslim-majority countries, 30 of them are in the territory of countries where Muslims are a minority, especially in non-Muslim countries. Religion, such as the hijab (veil), is a study that continues to develop until now. The Muslim population is in a very diverse area, and they wear Muslim clothes, carry out

Islamic rituals, and want to be part of public activities such as being active in politics and working to continue to get attention so that Muslim women do not get discriminated against politically, economically and culturally. Therefore, there is a need to place Muslim women visible in public political activities (Offenhauer dan Buchalter 2005).

The placement of women in public spaces equal between men and women when linked to a sociological perspective can be found there is a progressive feminist perspective that provides space for women to be active in the public sphere. Women have the same rights in politics as men. In the study of feminist sociology, women's issues must continue to be a concern, becoming a present and future discipline so that women do not experience political marginalization. This is a kind of migration from women's studies into women's studies (gender studies) to become mainstream (Delamont 2003, 114–17).

The issue of a veil similar to a veil can be categorized as cultural. However, currently, there is an Islamic deculturization movement that is sweeping the Islamic community. Islamic expressions that coincide with culture can be found in the Sasak Muslim community in Lombok, Kutai Muslims in East Kalimantan, Banjar Muslims in Banjarmasin, and Muslims Yogyakarta Java. It is not easy for them to leave traditions passed down from generation to generation because, in society, nothing is against Islamic law. Therefore, when there was a prohibition from Wahhabism to express Islam culture, they could not accept Wahhabism that had developed in the last ten years. Some Javanese, Kalimantan, and Lombok Muslims have to give up their cultural identity in wearing long beards, wearing turbans, robes, and hijabs. There is a struggle between Indonesian Muslims and Wahabism in Indonesia. This includes Aceh, which promotes Islamic sharia in society (Hamdi 2019, 108).

In Wahabi's own body, there is conflict. They do not support each other but go their separate ways. This has led to claims that they are the most correct in preaching Islam. This is also the case for Wahhabism in South Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, Yogyakarta and Aceh. Some conflicts between fellow Wahhabists give a sign that Islam is not a single religious sect. Some belief in what is considered to be his missionary mission. Even the majority of Wahabi congregations support the existence of religious purification and purification in the field of fiqh. In the case of the unavailability of Wahabi to accommodate local traditions, it shows that Wahabism does not care about the local context. This locality causes Wahabism to conflict with the people of Aceh, Yogyakarta, and Banjarmasin (Hamdi 2019, 176).

The development of wearing the headscarf with the hijab (covering his face) is one of the impacts of understanding Wahabism developed in Aceh. At

first, Acehese women wore the hijab as Javanese women wore a veil with visible and visible hair. However, in its development, women's headscarf is the headscarf which is often referred to as the syar'i hijab. There are various prohibitions against women, such as riding motorized vehicles straddlingly, women getting involved in politics, women going out at night. All of this is the influence of Wahabism that has developed in Aceh because in the view of Wahhabism women are not taught or ordered to be active in the public sphere. Women must cover all their limbs because women's bodies and even women's voices are understood as genitals (Abubakar 2005).

Related to the veil, which has recently become a trend among Indonesian Muslim women by some Islamic groups, exceptionally moderate Islamic groups, such as Muhammadiyah and NU, do not teach Muslim women to wear the veil is a serious debate. The veil is understood by moderate Muslim groups as a culture of Arab society and not sharia because there is no valid basis (authentic) either in the Qur'an or in the hadith that instructs Muslim women to wear the veil instead of women wearing a headscarf or hijab. (Gunawan dan Ilyas 2018).

Several essential notes regarding wearing the headscarf, veil, and various women's accessories in Aceh described in this section can be said to be a model or method of domestication of women in the public sphere with forced religious reasoning arguments. A conservative version of religious reasoning and even Wahabism dominated in Aceh during the implementation of Islamic sharia, so it seems clear that women must be controlled and laid off. Women are not in the public sphere but in the domestic sphere, which is considered their nature. Problems of marriage, child care, divorce all place women in a subordinate condition to male superiority.

