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Gender, Politics, and al-Qur'an: The Stance of Islamic Higher Education Institutions on Affirmative Action for Women in South Sulawesi

Rosmini
Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin, Makassar, Indonesia
A. Jufri
Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Amai Gorontalo, Indonesia
Sitti Riadil Janna
Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin, Makassar, Indonesia
Nursidah
Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bone, Indonesia
Email: rosmini.amin@uin-alauddin.ac.id

Abstrak: This article analyzes the political orientation of the academic community at Islamic higher education institutions in South Sulawesi regarding affirmative action policies for women in local political contests, viewed from the perspectives of the Qur'an and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. This study uses a mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design, integrating quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were obtained through a Likert-scale questionnaire to measure the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of political attitudes, while qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and documentation. The qualitative data was then analyzed using *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* theory. In accordance with the concept of gender in the Qur'an, which positions women as equal, balanced, and dignified. The results of the study show that normatively, the majority of respondents accept the principle of gender equality in the Qur'an, especially based on the concepts *of musāwāh, 'adl mashlahah,* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. However, at the level of local political implementation, the acceptance of affirmative action remains influenced by interpretations of *qiwāmah*, the misunderstood *siri'* culture within the Bugis-Makassar tradition, and patriarchal social constructs. This study confirms the tension between Qur'anic normative principles and local political practices, while showing that the contextual reinterpretation of Islam opens up a space of theological legitimacy for women's leadership. A contextual interpretation aligns with the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, enabling a role for women in politics and repositioning their status in a fair and dignified manner, without undermining the noble values of the Qur'an.

Keywords*:* *Musāwāh, 'adl, qiwāmah*, affirmative action, politics, gender equality, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah

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Abstrak: *Artikel ini menganalisis orientasi politik civitas akademika perguruan tinggi Islam di Sulawesi Selatan terhadap kebijakan tindakan afirmatif bagi perempuan dalam kontestasi politik lokal dalam perspektif Al-Qur'an dan maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran dengan desain eksplanatori sekuensial yang mengintegrasikan data kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Data kuantitatif diperoleh melalui kuesioner berskala Likert untuk mengukur dimensi kognitif, afektif, dan konatif dari sikap politik, sedangkan data kualitatif dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, fokus Grup diskusi (FGD) dan dokumentasi. Data kualitatif tersebut kemudian dianalisis dengan teori maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa secara normatif, mayoritas responden menerima prinsip kesetaraan gender dalam Al-Qur'an, khususnya yang didasarkan pada konsep musāwāh, 'adl, mashlahah, dan maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. Sesuai dengan konsep gender dalam Al-Qur'an yang memposisikan perempuan secara setara, seimbang dan bermartabat. Namun, pada tataran implementasi politik lokal, penerimaan terhadap tindakan afirmatif masih dipengaruhi oleh penafsiran mengenai qiwāmah, budaya siri' dalam tradisi Bugis-Makassar yang disalahartikan, dan konstruksi sosial patriarkal. Penelitian ini mengonfirmasi adanya ketegangan antara prinsip normatif Al-Qur'an dan praktik politik lokal, sekaligus menunjukkan bahwa reinterpretasi terhadap Al-Qur'an secara kontekstual membuka ruang legitimasi teologis bagi kepemimpinan perempuan. Penafsiran yang kontekstual sejalan dengan prinsip maqāṣid al-sharī'ah yang akan memberikan peran perempuan dalam politik dan mereposisi kedudukan secara adil dan bermartabat, tanpa mengebiri nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an yang luhur.*
Kata Kunci: *Musāwāh, 'adl, qiwāmah, tindakan afirmatif, politik, kesetaraan gender, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*

Introduction

The affirmative action policy in women's involvement in politics is a strategic policy to correct structural, cultural, and historical inequalities that have limited women's access to public decision-making space.[1] This policy not only focuses on fulfilling women's representation quantitatively through quota regulation but is also directed at strengthening the quality of participation so that women can contribute substantively to democracy.[2] In the perspective of Islamic

[1] Mona Lena Krook, "The Growth of a Field: Politics & Gender and Research on Gender Quotas," *Politics and Gender* 21, no. 1 (2025), p. 66–92. Safrudin Edi Wibowo and Fathiyaturrahmah, "Women and the Transmission of the Quran: Marginalization, Legal Strategies, and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah-Based Resolution," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah* 25, No. 1 (2025).

