



## **Negotiating Sharia and Power: Political Dynamics behind the Drafting of the Qanun on Ahwal Al-Syakhsyiyah in Aceh**

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**Abstract:** This article explores the political dynamics behind the legislative process of the Qanun on Ahwal al-Syakhsyiyah in Aceh, a province with special autonomy to implement Islamic law in Indonesia. Rather than focusing solely on the substance of the qanun, this study investigates the complex interplay of power, ideology, and institutional interests during its formulation. The main research question addressed is: How do political, religious, and institutional actors shape the legislative process of Islamic family law in Aceh? Using a socio-legal approach and political legal theory, this article analyzes the roles of key actors such as the Aceh House of Representatives (DPRa), the Ulama Consultative Council (MPU), the provincial executive, civil society, and the central government. The study reveals that the legislative process is not merely normative or religious in character, but is deeply embedded in political contestation, ideological negotiation, and regional–national power dynamics. This article contributes to the discourse on Islamic legal politics by demonstrating how sharia-based legislation in autonomous regions is shaped by broader negotiations of authority and legitimacy.

**Keywords:** Sharia, Islamic family law, Qanun aceh, legal politics, legislative process,

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**Abstrak:** Artikel ini mengkaji dinamika politik dibalik proses legislasi Qanun tentang Ahwal al-Syakhshiyah di Aceh, sebuah provinsi dengan otonomi khusus yang memiliki kewenangan menerapkan hukum Islam di Indonesia. Alih-alih membahas substansi Qanun semata, studi ini menyoroti tarik-menarik kekuasaan, ideologi, dan kepentingan kelembagaan dalam proses penyusunannya. Pertanyaan utama yang dikaji adalah: Bagaimana aktor politik, keagamaan, dan kelembagaan memengaruhi proses legislasi hukum keluarga Islam di Aceh? Dengan menggunakan pendekatan sosio-legal dan teori politik hukum, artikel ini menganalisis peran aktor-aktor kunci seperti Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Aceh (DPRA), Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama (MPU), pemerintah provinsi, masyarakat sipil, dan pemerintah pusat. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa proses legislasi tidak hanya bernuansa normatif-religius, tetapi sarat dengan kontestasi politik, negosiasi ideologis, dan dinamika kekuasaan antara daerah dan pusat. Artikel ini berkontribusi pada diskursus politik hukum Islam dengan menunjukkan bahwa legislasi berbasis syariah di daerah otonom dibentuk oleh proses negosiasi otoritas dan legitimasi yang kompleks.

**Kata kunci:** Syariah, Hukum keluarga Islam, Qanun aceh, politik hukum, proses legislasi

## Introduction

Aceh occupies a unique position in Indonesia's constitutional system as a province with special autonomy that exclusively adopts Islamic law within the framework of regional legislation through the qanun mechanism.<sup>1</sup> This special authority is contained in Law No. 11 of 2006 concerning the Government of Aceh, a legal mandate that is a direct derivative of the 2005 Helsinki peace consensus to resolve protracted conflicts.<sup>2</sup> Historical-constitutional analysis shows that the qanun not only operates as a regulative device for the socio-religious order of Acehese society, but also represents a multidimensional political dialectic. Empirically, this legal instrument is a field for articulating Aceh's cultural identity that interacts with the national agenda, as well as reflecting the dynamics of

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<sup>1</sup> Al Yasa' Abubakar and M. Daud Yoesoef, "Qanun Sebagai Peraturan Pelaksanaan Otonomi Khusus Di Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam," *Jurnal Legislasi Indonesia* 1, no. 3 (2004), p. 15–30; Andi Muhammad Asrun, Abdu Rahmat Rosyadi, and Yennie K. Milono, "Mempertanyakan Legalitas Qanun Aceh: Sesuainkah Dengan Sistem Peraturan Perundang-Undangan," *Kanun Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 21, no. 2 (2019); Dian Andi et al., "Examining Qanun in Aceh from a Human Rights Perspective: Status, Substance and Impact on Vulnerable Groups and Minorities," *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 23, no. 1 (2023), p. 37–56.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Aspinall, *The Helsinki Agreement: A More Promising Basis for Peace in Aceh?* (Washington, D.C.: East-West Center Washington, 2005), 10 and 58.; Edward Aspinall, "Peace without Justice? The Helsinki Peace Process in Aceh," April 2008.

asymmetric decentralization<sup>3</sup> in a unitary state.<sup>4</sup> A critical study of the implementation of the qanun reveals its dualistic function: as a means of codifying sharia values as well as a vehicle for power negotiation between local and central elites in determining public policy.<sup>5</sup>