### **WOMEN NOT WORKING IN PUBLIC, BUT DOMESTIC**

The Wahhabis in Aceh believe that women are not allowed to be active in the public space. Women do not work as breadwinners. In the view of the Wahhabis, women are housewives and do not leave the household. Women to work in the domestic sphere. Meanwhile, men are in the public domain. Such placement can be said to be a struggle for public space (contested public sphere). Things like that happen in Muslim-majority countries such as Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Indonesia. This kind of battle is a struggle for identity between men and women in the political space (Spiegel 2010).

The position of women in Islam has never been as low as often depicted in public space. Islam came to elevate the dignity of all humankind. Especially

women. The promotion of women in Islam had taken place when Islam was revealed to the ignorant Arab society. They consider women as “half-human” so that they are like merchandise that can be exchanged for plus and rented just like that between fellow men and tribal (ethnic) heads. Islam came to liberate such things with humanity’s teachings, which implements the teachings of monotheism that free human beings from all kinds of shackles born of human beings. Tawhid is a concrete form of Islamic respect for women that is only poorly understood in depth. There is a lot of gender bias in understanding the values of humanity in the teachings of Tawhid. However, most understand that monotheism is a principle of Islamic teachings that is only related to human worship of God alone. There are no other dimensions (Mulia 2008, 112–13).

Considering such matters, it is necessary to reinterpret various principal values in Islam so that this religion is understood textually and for the benefit of certain groups. Here, it is necessary to have *ijtihad* carried out continuously according to the changing conditions of the times. *Ijtihad* must not stop being practiced so that Islam becomes a religion that is genuinely following the context of its era. Most Muslims agree with the need for *ijtihad*, but there are problems when many conditions are treated to carry out *ijtihad* work. Especially if you reach the degree of *ijtihad* as an absolute *mujtahid*, almost nowadays no scholar understands various fields of science according to their context. However, the principle that must be adhered to is that *ijtihad* is highly recommended in Islam. With *ijtihad*, women can be avoided from the marginalization of Sharia (Mulia 2008, 114).

Fitzgerald, specifically gives attention to religious studies that discuss women’s issues related to family problems. As a social institution, the family needs to be rethought because there are very drastic changes when it comes to stating that a family must consist of a father-mother and children. Families also face challenges when partners experience demographic distancing, namely a distance between countries, between islands, between provinces, or between regions. Is the family living in one “common house,” or is the family a moral-ethical bond between those who love each other, care for each other, or communicate is also a family building? This is where family issues get a serious challenge because of the drastic changes (Fitzgerald 2003).

Problems of daily life in communities such as in Aceh are closely related to morality and ethics issues. As part of Indonesia’s Muslim community and the world, those who have references to al-Quran and the sunnah of the Islamic community (Muslim community) are measured by moral standards referred to in the holy book as a necessity. Family arrangements, children, and inheritance are always referred to in the scriptures’ teachings that have

been believed. Therefore, women who get half the share of men in terms of inheritance, women who are sometimes used as second wives, and women who take care of children, not working outside the home, are all referred to in the scriptures' moral standards, which are understood textually. Muslim communities (Muslim communities) taking care of the family are different from other religious groups such as Christianity or Catholicism. Al-Qur'an is the entire norm referred to by Muslims with various versions of their understanding. In such conditions, the moral-ethical standards of taking care of the family undergo sociological changes(Leaman 2013, 110).

Al-Qur'an is used as spirituality in taking care of family, children, education, human relations, and political matters. There is a textual understanding that women are not allowed to become part of political parties. If you have a political party, you must have the permission of her husband. Suppose the husband does not allow his wife to be involved in political parties or practical politics. In that case, women automatically have to give up their intention to get involved in practical politics. Al-Qur'an as a whole becomes a reference to become a strength in family and society. This is the political power of the Qur'an, which is the knowledge of most Muslims(Leaman 2013, 11).