[2] Amanda Clayton, at.al., "Quota Shocks: Electoral Gender Quotas and Government Spending Priorities Worldwide," *Journal of Politics,* 80, no. 3 (2018), p. 916–32. Angraini binti Ramli and Radwan Jamal Elatrash, "Woman Participation in Politics: Toward an Ideal Model in the Perspective of Siyasa al-Shar'iyya," *al-Risalah* 21, No. 1 (2021).

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politics, affirmative action is in harmony with the principles of justice (*'adl*), benefit (*maṣlaḥah*), human equality, and collective responsibility to build an inclusive socio-political order, as affirmed in contemporary Islamic political studies that place democracy and gender justice as compatible within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah.*[3]

In Indonesia, the debate on women's political participation cannot be separated from the tension between religious norms, socio-cultural constructions, and state affirmative policies.[4] On the one hand, the regulation of the 30 percent quota for women's representation is a structural effort by the state to encourage women's political participation, in line with global findings that quota policies are effective in increasing women's descriptive representation in parliament.[5] On the other hand, normative-cultural resistance is still strong, especially in areas with strong religious identities, were local religious and political relations shape patterns of acceptance or rejection of women's leadership. Therefore, the position of the academic community in Islamic universities is important: they play the role of producers of religious discourse as well as agents of social legitimacy for local political practices.[6]

Nationally, women's representation in parliament has shown an increase since the implementation of affirmative policies, reflecting a global pattern that gender quotas contribute to the increase in women's numerical representation. Election data from 1999–2019 show a gradual increase from 9.0 percent (1999) to 20.05 percent (2019), but this achievement is still below the quota threshold and does not fully guarantee substantive representation.[7] Thus, while affirmative policies encourage quantitative progress, women's political participation still faces structural challenges: internal party dynamics, an open proportional

[3] Faqiuddin Abdul Kodir, "Maqāṣid Cum-Mubādalah Methodology of KUPI: Centering Women s Experiences in Islamic Law" 19, no. 2 (2024), p. 519–45. Yusida Fitriyati, et.al., "Reconsidering Inheritance Equality: Gender Justice in Religious Court Decisions through the Lens of Maqashid Al-Shariah." *Nurani: Jurnal Kajian Syari'ah Dan Masyarakat* 25, No. 1 (2025), p. 122-140.

[4] Pär Zetterberg et al., "Democracy and the Adoption of Electoral Gender Quotas Worldwide," *Comparative Politics* 54, no. 2 (2022), p. 327–48. Catur Nugroho, et.al., Sharia, Gender Politics, and Public Discourse: Media Representation of Female Royal Leadership in Yogyakarta," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum dan Syariah* 17, No. 2 (2025).

[5] Diana Z. O'brien and Johanna Rickne, "Gender Quotas and Women's Political Leadership," *American Political Science Association* 110, No. 1 (20216), p. 112-126. Shamila Dawood, "Islamic Law and Gender Equality: Challenges and Reforms in Sri Lanka's Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act," *Journal of Islamic Law* 5, No. 2 (2024).

[6] Krismono, et.al., "Negotiating Islam, Democracy and Pluralism: Islamic Politics and the State in Post-Reform Indonesia," *Mazahib Jurnal Pemikiran Hukum Islam* 24, no. 1 (2025), p. 101–30.

[7] Sally White, et. al., "Voting against Women: Political Patriarchy, Islam, and Representation in Indonesia," *Politics and Gender* 20, no. 2 (2024), p. 391–421.

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electoral system, and socio-cultural and religious barriers that affect women's electoral opportunities.[8]

The context of South Sulawesi shows fluctuations that confirm the problem of representation stability. Based on the determination of the South Sulawesi Provincial KPU, of the 85 DPRD seats for the 2014-2019 period, only 15 seats were filled by women (12.75 percent), and increased to 16 after PAW (around 13 percent). In the 2019 election, women's representation increased to 25.88 percent, but decreased again in the 2024 election to 12.75 percent. These fluctuations are in line with recent findings that the increase in women's representation is not always stable because it is influenced by electoral system design, party dynamics, and local contexts.[9]