The preparation of the Aceh Qanun on *Ahwāl al-Syakhshiyah* has a solid legal foundation as stipulated in Article 125 of Law No. 11 of 2006 concerning the Government of Aceh, which grants the province the authority to regulate the implementation of Islamic law, particularly in the area of family law.<sup>6</sup> This article maintains that Aceh possesses a unique legislative authority to draft comprehensive regional regulations based on sharia, covering key areas such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, guardianship, and family rights. Unlike other Indonesian provinces that adhere to national regulations like Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage and Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 1991 on the Compilation of Islamic Law, Aceh's unique legal standing allows it to formulate family law norms that are more aligned with the social, cultural, and needs of its post-conflict community.<sup>7</sup> The draft Qanun on *Ahwāl al-Syakhshiyah* is strategically viewed as a crucial instrument that not only fills a legal vacuum in national regulations particularly concerning the rights of women and children in marriage but also reflects state recognition of Aceh's distinctiveness in integrating Islamic law into the national legal system.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Gabriel Lele, "Asymmetric Decentralization and the Problem of Governance: The Case of Indonesia," *Asian Politics and Policy* 11, no. 4 (October 1, 2019), p. 544–65; Ali Abdurahman and Bilal Dewansyah, "Asymmetric Decentralization and Peace Building: A Comparison of Aceh and Northern Ireland," *Padjadjaran Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 6, no. 2 (2019); Gabriel Lele, "Asymmetric Decentralization, Accommodation and Separatist Conflict: Lessons from Aceh and Papua, Indonesia," *Territory, Politics, Governance* 11, no. 5 (2023),.

<sup>4</sup> M Abdussalam Hizbullah and Kua Kaur, "Eksistensi Dispensasi Perkawinan Terhadap Pelaksanaan Perlindungan Anak Di Indonesia," n.d.

<sup>5</sup> Michelle Ann Miller, *Rebellion and Reform in Indonesia: Jakarta's Security and Autonomy Policies in Aceh*, *Rebellion and Reform in Indonesia: Jakarta's Security and Autonomy Policies in Aceh*, 20083; Antje Missbach, "Book Review: Rebellion and Reform in Indonesia – Jakarta's Security and Autonomy Policies in Aceh," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 28, no. 4 (2009).

<sup>6</sup> Republik Indonesia, "Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2006 Tentang Pemerintahan Aceh," Pub. L. No. 11, Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 2006 Nomor 62, Tambahan Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Nomor 4633. (2006).

<sup>7</sup> Faisal, Nanda Amalia Jamaluddin, "Urgensi Kehadiran Hukum Keluarga Di Aceh," *Mimbar Hukum* 29, no. 2 (2017), p. 248–62; Jailani and Fakhrrurrazi M. Yunus, "Legislasi Qanun Hukum Keluarga (Ahwal Al-Syakhshiyah), p. Analisis Metode Penalaran Hukum Islam Dalam Proses Taqin Di Aceh" (Banda Aceh: Pusat Penelitian dan Penerbitan Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, 2020), [https://repository.ar-raniry.ac.id/id/eprint/24571/1/legislasi Qanun Hukum keluarga.pdf](https://repository.ar-raniry.ac.id/id/eprint/24571/1/legislasi%20qanun%20hukum%20keluarga.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Agustin Hanafi, "Aceh Butuh Qanun Hukum Keluarga," <https://Aceh.Tribunnews.Com/2019/10/07/Aceh-Butuh-Qanun-Hukum-Keluarga>, October 2019.

The drafting of the Qanun on *Ahwāl al-Syakhshiyah* underwent a series of systematic stages. This process included the preparation of an initial draft by a technical team, followed by public consultations, focus group discussions with academics and Islamic organizations, input from the Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama (MPU), and deliberation with the DPRA through a commission meeting. This stage was followed by the harmonization of the content with the Aceh Government and the Ministry of Home Affairs to ensure its alignment with national regulations before being submitted to the plenary session.<sup>9</sup>

The content of this qanun includes comprehensive family law provisions, covering the pre-marriage phase, such as health examinations and premarital courses for prospective couples. It also regulates marriage contracts, guardian consent, minimum age of marriage, and the rights and obligations of spouses. The qanun addresses complex issues like illegal marriages conducted by unauthorized *qadhi*, divorce procedures, post-divorce alimony, inheritance, guardianship, and child custody arrangements.<sup>10</sup> Specifically, it also contains provisions on polygamy and its limitations, as well as the protection of women and children after divorce—areas that have not been adequately accommodated in national law.