In such a context, Acehese women receive slightly different treatment from men. Men are leaders for all conditions and all walks of life. Meanwhile, women cannot be leaders for men, even though there have been many female leaders, including female kings and female pre-independence fighters such as Malahayati, Cut Nyak Dien, even though in Aceh's history and Cut Meutia. In the latest development, women's position after the implementation of Islamic sharia has become a kind of complement to men who are considered fighters and leaders of all levels of society. Many Acehese women have always been active in the public sphere and have no religious problems. However, during the development of the GAM era and post-reformation, women's positions experienced a decline in roles that were degraded by the political interests of the power elite (Dijk 2013).

Sharia is textually understood as the path to God for a Muslim. In its current expanded meaning, sharia is a guide to social, moral, religious life and a direction for life as a whole. Sharia is considered a holy guide taken from the Qur'an and Sunnah, the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, the agreement of the scholars and qiyas, which is an analogy which is a way of deducing the opinions of experts on a problem. Sharia is not a set of legal values that can be interpreted more broadly and flexibly so that humanity can carry out creativity due to the times' changing contexts. Sharia should be interpreted broadly so that Muslims are not confined to it(Drexler 2009, 163-64).

In the al-Qur'an, Amina Wadud said, if it is understood comprehensively, not half-heartedly, and with male bias, it will be found how much Islam respects women. Islam significantly contributes to uplifting the dignity of women. Many verses in the Koran deal with revering women. Women are not placed as "second humans" because of menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth. Al-Qur'an significantly contributed to transforming religious values into human values based on Tauhid as understood by progressive scholars such as Hasan Hanafi, Rifat Hassan, Fatimah Mernisi Asghar Ali Engineer. Al-Qur'an pays close attention to the Reformation of a conservative understanding(Wadud 2007, 188).

The two streams of understanding of the text of the Qur'an have an impact on the existence of two understandings that continue to develop until now among the Muslim community. Between the two often can not meet to understand a single verse that is the basis of the law establishes a legal issue. Conservative groups understand it as a general and universal proposition, while progressive groups understand the proposition to be often particular and casuistic. Therefore, the law's inference needs to be done so that the established law benefits humanity and Muslims in particular. As Hussein Muhammad said, this is quoting Imam As-Syatibi that the particular text limits the existence of the general text. Therefore, it cannot be a universal text, used as a legal guide as long as there is still a specific text used as a legal basis(Muhammad 2016, 125).

Domestication of women means that women do not have income that can support their families. The impact of this is that many women are financially and economically dependent on their husbands. It becomes a severe problem when the husband does not have sufficient income or income for his family. What is often done by wives is borrowing from neighbors who have excess funding or finances; as Ana said, her husband is not economically sufficient for the family but forbids his wife to work outside the home. It is said that the wife must work in the house, namely taking care of the children, cleaning the house, and following the husband's orders(Nurmila 2009, 133-34).

### **MOTHERHOOD IS MAIN, NOT WORK (STATE IBUISM)**

Being a mother is almost synonymous with taking care of a child, breastfeeding, raising, and looking after it. The mother is not someone who works outside the home but works inside the house (domestic domain). This kind of picture is what develops in society in general, as in Aceh. There are moral standards applied in the context of the family based on religious, cultural, and social reasons or values applied to families in Southeast Asia, including in Indonesia.

These values are part of reducing a woman's relationship with outsiders, especially in matters of public affairs, such as for work. (Platt, Davies, dan Bennett 2018).

One of the most basic forms of the ideology of ibuism built by a political regime power is accepting the condition if a wife or mother is polygamous by her husband. A good wife's position is if she is willing to accept it happily because that is what is considered a mother who is willing to understand her husband's condition. This has developed especially among conservative ulama and Wahabism-Salafism developed in Indonesia and the Middle East (Chin 2018).

In many cases, in Indonesia, including in various novels that scholars have written, *Supiyah* was written by Nia Dinata, YB Mangunwijaya's *Burung-Manyar* Kuntowijoyo's *Kutbah Di Atas Bukit* are novels that describe the roles of women in the arena. The public, however, is considered less following Indonesian tradition. In our tradition (Indonesia), many people state that the woman is the mother of children. The woman is the backbone of child care and safeguards the family assets that her husbands have sought. There is strong criticism of such a perspective, but it remains a hindrance in everyday reality. The woman is still a wife, not an activist in the public field (Chin 2018, 13).