Studies have confirmed that women's representation is important for the quality of democracy and public policy responsiveness, but structural-cultural barriers remain limited. Gender stereotypes and discrimination in local political culture affect women's electoral chances and public perception of women's leadership[10]. In addition, limited access to political and financial resources—including campaign funding gaps, weak political networks, and a lack of leadership training reduces the competitiveness of female candidates. The burden of domestic dual roles and political careers is also a major obstacle, as traditional gender norms increase unpaid work and reduce women's space for political activity. Institutional barriers such as gender-biased party structures, informal recruitment, and masculine power networks also limit women's access to strategic positions.[11]

Normatively, the Qur'an does not close the space for women's participation in the public sphere, including politics. The principle of spiritual and moral equality in QS. al-Hujurat/49:13 and QS. at-Taubah/9:71 is often used as a theological basis that men and women are partners (*awliyā'*) in upholding *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*. The literature on Islamic and gender studies shows that these verses are reinterpreted as legitimizing women's socio-political participation.[12] Contemporary hermeneutic studies affirm that there is no explicit prohibition in the Qur'an regarding women's political leadership, while the hadith that is often used as the basis for restrictions needs to be read in a certain historical-political

[8] Thomas B. Pepinsky, "Cleavages, Institutions, and Democracy in Indonesia: The 2024 Elections in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 44, no. 3 (2025), p. 345–65.

[9] Amanda Clayton, et.al., "Electoral Gender Quotas and Democratic Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review*, (2025), p. 123–40.

[10] Petra Ahrens and Petra Meier, "From Parliament to Party: The Gender-Sensitive Parliamentary Group," *Politics and Governance* 12 (2024), p. 1–17.

[11] White et al., "Voting against Women: Political Patriarchy, Islam, and Representation in Indonesia."

[12] Sajida Shaheen, "Women Leadership Roles in Islamic Jurisprudence: A Contemporary Ijtihad" 1 (2025), p. 22–34.

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context[13]. However, patriarchal textual approaches are still influential in limiting women's participation to the domestic or non-political social realm.[14]

Contemporary Islamic political discourse presents a spectrum of views from a progressive approach based on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and substantive justice to a conservative approach that maintains a patriarchal structure of public leadership. QS Reading. at-Taubah/9:71 on *wilāyah* and gender partnerships, as well as QS. al-Syūrā/42:38 on *shūrā,* in recent literature understood as the foundation of inclusive deliberative ethics. At the same time, QS. an-Nisā'/4:34 on *qiwāmah* demands a contextual reading, because *qiwāmah* has historically been concerned with the economic responsibility of family protection, not the political superiority of men. With *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, the normative purpose of these verses is understood as maintaining justice, stability, and social responsibility of values that can be strengthened through women's political participation when structural barriers are overcome, including through affirmative policies.[15] Queen Bilqis's leadership narrative (QS. an-Naml/27:23–44) also presents an important precedent: the Qur'an highlights Bilqis' rationality and deliberative capacity as legitimate leadership qualities[16].

Within this framework, universities including Islamic universities have a strategic position as an arena for knowledge production, public opinion formation, and socialization of democratic values. Recent studies confirm that higher education shapes political attitudes, civic awareness, and orientation towards gender equality.[17] This research is socio-political research that uses *a* mixed-methods approach with a Sequential Explanatory Design model. This design begins with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, then continues with the collection and analysis of qualitative data to explain, deepen, and confirm quantitative findings. This model is widely recommended in social science research because it allows the integration of statistical inference with more in-

[13] Wajahat Khan and Hafeeza Bano Arain, "Exploring Islamic Feminism: Challenges and Opportunities for Women's Empowerment," *Journal of Religion & Society (JR&S)* 03, no. 01 (2025), p. 834–40.

[14] Fatima Essop, "Advancing Gender Equality in Muslim Leadership: Women's Representation in Ulama Bodies in Post-Apartheid South Africa," *The African Journal of Gender and Religion* 30, no. 2 (2024), p. 30–59.

[15] Abdullah Affandi, et.al., "Maqāṣidī Exegesis: A Path for Promoting Gender Equality in Contemporary Islamic Discourse," *Qof* 9, no. 1 (2025), p. 61–80.

[16] Wajahat Khan and Hafeeza Bano Arain, "Exploring Islamic Feminism: Challenges and Opportunities for Women's Empowerment."

[17] Christina Wolbrecht and David E. Campbell, "Nevertheless, Role Models Persisted: Girls Exposed to Women Politicians More Likely to Vote as Adults," *Political Behavior*, (2025), p. 253–72.