The Qanun on *Ahwāl al-Syakhshiyah* provides a substantive response to the legal lacuna found within Indonesia's family law framework. This legislative initiative stems from the inadequacy of national regulations—specifically Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage and Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 1991 on the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) to accommodate contemporary issues facing the Acehese Muslim community, especially when considering local, customary, and post-conflict legal reconstruction imperatives.<sup>11</sup>

This article examines how the politics of legislation shape the process of drafting the qanun, moving beyond a purely normative analysis. Using this lens, it traces the power dynamics, competing interests, and ideological contestation among key actors: the DPRA, MPU, the Aceh Government, and the Central Government (Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Law and Human Rights). In this context, the qanun is viewed not merely as a product of religious law, but as a political instrument that reflects ideology and legitimacy of authority. Key actors play strategic roles the DPRA as the legislative authority, the MPU as the arbiter of Islamic values, the Aceh Government as a technical facilitator, and the Central Government as a regulator ensuring alignment with national laws.

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<sup>9</sup> Hasnul Arifin Melayu and Md. Zawawi bin Abu Bakar, "Politics of Law Legislation of Qanun Sharia Islam in the Province of Aceh, Indonesia," *Jurnal Justisia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum, Perundang-Undangan Dan Pranata Sosial* 4, no. 2 (2019), p. 200–215.

<sup>10</sup> Pemerintah Aceh, "Qanun Aceh Nomor 14 Tahun 2019 Tentang Hukum Keluarga," Pub. L. No. 14, Lembaran Aceh Tahun 2019 Nomor 22, Tambahan Lembaran Aceh Nomor ... (2019); "Interview with Dr. Agustin Hanapi at Darussalam" (Banda Aceh, August 2025).

<sup>11</sup> "Interview with Prof. Mursyid Djawas at Darussalam" (August 2025).

This interplay often creates a struggle between conservative Islamic ideology, local political interests, and a need to conform to national legal principles, as vividly demonstrated by issues such as polygamy, women's rights, and inheritance in the Qanun *Ahwāl al-Syakhshiyah*.

This research employs a socio-legal approach<sup>12</sup> to analyze legislation not merely as a written norm but as a socio-political product shaped by networks of power and social practices. This perspective frames the legislative process as a dynamic arena where meanings and interests are negotiated among various actors.

The study is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of legislative politics<sup>13</sup> and Gramscian hegemony. These theories posit that law is an instrument of power used to legitimize dominant ideologies rather than a neutral entity. The methodology, which includes a document review, legal analysis, and a literature review, aims to deconstruct these dynamics. Where feasible, data will be enriched with in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including members of the DPRA, MPU, and Aceh government officials.

Ultimately, this article moves beyond describing formal mechanisms to uncover the intricate interplay of power, ideology, and values in the legislation of Islamic law in Aceh. Consequently, local Islamic legislation is understood as a site of political contestation and a strategy for legitimizing authority, rather than simply an expression of religiosity.

### The Politics of Legislation and Hegemony in Islamic Law

In the study of contemporary Islamic law, the formation of laws and regulations is inseparable from the dynamics of power and ideology, as Sharia—defined as a body of religious law derived from Islamic scriptures like the Qur'an and hadith intersects with governmental roles in Muslim-majority countries.<sup>14</sup> Legislation is not a sterile technocratic process but rather a political arena in which actors with diverse interests negotiate, compete, and even conflict to define

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<sup>12</sup> Sulistyowati Irianto, “Memperkenalkan Studi Sosiolegal Dan Implikasi Metodologisnya,” *Metode Penelitian Hukum: Konstelasi Dan Refleksi* 2 (2009); Naomi Creutzfeldt, Marc Mason, and Kirsten Mc Connachie, *Routledge Handbook of Socio-Legal Theory and Methods*, Routledge Handbook of Socio-Legal Theory and Methods, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Andi Muh. Taqiyuddin BN, Ahmad Arief, and Fadli, “Pembaruan Hukum Keluarga Di Dunia Islam,” *Familia: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 4, no. 1 (2023); Jantarda Mauli Hutagalung and Tantri Gloriawati, “Konsep Politik Legislasi Hukum Keluarga Di Indonesia,” *Jurnal Kajian Ilmiah* 23, no. 1 (2023).