Nia Dinata, then wrote a manuscript for a post-1998 feature film, *Dia, Aku, Supiyah, and Share of Husband*, giving an illustration of how Indonesian women, in the post-reform era, had to be willing if their love for their husbands had to be given up because her husband married another woman of his choice. This theme is controversial because it contains very sharp criticism of social reality. After all, many men take more wives, but their economic situation does not meet the requirements of an economically capable family, so they have to go into debt. Husbands who practice polygamy are more likely to be encouraged because of their sexual desire, not for anything else, even though they sometimes look for religious reasons as justification. (Chin 2018, 55). Living in polygamy for some men is again happiness because that is the idea of domesticating women.

Meanwhile, even polygamous women are not happy to show happiness in public. In short, women must have the ability to have two faces: in front of their husbands and in front of the public as a happy partner, even though they have mentally rebelled. Because of this, many traditional, patriarchal and conservative societies say that a woman must make her husband happy with all the conditions she faces every day in her household. (Chin 2018, 56).

Such an understanding is called an understanding that Islam heavily influences

the Middle East. Such understanding developed since the middle ages of Islam, until recently in Indonesia. Therefore, it is necessary to get attention and then reinterpret several Islamic laws (fiqh), which are used as guidelines for breaking the relationship between husband and wife or the relationship between men and women in Indonesia. This is because many things in Saudi Arabia did not happen in Indonesia as a pluralistic country with different Islam from Saudi Arabia. If there is no reinterpretation based on Islamic law, it is feared that Islamic law itself will conflict with social reality (Hefner 2008).

Many women in countries with large Muslim populations, such as Kosovo, Turkey, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, and Pakistan, experience political marginalization because political regimes do not provide adequate space for women. Many women who want to get involved in politics experience “blockages” or are demoted in the middle of the road because of the general perspective that exists in the country, and these women are not as heads of state or heads of public affairs. In contrast to men, who are considered the head of public affairs and the public world belongs to men (Rolland 2015).

Control over women becomes an ideology of marginalizing women by a political regime. Regimes that lack attention to gender justice are based on a framework of sexuality. Political or public participation by women, such as in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, and Indonesia, indirectly criticizes the understanding that women cannot participate in the public sphere. Since the Reformation took place in Indonesia, women’s involvement in politics has been pushed to reach 30%. This implies that many women are involved in practical political activities both in political parties (legislative) and in the executive (Rolland 2015, 13).

Many women involved in socio-religious organizations such as Nasyyatul Aisyiyah (NA), Fatayat, and Muslimat engage in practical political activities because they think that women themselves must take women’s political roles. This is done because many things related to women are understood and experienced by women, so that women have a lot to take part in it. Women can no longer be restrained from participating in practical political activities even though they have been heavily involved in socio-religious organizations (Syamsiyatun 2007).

The view of NA activists, why they are actively involved in political activities, is practical because there is authentically no ban on women not being active in political parties. Authentically it is even said that men and women have the same role and position in terms of political transactions (matters related to politics). Neither the Qur’an nor the hadith of the Prophet has any prohibition on women being active in political parties or public activities. If anyone

forbids women from being active in political parties or public activities, it is because they understand the Qur'an and hadith following the common interests (Syamsiyatun 2007, 4).