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depth contextual meaning. In this design, qualitative data serves as an explanatory of quantitative results, resulting in stronger meta-inferences.[18]

The Mixed Methods approach was chosen because it is able to capture numerical tendencies as well as the dynamics of social meaning that cannot be fully explained by statistical data alone. Recent methodological studies have shown that sequential explanatory design is most effective when research aims to test the relationships between variables while understanding the causative factors and the social context behind them.[19] Thus, this design is considered appropriate to examine the orientation of the political attitude of the academic community of Islamic universities towards the affirmative action policy of women's involvement in local political contestation, because this phenomenon requires quantitative attitude mapping as well as qualitative interpretation of values and experiences.

The subject of the study is the academic community of Islamic universities in South Sulawesi, both public and private, including leaders, lecturers, education staff, and students, from the following nine universities. Alauddin State Islamic University Gowa, IAIN Bone, IAIN Pare Pare, IAIN Palopo, STAI Al-Ghazali Soppeng, As'adiyah Sengkang Wajo Islamic University, STAI DDI Mangkoso Barru, IAI Ahmad Dahlan Sinjai, STAI YAPNAS Jeneponto. In contemporary socio-political research, a multi-level approach to institutional and individual actors is recommended to capture variations in attitudes based on structural positions and demographic characteristics.[20] Quantitative data were obtained through a questionnaire (*rating scale*) to measure cognitive, affective, and conative orientation. The use of the Likert scale of 1–5 remains a standard instrument in the measurement of political attitudes because it has good reliability and sensitivity in detecting variations in opinion.[21] Recent psychometric literature confirms that multidimensional measurement of attitudes (cognitive–affective–conative) increases the validity of constructs compared to one-dimensional measurements.[22]

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[18] Sergi Fàbregues and Timothy C. Guetterman, "Editorial: Mixed Methods Research Systematic Methodological Reviews Benefits, Challenges, and Solutions," *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 19, no. 1 (2025), p. 6–17.

[19] Nataliya V Ivankova and Nancy P Wingo, "Intersecting Mixed Methods and Community-Based Participatory Action Research to Promote Patient-Centeredness in Research," in *Handbook of Social Inclusion: Research and Practices in Health and Social Sciences* (Springer, 2022), p. 1625–43.

[20] Jungkunz and Weiss, "Populist Attitudes among Teenagers: How Negative Relationships with Socialization Agents Are Linked to Populist Attitudes."

[21] Ahrens and Meier, "From Parliament to Party: The Gender-Sensitive Parliamentary Group."

[22] Gaguk Margono, "The Development of Instrument for Measuring Attitudes toward Statistics Using Semantic Differential Scale," *2nd International Seminar on Quality and Affordable Education*, no. Isqae (2013), p. 241–50.

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In addition to questionnaires, this study used in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The FGD method is recommended in public policy and gender studies because it allows for the exploration of the dynamics of social interaction, the negotiation of meaning, as well as the identification of consensus and differences in perspectives between participants.[23] The combination of interviews and FGDs enriched the data with the subjective experience and collective reflection of the respondents. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics through crosstabulation to identify attitude-orientation patterns based on respondents' characteristics such as gender, age, position, faculty, and education level. Cross-tabulation analysis remains an important technique in comparative political studies to map the initial associations between variables before further analysis.[24]

Meanwhile, the qualitative data analysis follows an interactive model comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The theory employed in analyzing the qualitative data is *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* a concept that prioritizes the objectives of Islamic law applied here to the role of women in the political sphere. The analysis is carried out continuously until it reaches data saturation, in accordance with the principle of interactive data analysis in social research.[25] The results of quantitative and qualitative analysis are then integrated at the final interpretation stage to produce comprehensive conclusions. The mixed methods integration literature confirms that the integration of results at the interpretation stage improves the quality of policy recommendations because it combines the power of statistical generalization and narrative depth.[26]

Gender Equality and the Political Stance of Islamic Higher Education Institutions from the Perspective of the Qur'an

1) The Concept of Affirmative Action in Politics

Affirmative action in the political realm is a policy approach to overcome historical and structural inequalities experienced by certain groups, especially women, in accessing political power. Recent literature places quota policies and various forms of affirmation as corrective instruments against institutional biases that have been institutionalized in the political recruitment system[27]. Normatively,

[23] Safitri Agustin et al., "The Impact of Problem-Based Learning Model with Focus Group Discussion Method on Students' Learning Outcomes in Basic Vocational Subjects," *Journal of Hypermedia & Technology-Enhanced Learning* 2, no. 2 (2024), p. 182–93.