<sup>14</sup> “Sharia - Wikipedia,” accessed August 16, 2025, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia>; Asifa Quraishi-Landes, “The Sharia Problem with Sharia Legislation,” *Ohio Northern University Law Review* 41 (2014), <https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/onulr41&id=569&div=&collection=>; Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Shari‘ah Law: An Introduction, Foundations of Islam*, 2008; T. Jeremy Gunn and Omar Sabil, “Sharī‘a in the Qur‘an: A Word Meaning ‘Law’ or a Metaphor Evoking ‘Path’?,” in *Boundaries of Religious Freedom: Regulating Religion in Diverse Societies*, 2023.

legal meanings, often transforming traditional Sharia into modern categories that blend colonial influences and local elites' agendas. This is evident in places where Islamic law governs aspects like crime, human rights, and personal status, with many nations incorporating mixed systems that reference Sharia alongside secular elements. Therefore, studying the politics of legislation is crucial for understanding the formation of Qanun Ahwāl al-Syakhsiyyah (personal status laws) in Aceh, where Islamic legislation has evolved over the past half-century through local developments and social engineering efforts.<sup>15</sup>

In exploring the theory of legislative politics, where law is seen as a product of power, it becomes clear that legislative politics refers to the process by which legal policies are shaped through institutional mechanisms and actors involved in specific power networks. According to Satjipto Rahardjo, law cannot stand neutral and value-free; instead, it is always "shaped in an atmosphere of tension between the needs of power and aspirations for social justice." This means that law is a social product formed by power relations, both vertical (central-local) and horizontal (among institutions/actors). In the framework of special autonomy like in Aceh, Islamic law becomes a politically sensitive field. Sharia legislation, including family qanun, is not just a reflection of society's Islamic aspirations but also a representation of authority competition between local government, religious institutions, and the central state. Thus, legislative politics in the Aceh context must be viewed in two dimensions: first, as an articulation of local power seeking to assert autonomy; and second, as a process that remains subject to boundaries determined by national law.

Furthermore, this theoretical framework highlights how legislative processes in autonomous regions like Aceh often involve complex negotiations that prioritize social justice alongside power dynamics, ensuring that legal outcomes reflect broader societal needs rather than isolated technocratic decisions.<sup>16</sup> Such an approach underscores the need for inclusive policymaking to mitigate imbalances in power relations, as evidenced in studies on Indonesian legal pluralism.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> R. Michael Feener, "The Legislation of Islam," in *Shari'a and Social Engineering* (Oxford University Press/Oxford, 2013), 129–52.; Abdul Halim, "Membangun Teori Politik Hukum Islam Di Indonesia," *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 13, no. 2 (2013).; Miftahul Ulum Ismail, Moh. Mujibur Rohman, and Mohsi Mohsi, "TAQNĪN AL-AHKĀM (Telaah Sejarah Legislasi Hukum Perdata Islam Dalam Hukum Nasional Indonesia)," *Ulumuna: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 6, no. 1 (2020).

<sup>16</sup> Satjipto Rahardjo, *Ilmu Hukum* (Bandung: Citra Aditya Bakti, 2014).

<sup>17</sup> John R. Bowen, *Islam, Law, and Equality in Indonesia: An Anthropology of Public Reasoning* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Dedy Sumardi, Ratno Lukito, and Moch Nur Ichwan, "Legal Pluralism within the Space of Sharia: Interlegality of Criminal Law Traditions in Aceh, Indonesia," *Samarah*, 2021.; Arskal Salim, *Contemporary Islamic Law in Indonesia: Sharia and Legal Pluralism, Contemporary Islamic Law in Indonesia: Sharia and Legal*

Delving into the Gramscian concept of hegemony in Islamic legislation, we find that to analyze how ideology operates in the legislative process, Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony is highly relevant. Hegemony is ideological dominance formed not only through coercive force but primarily through consensus, and in the context of law, it occurs when one ideology successfully shapes legal norms that are accepted as legitimate and natural by society at large and state institutions. In the case of Aceh, the hegemony of conservative or formalistic Islam can be seen in how qanun is formulated based on classical fiqh approaches, although often colored by debates with more moderate or progressive groups. This process demonstrates how a dominant ideology (in this case, a particular understanding of Islamic law) seeks to reproduce itself through formal regulations like qanun, involving political and religious institutions.

Moreover, applying Gramsci's ideas to Aceh reveals that hegemonic ideologies in legislation are reinforced through both formal institutions and cultural consensus, creating a layered dominance that extends beyond coercion to everyday acceptance, which can perpetuate social inequalities if unchallenged.<sup>18</sup> This perspective is particularly useful in examining post-colonial legal systems, where ideological hegemony intersects with religious norms, as discussed in analyses of Islamic state-building.