Few groups of scholars or Muslims think that if women are active in political parties or public activities, it will damage society. However, this view is a view that has no solid foundation because, in the holy book and the hadith of the Prophet, men and women are given the potential to become leaders. The issue of *ijtihad* in interpreting the text states that men and women leaders need to get the attention of many parties so that gender injustice can be gradually eliminated. From there, there was no longer any discrimination against women in public affairs. The idea of a reinterpretation of the scriptural text, which is considered unfair to women, is carried out by progressive scholars in almost all Muslim countries. However, some conservative scholars still maintain a textual understanding of the text's sound as a part that does not need to get interpretations or *take* progressive scholars. (Syamsiyatun 2007, 8)

With such a view, it is necessary to carry out activities that give space to women. Apart from the political approach, the cultural approach in Islam needs to be given attention because, so far, the cultural approach has not been given attention (Noor 2015). In the case of Indonesian Islam, it is as stated by Farish. A. Noor, the Indonesian Muslim middle class's presence has changed the Indonesian Muslim community's social demographics. The approach to religion, which was primarily textual and conservative, has turned into contextual and more progressive, especially among the urban middle class. There is indeed a controversy over the discourse on Islam. One party wants Islamism in the private domain, but on the other hand, there is a transformative spirit in the public sphere. This is the bright spot for the rise of moderate Islam and Indonesian cultural Islam after the Reformation took place in 1998 (Noor 2015). The idea of "laying off women" as mothers while men are public humans indirectly explains Indonesian Islamic reviewers. Indonesian Islam is currently having a contest (contestation) between textual Islam which wants the Islamization of the public space by laying off women. As well as the de-Islamization of public space as a free space for anyone, including women. The struggle for public space in Aceh is carried out by reducing women's public roles and providing the most comprehensive possible space for men. After implementing Islamic sharia, it is evident that this kind of condition is taking place in Aceh. It has received a severe response from Acehnese women activists from both socio-religious organizations and Muslim scholars (Ansor 2016).

Politically changing conditions in Aceh cannot be separated from Islamism's power, which leads to the desire to formalize Islam in the public sphere.

Islamism itself is a political force that can distill substantial Islam itself. Islamism is a political movement, not Islam itself (Tibi 2012). Islamism is a movement that is closer to a political movement than a cultural movement. It is just that post Islamism, in fighting for its ideas, often uses cultural methods such as organizing educational activities, community assistance, and other religious activities such as recitation, *istighotsah*, and *tabligh Akbar*. All of what is done is a movement to make framing in the community that formalization matters are more critical than essential things because the people are more easily directed to things that are formal than substantial. (Tibi 2012, 8).

### **CONTROL FEMALE SEXUALITY, FREEING MEN**

As Amina Wadud said, women are menstruating, pregnant, giving birth, and breastfeeding. Therefore, women have limitations and are physically weak, so they need to get special treatment, namely being sent home. Meanwhile, the man does not experience all of that, so that he has the freedom that women do not have. Women become creatures that seem less human. It is known that men and women are only clothed in terms of women getting menstruation, getting pregnant, and giving birth. Meanwhile, what men can do, women can do too. The dimensions of sexuality are often equated with gender issues to be understood interchangeably (Husein 1994; Moghissi 2005).

Women in Southeast Asia are more “laid off” because this is what is considered the most following the traditions and values that have been constructed to society. The applied moral standards have received support from the political regime and religious authorities, thus directing women to always “maintain morals” - moral force, namely by not leaving the house much because leaving the house will bring harm to the women themselves. Women at home have automatically been seen as contributing to the development of public morality (Platt, Davies, dan Bennett 2018, 3).

With such conditions, it is making women’s sexuality truly controlled by society and the state. The freedom for women to choose a partner and marry, get a decent job, support community development, and support the family’s economy is challenged by the community’s moral standards. There is a contradiction between the desire to encourage women to take part in the economic arena and the moral will that leads to the “moral panics” of society if women are active outside the home as one of the family’s economic pillars strength. This is the contradiction of sexuality perpetuated to this day in patriarchal societies (Platt, Davies, dan Bennett 2018, 11).

Women are under strict moral control because they are in a position to be

monitored by social mechanics laws (a social mechanism), maintaining the completeness of the rituals applied and social transformation due to the demands of change. If women are active in public activities, then the family experiences morality-ethical problems, women will be considered the cause. However, if the family economy experiences problems due to the husband (spouse) being unable to meet their needs, it is also considered the cause of the household's breakdown. This causes the conflict between the operational needs of the public and domestic Indonesian women to continue to be a problem. Between public morals and the growth of gender justice are two things that are mutually confronted and strongly differentiated (Brenner 2011).