[24] Albertella et al., "Building a Transdisciplinary Expert Consensus on the Cognitive Drivers of Performance under Pressure: An International Multi-Panel Delphi Study."

[25] Catherine H. Saunders. et. al., "Practical Thematic Analysis: A Guide for Multidisciplinary Health Services Research Teams Engaging in Qualitative Analysis," *Bmj*, 2023.

[26] Fàbregues and Guetterman, "Editorial: Mixed Methods Research Systematic Methodological Reviews Benefits, Challenges, and Solutions."

[27] Ahrens and Meier, "From Parliament to Party: The Gender-Sensitive Parliamentary Group."

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this idea assumes that democracy does not stop at procedural equality; Democracy must guarantee substantive equality so that every citizen has a real opportunity to participate in the political process.[28] In line with the argument of structural justice, inequality of representation is understood as a consequence of power relations formed by social and political institutions, so that it requires affirmative intervention to correct the long-standing impact of gender exclusion.[29] Therefore, justice does not always mean equal treatment, but rather proportionate treatment to overcome different inequalities. This principle is the basis for normative legitimacy for affirmative policy in modern democracy.[30] Thus, affirmative action can be understood as an institutional mechanism that transforms formal equality into substantive equality in women's political representation.

Forms of electoral affirmative action vary, but the most widely used are women's candidacy quotas, placement mandates, and zipper systems. Comparative literature shows that quota design greatly determines its effectiveness in increasing women's representation. Quotas generally set a minimum percentage of women in the list of candidates or party structure. Without clear placement mandates, quotas often end symbolically. In such practice, women are indeed listed as candidates, but they are placed in a sequence number that is not strategic so that electoral chances remain low. Recent studies have confirmed that the effectiveness of quotas depends on a combination of quota percentages, sanction mechanisms, and rules for placing candidates on party lists. The zipper system, which compiles a list of candidates alternately male and female, is considered more effective in a closed proportional system because it maintains a balanced distribution of opportunities and reduces internal manipulation of the party. Therefore, the power of institutional design is more decisive than just the formal quota number in the law.[31]

Furthermore, affirmative action not only aims to increase the number of women in political institutions but also has the potential to be transformational. The existence of the quota encourages the party to make institutional adjustments by reforming recruitment, regeneration, and distributing campaign resources. When parties are required to meet the percentage of female representation, they cannot rely entirely on traditional masculine political networks but instead are driven to build more inclusive and institutionalized structures. The impact is seen not only on the election results but also on the internal restructuring of the party and the power dynamics within it.

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[28] Yves Kläy et al., "Substantive Representation of Women: Empirical Evidence," *British Journal of Political Science* 55 (2025), p. 1–22.

[29] Mari Miura, Kenneth Mori McElwain, and Tomoki Kaneko, "Explaining Public Support for Gender Quotas: Sexism, Representational Quality, and State Intervention in Japan," *Politics and Gender* 19, no. 3 (2023), p. 781–805.

[30] Krook, "The Growth of a Field: Politics & Gender and Research on Gender Quotas."

[31] Clayton, O'Brien, and Piscopo, "Electoral Gender Quotas and Democratic Legitimacy."

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In the Indonesian context, the policy of 30% female representation is institutionalized in legislative candidacy, but its implementation faces structural challenges. The open proportional system encourages competition based on individual votes so that candidates compete directly. Women with financial and network limitations are often more disadvantaged than men who have stronger patronage access.[32] Recent studies show that in an open list system, the quota effect tends to be reduced without political funding reform and strengthening the capacity of women candidates.[33] In addition, the party's internal power structure is influenced by patronage and oligarchy, which limits women's access to recruitment processes and strategic positions. The effectiveness of affirmative policies is also influenced by local culture, social structure, and women's ability to access informal networks. Domestic norms and symbolic subordination show that affirmative action must be analyzed in the socio-cultural context that frames everyday political practice.[34]

In the context of Muslim-majority countries, the dynamics of religious values also influence. The debate over women's leadership is often associated with the interpretation of religious texts. Contemporary studies affirm that interpretation is plural and dynamic. Many Muslim scholars propose the normative legitimacy of women's political equality within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and social justice.[35] Resistance to women's leadership often reflects patriarchal constructions more than normative doctrines of religion[36]. Therefore, the challenge of affirmative policy stems from the institutional dimension as well as religious and cultural discourse.