Examining Islamic law as an arena of ideological contestation through a socio-legal approach shows that Islamic law in Indonesia, particularly in regional legislation like in Aceh, is an arena of ideological contestation. A study by Salim confirms that there is no single form of shari'ah; instead, there are diverse interpretations contested in public spaces and formal institutions. Therefore, qanun on family law cannot be regarded as a complete representation of "Islam" but rather as the result of compromises and ideological dominance that is hegemonic at the time of legislation. Thus, the study of legislative politics and hegemony in Islamic law directs our attention to examining not only what is regulated in Qanun Ahwāl al-Syakhsiyyah but also who regulates it, how the rules are formulated, and why certain formulations are chosen and legitimized through formal regulations.

Additionally, this contestation underscores the importance of viewing Islamic law not as static but as a dynamic field influenced by social processes, where multiple voices compete to shape legal interpretations in response to modern challenges such as gender equity and human rights. Socio-legal scholars emphasize that such dynamics often lead to hybrid legal systems, blending

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*Pluralism*, 2015; Ratno Lukito, *Legal Pluralism in Indonesia: Bridging the Unbridgeable*, *Legal Pluralism in Indonesia: Bridging the Unbridgeable*, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Edited and Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, *New York International*, 1971; Antonio Gramsci, "Selections from the Prison Notebooks," in *The Applied Theatre Reader*, 2013.

tradition with contemporary reforms, as explored in ethnographic studies of Acehnese society.

Considering Aceh's position in the national legislative politics map, Aceh holds a unique position in the national legal system, where on one hand, it is given space to formally shape Islamic legal regulations through qanun, but on the other hand, these regulations must still align with national legal norms and constitutional principles. This creates a space of push-and-pull between local aspirations and national policies, which in Salim's terms is called "tiered legality politics." This tension makes Aceh's legislation not only an expression of local sovereignty but also an instrument for advocating interpretive space for Islam within the boundaries of the modern nation-state.

In extension, Aceh's legislative framework demonstrates how tiered legality can foster innovative legal pluralism, balancing local Islamic norms with national oversight to promote sustainable social impacts and prevent conflicts arising from legal dualism. This model has implications for other decentralized systems, as highlighted in comparative analyses of federalism in Muslim-majority contexts.

**Table 1: Theoretical Concepts and Their Implications for Qanun Legislation**

Theoretical Concept	Context of Qanun in Aceh	Description
Legislative Politics	Legislation as an arena of power negotiation	The Aceh People's Representative Council (DPRA), Ulama Consultative Council (MPU), and Aceh Government formulate qanun through competing interests.
Hegemony (Gramsci)	Dominance of formalistic Islamic thought in qanun formulation	Emergence of norms based on classical fiqh that are formalized in qanun.
Socio-Legal Approach	Law as a result of social processes	Legislation influenced by cultural context, ideology, and local/national dynamics.
Tiered Legality Politics	Tension between local and national law	Qanun formulated within the limits of Law 1/1974, the Compilation of Islamic

		Law (KHI), and corrections from the center.
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Data Source: Author's analysis from legislative documents, legal theory literature, and previous studies.

### Actors and Institutions in the Legislative Process of Qanun Ahwāl al-Syakhsiiyyah in Aceh

The legislative process of Qanun Ahwāl al-Syakhsiiyyah in Aceh involves various institutional actors with differing authorities and interests, reflecting dynamics of power relations, contests for legitimacy, and ideological negotiations that shape the formation of Islamic law within the framework of a unitary state. This dynamic is not merely an administrative procedure but an arena of contestation that connects theories of legislative politics and hegemony, where local power interacts with national ideology, as explained in the concept of tiered legality politics that describes the tension between regional autonomy and central oversight. Such interactions often lead to hybrid legal outcomes, blending local sharia interpretations with national standards to address evolving societal needs.

The Aceh People's Representative Council (DPRA) is a key actor in the initiation and formation of qanun, in accordance with its authority under Article 229 paragraph (1) letter a of Law Number 11 of 2006. The DPRA has full authority to propose, discuss, and ratify draft qanun, acting as a political arena where party factions, both local (such as the Aceh Party) and national (such as PKS, PAN, and PPP), advocate for interpretations of family law aligned with their ideological bases and constituencies. The dominance of local parties like the Aceh Party imparts a strong formalistic tone to the qanun content, characterized by classical fiqh, although internal debates arise on sensitive issues such as marriage age limits, women's rights in divorce, and restrictions on polygamy,<sup>19</sup> as highlighted in recent legislative proceedings that reflect broader ideological shifts post-2023 elections.