In fact, from the New Order government to the Reform Order until now, many women activists were very active in social activities, active in non-governmental organizations (NGO's), and socio-religious institutions. Since 2004, many women have been involved in political parties because they meet the 30% quota for women. They continue to move people from villages to villages and within the migrant community. However, social control as part of control over women continues even though it is clandestine, reducing women's activity hours by telling women to reduce their curfew. (Brenner 2011, 14).

The presence of women in the public sphere should be seen as part of what is said to be the democratization of the private space so that women are given the freedom to express their will either in the public space or in the private space. If many women want to get involved in politics, it is practically not deterred. Women are involved in making a living, become construction workers. Manual laborers still get their rights. Even if there are women who will not be involved in the public sphere, but in the domestic sphere, everything must be seen as part of a democratic choice between men and women. Such objective conditions for women are essential to obtain. Because so far, women who will be active in the public arena must get approval (permission) from their husbands.

Even though she is excellent, independent, intelligent, thoughtful, and so on, that woman is considered her nature to be a companion to her husband. The woman is not a leader. The women in the household are the wives and the caretakers of the household. Meanwhile, the man as her husband is the leader. The existence of men and women who are different in domestic roles and public roles is considered natural, even sunatullah. Such is the view of some of the Muslim community's views on women so that gender justice for women is still a struggle that has not become an actual reality in the Muslim community (Blackwood 2007).

The issue of control over women's sexuality continues to be perpetuated as

a government regime's political policy. In Indonesia since the Soeharto era, the ideology of Ibuism has become very popular. What is called good and great women are women who are only successful in managing the household, including children and husbands, safeguarding family assets, not those who are active in public activities? This is an ideology that has continued to develop until recently, so that when you see that women are active in the public world, but their families have a little problem, it is a mother (a woman) who will be the culprit, even though her husband is also active outside the home as well as her children. (Blackwood 2007, 4–5).

Domination over women using an unfair ideology of gender equality, being a woman sexually is in a very marginal position. The growing public opinion reinforces women's marginalization from the public sphere due to sexuality that women have been married by men because they are good women. She is considered successful and significant by the wider community not because of her prowess as a public official, a reliable breadwinner, a manager, or a political party leader. Women are married in a tradition that develops because they can appear as pious, simple, obedient women and are considered to maintain the integrity of their families (Blackwood 2007, 15).

From there, it is clear that the position of men is more dominant than women in sexuality. Men have much broader freedom than women, even though there are many "great" women in society. Women's lack of freedom can even be seen in marriage, which must be obedient to the family, especially men. The choice of whose spouse in many societies is still the authority of the male family. Women are directed according to the choice of the male family. Even if women can choose their partner, if later there are family problems, then women will be accused of being the cause because they do not obey the family-controlled by men, either husband or male siblings.

In the scriptural text, men and women have an equal position. Women can be leaders over men. On the other hand, men can become female leaders with various criteria such as having a leadership spirit, being fair, honest, responsible, and role models. This is referred to in Islamic activists and contemporary Muslim scholars such as Ali Bin Abdul Razik, Hasan Hanafi, Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid, and Mohammed Arkoun. However, in practice, women's position in public leadership is still questionable for reasons that are theological and ideological in nature, such as fears of moral damage and national decline, which are said to be due to (Elius 2010).

We can see how many women are active in the public arena. In the Islamic world we can see Aisyah, Zainab, Umm Salamah, Umm Kulsum, Khadijah very active in the public world. They become narrators of hadith, become

military fighters, become businessmen, all of which are in the public sphere. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, it can also be said that women who were active in military warfare, such as Tjut Nyak Dien, Cut Meutiah, RA. Kartini and Rahmawati, the wife of Soekarno, are active in the political-public stage, which do not get a hitch. Meanwhile, lately, there have been obstacles for women to be active in the public world because men have far more rights than women to be active in the public sphere. Women are domestic spaces (Elius 2010, 5).