2) The Effectiveness of Gender Quotas

The effectiveness of quota policies is measured not only by the increase in the number of women elected (descriptive representation), but also by their ability to play a substantive role in legislation, policy, and overseeing the gender equality agenda. International empirical evidence suggests that increased

[32] White et al., "Voting against Women: Political Patriarchy, Islam, and Representation in Indonesia."

[33] Kim and Fallon, "Making Women Visible: How Gender Quotas Shape Global Attitudes toward Women in Politics."

[34] Jóhanna Kristín Birnir et al., "The Patriarchy in the Parties: Voters, Parties and Women's Electoral Fortunes in the 2024 Legislative Election in Indonesia," *Electoral Studies* 95, no. May (2025), p. 102938.

[35] Ahmed Ezzeldin Mohamed, "Islam, Politics, and Women in the Public Sphere: Between Institutions, Movements, and Practices," *Forthcoming in I.B. Tauris Handbook of Contemporary Islamic Studies* 2026, p. 1–30.

[36] Farjana Mahbuba and Sumaiya Rabeya, "Female Leadership in Muslim Societies: Theological and Socio-Cultural Debates in Contemporary Literature," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (2023), p. 96–115. Dermawan and Nasya Tisyfa Taudiyah, "Analysis of the Sibaliparriq Concept from a Gender Equality Point of View; Examining the Views of Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah," *Mazahibuna: Jurnal Perbandingan Mazhab* 3, No. 1 (2021).

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women's representation correlates with improved social policies. A cross-country study found women's representation contributed to improved child health outcomes, including a reduction in neonatal mortality and increased vaccination coverage.[37] In the context of European parliaments, research shows that women legislators are more responsive to social preferences in lawmaking.[38] However, the success of the quota is influenced by the design of regulations, enforcement, and the socio-cultural context, especially the party's strategy in placing women in competitive electoral positions.[39] Without the integration of women in the legislative process and institutional commitment, quotas risk strengthening symbolic representation. Therefore, the implementation of quotas requires strong rules, effective enforcement mechanisms, and high internal party commitment.

The literature also shows that women's representation can shift policy priorities on social and welfare issues,[40] Pushing the agenda of gender equality and social protection,[41] but it is greatly influenced by the institutional capacity of the state and the accountability of the enforcement of electoral rules.[42] The proportional system tends to be more conducive than the majoritarian system because it allows for a more inclusive list of candidates, while the one-seat district system tends to favor candidates who are considered the most competitive and are often dominated by men.[43] In addition to numbers, the role of critical actors is important. Substantive change is often driven by women actors initiating legislation, building cross-party coalitions, and mobilizing support for the equality agenda.[44]

3) Political Attitude Orientation

Political attitude orientation is important to understand individual evaluations of affirmative action policies and gender quotas. The political psychology literature emphasizes multidimensional attitudes, namely cognitive, affective, and conative, that interact with each other to form a political response[45]. The tripartite model explains that attitudes are formed from knowledge, emotions,

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[37] Niharika Rustagi: Sonia Akter, "The Impact of Women's Political Representation on Child Health Outcomes During 1990−2020: Evidence from a Global Dataset" 66, no. December (2022), p. 1–5.

[38]Kläy et al., "Substantive Representation of Women: Empirical Evidence."

[39]Birnir et al., "The Patriarchy in the Parties: Voters, Parties and Women's Electoral Fortunes in the 2024 Legislative Election in Indonesia."

[40]Clayton, O'Brien, and Piscopo, "Electoral Gender Quotas and Democratic Legitimacy."

[41] Krook, "The Growth of a Field: Politics & Gender and Research on Gender Quotas."

[42] Bilici, "Women at the Top: Evaluating the Role of Gender Quota in Leadership Representation."

[43] Krook, "The Growth of a Field: Politics & Gender and Research on Gender Quotas."

[44] Kläy et al., "Substantive Representation of Women: Empirical Evidence."

[45] Sabina Avdagic and Lee Savage, "Does the Framing of Immigration Induce Welfare Chauvinism? The Effects of Negativity Bias and Motivated Reasoning," *Political Behavior* 46, no. 4 (2024), p. 2169–89.