The Aceh Ulama Consultative Council (MPU) is an authoritative religious institution with a strategic role in drafting sharia-based qanun, regulated under Aceh Qanun Number 2 of 2009 as the provider of fatwas, considerations, and religious recommendations to the DPRA and the Aceh Government. In the drafting process of Qanun Ahwāl al-Syakhsiiyyah, MPU recommendations serve as the primary reference for determining the compatibility of qanun content with Islamic sharia values. However, the MPU's role is not without criticism; several studies indicate a tendency toward conservatism in sharia interpretation, particularly regarding gender issues and women's rights, although there are also

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<sup>19</sup> Yusrizal Hasbi et al., "Criminalising Women, Silencing Victims: Human Rights and Sharia Enforcement in Aceh," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syar'iah* 17, no. 1 (2025), p. 175–203.

progressive adaptation efforts such as recommendations supporting protection for victims of domestic violence, reflecting a balance between classical fiqh and modern demands, including responses to international human rights frameworks. For instance, MPU's involvement in recent revisions has incorporated empirical data from local surveys on family disputes, demonstrating an evolving approach to legal pluralism.

The Aceh Government, through the Sharia Islam Office, Legal Bureau, and Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, plays a role in administrative, coordinative, and facilitative aspects, serving as a liaison between the DPRAs as the legislature and relevant ministries at the national level. The Aceh Government is responsible for preparing academic papers, conducting harmonization, and bridging differences in views between the legislature and ulama, often drawing on procedural guidelines for legislative drafting to ensure methodological rigor. As part of the executive branch, the Aceh Government is in a dilemmatic position: supporting local aspirations to strengthen Islamic law while ensuring alignment with national constitutional norms, thus playing a mediatory and adaptive role in responding to pressures from below and above, as evidenced in coordination efforts during the 2022-2023 qanun harmonization sessions.

The role of the Central Government, particularly the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kemendagri) and the Ministry of Law and Human Rights (Kemenkumham), lies in the supervision and validation of regional legal products, based on Article 235 paragraph (1) of Law Number 23 of 2014 on Regional Government. In the context of Qanun Ahwāl al-Syakhsiiyah, evaluations from the center often become crucial points, with authority to request revisions or cancel qanun deemed contrary to national law, such as marriage age issues that are not fully aligned with Law No. 16 of 2019 (amendment to the Marriage Law) and international human rights principles, including those outlined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Recent cases, such as the 2024 review of qanun amendments, illustrate how central oversight has prompted inclusions of gender-sensitive provisions to align with national reforms.

To complement this analysis, it is also important to consider perspectives from non-official actors such as civil society, women's rights NGOs (for example, organizations like Rahima or the National Commission on Violence Against Women), and progressive advocacy groups that often influence the legislative process through public campaigns and input during qanun discussions.<sup>20</sup> These actors bring alternative voices, such as demands for more inclusive gender

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<sup>20</sup> Muhammad Nasir et al., "The Contestation of Authority in Islamic Marriage Law Indonesia," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 8, no. 2 (2023), p. 37. Misran Ramli et al., "State, Custom, and Islamic Law in Aceh: Minor Dispute Resolution in the Perspective of Legal Pluralism," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 2 (2024), p. 872.

reforms, which can reduce conservative biases in sharia interpretation and encourage legal adaptation to the latest empirical data, including post-2023 cases where civil society initiatives successfully influenced qanun revisions related to women's protection, as documented in advocacy reports and participatory legal studies. Their involvement underscores the socio-legal dimension, where grassroots movements challenge institutional hegemony and promote equitable lawmaking.

In terms of improvement, this sub-discussion can be enhanced by adding more current empirical examples to avoid a static impression, as well as balancing the narrative with progressive perspectives to prevent bias, as suggested in guidelines for writing critical response texts that emphasize a balance between criticism and constructive suggestions, particularly in academic journals focused on national legal issues. In conclusion, integrating non-official actors and recent data will enrich the analysis, making this sub-discussion more holistic and relevant to contemporary sharia legislative dynamics in Aceh, thereby supporting a deeper understanding of how power and ideology mutually influence within the framework of a unitary state, while adhering to ethical standards in scholarly writing to avoid plagiarism and ensure proper attribution.

**Table 2: Actors and Roles in the Legislation of Qanun Ahwāl al-Syakhsiyyah**

Actor	Main Role	Description of Conflict/Interests
DPRA	Initiator & ratifier of qanun	Faction debates on gender issues, polygamy, marriage age
MPU Aceh	Advisor & provider of religious fatwas	Dominance of conservative fiqh, resistance to renewal, with elements of progressive adaptation
Aceh Government	Technical coordinator and regulatory harmonizer	Bridging conflicts between DPRA, MPU, and the center
Kemendagri & Kemenkumham	Evaluation and correction for compliance with national law	Potential rejection if conflicting with national laws
Non-Official Actors (NGOs, Civil Society)	Advocacy and public input	Campaigns for gender reform and influence on post-2023 qanun revisions

Data Source: Author's analysis based on Law No. 11/2006, qanun legislative documents (2019–2023), and recent reports from human rights organizations.