Men get freedom sexually. Meanwhile, women are held hostage because of their sexuality. Many women's organizations with religious affiliations such as Aisyiyah, Muslimat, Nasyiatul Aisyiyah, Fatayat, Perempuan Sarikat Islam (Islamic Women) cannot change the overall image that the issue of sexuality does not necessarily mean that women must be controlled. Women do not have to be laid off while men are free to carry out social and public activities. Women's leadership can also be seen in several prosperous areas, such as in Kebumen, Karanganyar, Klaten, Banten, Tangerang, and Bone, led by the Governor and the Mayor / Regent of Women. However, women still cannot be considered free in public politics in contrast to men.

It can also be seen the success of active women in public spaces, such as volleyball, basketball, badminton, marathon running, swimming, and beautiful jumping. The women managed to become champions and bring fragrance to this nation and country. However, it is said that women's success in the world of sports is not considered to be their principal obligation. The principal obligation of women remains in the household. The success of women in sports is considered "the sacrifice of men for women." Meanwhile, if men succeed in achieving achievements, it will be considered as something they should be. This is a gender-biased ideology that is perpetuated by societal culture and politics (Hoodfar 2015).

The presence of women in various sports contested does not necessarily mean that the position of women is elevated in rank. Especially in conservatives' view, that sport is a colonial activity. It does not reflect part of Islamic culture except swimming, archery, and horse riding, which the Prophet said was taught for Muslims' health. Even though women are getting the attention of conservative clerics, such a thing is not following Islamic principles. Women are involved there, but because the various sports that are contested are considered not following Islamic law or Islamic traditions. This is a challenge among Indonesian Muslims and Southeast Asian Muslims (Hoodfar 2015, 55-56).

## CONCLUSION

All of the explanations presented above show serious challenges related to gender equality in a democratic political regime. The relationship between gender justice, which positions women as equal to men in terms of work, both public and domestic, and family management is the aspiration of women activists in Aceh and women in Indonesia in general. This is a concern because for a long time, since the new order took place until now, the gender justice that women activists expect has not been going well. There are theological, cultural, and political difficulties when women are positioned equally with men, even though religious arguments give women a noble place.

From the explanation that has been stated, the position of women is in a discriminatory space. Because the interpretation of Islamic sharia does not provide expansive space for women. Many interpretations of religious holy texts related to Islamic law shut down women from being active in the public sphere. Various regulations such as the forced wearing of the hijab, the obligation to wear Islamist clothes, the prohibition of wearing trousers, the prohibition of riding motorbikes, the prohibition of leaving the house with men who are not mahram and working in the public domain are models of control over women carried out by the Sharia Police. However, what is interesting is that women still do whatever is prohibited by Wilayatul Hisbah. Everything that women do can be a form of “women’s resistance” against Islamic sharia in Aceh.

With the condition of women in the public sphere being discriminated against due to the existence of the implementation of sharia politics, which received support from the political regime as well as religious leaders, religious leaders, and conservative religious groups, finally, Aceh women’s movement activists then fought over public space as a resistance to the policies of the political regime.

The involvement of women in public activities is a common thing. Even when many women are active in the public sphere, become breadwinners in offices, become teachers, lecturers, work in factories and become politicians, this is the most crucial challenge in looking back at the division of roles between men’s roles and women. Men are no longer dominant in taking public roles. Meanwhile, women are only placed in domestic roles. It is necessary to involve men in domestic roles because women have been involved in domestic and public roles. Women’s role in the end row between domestic roles and public roles is very burdensome for women.

It is time to deconstruct the differentiation of roles between men and women. Today, women are asked to take domestic roles, even though the family economy is messy, lacking and wallowing in debt to sustain the family. It is

time for men to be brave enough to allow women to be actively involved in public roles so that the possibility of social conflicts and conflicts caused by economic shortages does not cause many family breakdowns. It is necessary to look back on traditional values that have been embraced as a kind of absolute value so that it places women who are more asked to take on domestic roles.

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