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values, social experiences, and the tendency to act[46]. Attitudes develop through long-term political socialization and repeated exposure to information[47], influenced by family, education, media, social organizations, and religious institutions; Higher education influences through academic discourse and cross-identity interaction.[48] Attitude orientation plays a role in the formation of political culture, because the perception of equality and legitimacy of authority is formed by a collective value system.[49] In the study of political gender, support for quotas is tied to social identity, the experience of inequality, and the internalization of cultural norms.[50] Schema theory explains that individuals process political information through established cognitive frameworks, including religious values and gender norms. In religious societies, attitudes towards gender equality are influenced by the interaction of religious values and local norms.[51]

4) PTKI Academic Community and Gender Affirmation

Universities play a role as an arena for political socialization and the reproduction of democratic values. Higher education increases political tolerance and support for equality when campuses provide open discussion spaces.[52] Students, lecturers, and education staff are actors who construct the meaning of public issues, including gender and affirmative policy.[53] Exposure to academic literature and cross-identity interactions strengthens egalitarian attitudes and support for women's representation.[54] The academic community tends to have a reflective cognitive capacity to understand structural inequality so that it is more open to quotas as a corrective instrument. However, PTKI has a distinctive dynamic, and academic discourse is influenced by the interaction of theological

[46] Gabriel Lins De Holanda Coelho et al., "Mental Representations of Values and Behaviors," *European Journal of Personality* 36, no. 6 (2022), p. 926–41.

[47] Sebastian Jungkunz and Julia Weiss, "Populist Attitudes among Teenagers: How Negative Relationships with Socialization Agents Are Linked to Populist Attitudes," *Perspectives on Politics* 22, no. 4 (2024), p. 1140–56.

[48] Clayton, O'Brien, and Piscopo, "Electoral Gender Quotas and Democratic Legitimacy."

[49] Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, "Democratic Norm Erosion and Partisanship in the United States," *Democratization* 32, no. 8 (2025), p. 1880–1903.

[50] Marzia Oceno and Lauren Chojnacki, "Feminism within Parties: Implications for Political Elite Evaluations and Policy Attitudes," *Research and Politics* 10, no. 3 (2023).

[51] Saiful Mujani, "Behavioural Approaches to Muslim Politics: The State of the Art," *Muslim Politics Review* 1, no. 1 (2022), p. 41–57.

[52] Charles Wharton Kaye-Essien, "The Socio-Political Context of Citizen Activism: An International Comparative Perspective," *Public Administration Review*, (2025), p. 97–109.

[53] Jan Germen Janmaat and Bryony Hoskins, "The Changing Impact of Family Background on Political Engagement During Adolescence and Early Adulthood," *Social Forces* 101, no. 1 (2022), p. 227–51.

[54] Kläy et al., "Substantive Representation of Women: Empirical Evidence."

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values, religious authority, and educational modernization.[55] On the one hand, there is a growing progressive interpretation in favor of equality, on the other hand there is a conservative view that places public space as the domain of men. Political attitudes are also formed through student organizations and informal interactions; Organizational involvement improves political efficacy and critical reflection skills.[56] The existence of the center for gender studies increases internal policies of responsiveness to equality and sensitivity to discrimination[57]. Therefore, the campus functions as a social intellectual ecosystem that shapes an inclusive political orientation through the interaction of curriculum, campus culture, student organizations, and institutional infrastructure.

5) The Qur'an, Culture, and Gender Issues in Politics

Women's political discourse in Muslim society is influenced by the interaction of religious teachings, local culture, and socio-economic conditions. Islam is not a monolithic entity; Interpretations of women's roles in public spaces vary.[58] Variation in interpretation correlates with the level of support for women's political participation; egalitarian interpretations increase the legitimacy of women's leadership, while conservative interpretations maintain traditional roles.[59] Local culture in Indonesia also plays a dual role: norms of honor and customs can limit or legitimize women's politics depending on social interpretations. Matrilineal systems such as Minangkabau provide symbolic legitimacy for women's authority although it does not automatically become a formal political representation[60]. Economic factors are also important: women's economic independence is positively correlated with the support of women's political leadership. Globalization, urbanization, and the expansion of education have also encouraged egalitarian attitudes[61].