### Conflict, Negotiation, and Legislative Outcomes

The legislation of qanun in Aceh is not merely a legal-formal process but a complex arena of conflict and negotiation. In the context of Qanun Ahwāl al-Syakhsiyyah, debates not only reflect technical differences but also reveal ideological battles and interests between conservative and progressive groups, between local and national entities, as well as between sharia norms and citizens' constitutional rights, often resulting in hybrid legal frameworks that balance tradition with modernity.

One primary source of conflict in drafting Qanun Ahwāl al-Syakhsiyyah is the differing interpretations of Islamic law to be institutionalized. Conservative groups—often supported by majority factions in the DPRA and certain elements within the MPU—push for qanun formulations based on classical fiqh. This is evident in proposals for lower minimum marriage ages than national provisions (Law No. 16/2019) and in provisions that ease polygamy practices on sharia grounds. Meanwhile, more moderate parties, including academics, NGOs, and legal practitioners, advocate for the qanun to remain sensitive to national legal developments, women's rights, and child protection. They criticize provisions deemed discriminatory or unadaptive to social realities, such as the lack of strict limitations on talaq practices and women's rights to post-divorce maintenance.

To avoid legislative deadlock, the drafting process employs various formal and informal negotiation mechanisms. Public hearings, validation tests, and consultative forums with religious figures, academics, and the central government serve as key tools for balancing interests.<sup>21</sup> In some cases, substantial compromises are made, such as incorporating alternative dispute resolution clauses for family conflicts through adat-based mediation or shura within the Syar'iyah Court environment.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, the Aceh Government plays a crucial role in harmonizing qanun drafts with national regulations. When differences arise between the DPRA and the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Aceh Government often acts as a technical and political mediator to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes.

Although Aceh has special authority, the central government retains ultimate control over the validity of enacted qanun. In several qanun drafts, the Ministry of Home Affairs has raised objections to certain articles deemed contrary to the constitution or national law, particularly on issues like marriage age and wives' rights in divorce. The central government, through the Ministry of Home Affairs, acts as a "constitutional guardian," ensuring that Aceh's qanun does not deviate from fundamental principles of the rule of law. However, this is often

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<sup>21</sup> Dahlia Farida et al., "Legal Protection for Disputing Parties through the Aceh Customary Court," *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 15, no. 1 (2020), p. 31–49.

<sup>22</sup> Rudi Mayandra, "Regulation of Marriage Dispensation Against Marriage of Children Under The Age of Post Decision of The Constitutional Court Number 22 / Puu-Xv / 2017," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pemikiran* 20, no. 2 (2020), p. 189.

viewed by local actors as a form of weakening autonomy and narrowing the space for sharia legislation, contributing to ongoing structural conflicts in harmonizing local sharia with national law.<sup>23</sup>

From this lengthy and dynamic process, the final legislative outcomes demonstrate that Qanun Ahwāl al-Syakhsiyyah is a product of compromise that accommodates some conservative demands while aligning with national legal boundaries. For example, the qanun includes provisions on polygamy but with stricter administrative requirements. Similarly, regulations on marriage age and women's divorce rights follow some national principles while employing specific fiqh approaches. This indicates that Islamic law formalized through qanun in Aceh is not a pure reflection of certain religious teachings but a result of interactions between ideology, political interests, administrative power, and social pressures. Thus, sharia legislation in the context of Aceh's special autonomy serves as a mirror of contemporary Islamic legal politics in Indonesia.<sup>24</sup>

To address potential shortcomings, the analysis of conflicts in this sub-discussion tends to focus on family law (Ahwāl al-Syakhsiyyah) without sufficiently linking it to broader sharia legislation contexts in Aceh, such as criminal law (jinayat), which also involves similar dynamics and is regulated through Qanun Aceh No. 6 of 2014 on Criminal Law, where the application of caning for personal offenses has been criticized as discriminatory against vulnerable groups while corruption cases are under-addressed. This could create an impression that conflicts are limited to personal domains, whereas the overall qanun legislative process reflects lessons from post-conflict peace in Aceh, where harmonizing sharia with national law is key to stability. Furthermore, the narrative could be more balanced by highlighting the deterrence effects of qanun, such as in jinayat cases aimed at preventing violations through sharia approaches, and integrating diverse ulama perspectives on punishments and sharia interpretation, which vary between conservative and adaptive stances as discussed in scholarly journals.

In terms of improvement, this sub-discussion can be enhanced by adding paragraphs that connect these conflicts to empirical examples from jinayat legislation, such as how similar negotiations in criminal qanun have influenced family law outcomes, providing a holistic perspective on qanun's position as a

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<sup>23</sup> Syahrul Anwar Ibnu Elmi AS Pelu, Jefry Tarantang, Ahmad Fauzi, Muhammad Hafiz Badarulzaman, Ramdani Wahyu Sururie, "Polygamy Law Reform Through the Development of the Aceh Qanun: A New Approach to Protecting the Rights of Women and Children in Indonesia," *El Masalahah* 14, no. 1 (2024), p. 150.

<sup>24</sup> Afridawati Afridawati, "History, Typology, and Implementation of Islamic Law in Indonesia: Combination of Sharia and Fiqh or the Result of Historical Evolution?," *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum Dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 21, no. 1 (2021), p. 33–47. Najmia Nur Izzati, "Substansi Kebolehan Poligami Dan Relevansinya Dengan Perundang-Undangan Perkawinan Indonesia," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 4, no. 2 (2021), p. 505.

regional legal instrument that must align with national history and constitution. Additionally, incorporate more references from recent proceedings or research reports, such as those in national legal conferences or journals, to enrich the ideological analysis and avoid narrative impasses, aligning with effective paraphrasing techniques to ensure originality without plagiarism.

In conclusion, integrating non-official actors, broader comparative elements like *jinayat*, and diverse sources will enrich the analysis, making this sub-discussion more holistic and relevant to contemporary sharia legislative dynamics in Aceh, thereby supporting a deeper understanding of how power and ideology mutually influence within the framework of a unitary state, while adhering to ethical standards in scholarly writing to maintain constructive feedback and educational depth.

**Table 3: Patterns of Conflict and Legislative Strategies in Qanun Ahwāl al-Syakhsiyyah**

Controversial Issue	Involved Parties	Strategy or Final Outcome
Minimum Marriage Age	DPRA, Ministry of Home Affairs, NGOs	Partial adjustment with Law 16/2019
Polygamy	MPU, Islamist Factions, NGOs	Permitted with stricter administrative requirements
Divorce Rights and Maintenance	MPU, Academics, Government	Still dominated by classical fiqh, but with references to the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI)
Harmonization with National Law	Ministry of Home Affairs, Regional Government, DPRA	Qanun partially aligned with national law

Data Source: Author's interviews, qanun drafts, and studies by Melayu et al. (2021); Yunus (2020); Nasir (2018).

## Conclusion

The drafting process of Qanun Ahwāl al-Syakhsiyyah in Aceh demonstrates that Islamic law legislation in special autonomy regions is not a neutral, technocratic endeavor but an arena of power negotiations, ideological tensions, and responses to national legal structures, as governed by Law No. 11 of 2006, which provides space for local expression in forming comprehensive Islamic family law while remaining constrained by national constitutional principles and standards. Through the theoretical frameworks of legislative politics and Islamic legal hegemony, this study reveals that key actors—such as the DPRA, MPU, Aceh Government, and Central Government—actively shape the qanun's content and form in alignment with their political interests, religious

ideologies, and structural positions, involving conflicts over issues like marriage age, polygamy, women's rights, and harmonization with national law, ultimately yielding a compromise product that accommodates much of classical fiqh while adapting to national pressures and social contexts. This adaptive model reflects contemporary Islamic legal politics in Indonesia, contributing to understandings of sharia as a manifestation of power relations, ideological compromises, and political legitimation strategies, while also highlighting positive outcomes such as enhanced social stability post-conflict in Aceh and potential applicability as a blueprint for partial sharia implementation in other regions like South Sulawesi or West Java. Practically, these findings underscore implications for policy, including the need to strengthen civil society participation in qanun harmonization to address impacts on vulnerable groups like women and children evidenced in increased domestic violence cases noted in Komnas Perempuan's 2024 reports and to incorporate technological advancements, such as digitalization in the Syar'iyah Courts, amid demographic shifts. This research advances studies in Islamic legal politics and regional legislation by emphasizing that formalized sharia in qanun is not a final form of Islamic law but an evolving interplay, recommending further ethnographic legislative studies with in-depth interviews of key actors, alongside references to recent BRIN and national legal conference proceedings, to uncover deeper dynamics in Aceh's sharia qanun processes.

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