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[55] Robert W Hefner, *Islam and Citizenship in Indonesia: Democracy and the Quest for an Inclusive Public Ethics* (Routledge, 2023).

[56] Sergiu Gherghina and Clara Volintiru, "Political Parties and Clientelism in Transition Countries: Evidence from Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine," *Political Parties and Electoral Clientelism*, no. March (2023), p. 87–103.

[57] Amir Malik, "Gender Sensitive Communication in ELT Classroom: Practices and Prevention," *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review* 7, no. II (2023).

[58] Samira Azabar, et.al., "How Does the Religiosity-Gender Attitudes Nexus among Dutch Muslims Differ by Origin Backgrounds and Migration Motives?," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 9870 (2025), p. 1–22.

[59] Fiqh and Kodir, "Maq ā ṣ Id Cum-Mub ā Dalah Methodology of KUPI: Centering Women's Experiences in Islamic Law for."

[60] Aida Humaira et al., *Eksistensi Pemimpin Perempuan Di Asia Tenggara* (KBM Indonesia, 2026).

[61] Fatima Z. Rahman, "Islamic Doctrine and Women's Economic Rights: Implications of an Ambiguous Relationship for State Policy in the Muslim World," *Politics and Religion* 18, no. 1 (2025), p. 50–73.

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In contemporary Islamic studies, *musāwāh* and *'adl* are understood as the normative principles of the Qur'an that underpin the argument for gender equality.[62] The *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach emphasizes the equal protection of human dignity.[63] Historical readings of classical interpretation need to be placed in a medieval patriarchal context and not treated as a final universal norm.[64] Gender hermeneutics affirms that the message of justice is comprehensive spiritually, socially, and politically.[65] Contemporary interpretations of Q.S. al-Aḥzāb/33:35 and Q.S. al-Tawbah/9:71 emphasize the social moral partnership in collective responsibility,[66] while Qur'anic studies show that the concept of "*awliyā' ba'ḍuhum li-ba'ḍ"* has a participatory dimension that can be extended to the socio-political realm. The story of Queen Bilqis (Q.S. al-Naml/27:23–44) is understood as a model of deliberative and rational leadership that is not normatively criticized[67]. Q.S. al-Nisā'/4:34's reinterpretation of *qiwāmah* places it as a contextual responsibility based on socioeconomic function, rather than the ontological superiority of men. This perspective opens up space for women's leadership as long as it fulfills the principles of justice and public benefit.[68]

Linguistically, the concept *of musāwah* is rooted in the word *sawiya* (سَوِيَ) which means equal, balanced, or proportional, a meaning that affirms that equality in the Qur'an is not mechanistic uniformity, but an existential harmony that rejects any form of gender-based ontological hierarchy. The perspective of gender equality in the Qur'an places men and women on equal spiritual and social axes (QS. Al-Hujurat/49:13), where the virtue of a human being is measured only by the quality of his piety, not his biological determinism. In the context of Qur'anic normativity, the concept of *musāwah* is transformed into a political moral foundation that deconstructs the structural inequality that has been imprisoning women's movement space in the public sector. The existence of affirmative action policies in the form of quotas for women's representation in the formal political sphere is not a legal anomaly or just a modern political concession, but a concrete manifestation of restorative justice that comes directly from the ethics of the

[62] Saeed Khodaverdian, "Islam and Democracy," *Kyklos* 75, no. 4 (2022), p. 580–606.

[63] Affandi, Billah, and Syaifudin, "Maqāṣidī Exegesis: A Path for Promoting Gender Equality in Contemporary Islamic Discourse."

[64] Mahbuba and Rabeya, "Female Leadership in Muslim Societies: Theological and Socio-Cultural Debates in Contemporary Literature."

[65] Novendri Eka Saputra and Hidayatullah Ismail, "Qur'anic Literacy in the Protection of Children's and Women's Rights in Muslim Families," *Priviet Social Sciences Journal* 5, no. 12 (2025), p. 531–41.

[66] Wajahat Khan and Hafeeza Bano Arain, "Exploring Islamic Feminism: Challenges and Opportunities For Women's Empowerment."

[67] Saputra and Ismail, "Qur'anic Literacy in the Protection of Children's and Women's Rights in Muslim Families."

[68] Mahbuba and Rabeya, "Female Leadership in Muslim Societies: Theological and Socio-Cultural Debates in Contemporary Literature."

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liberation of the Qur'an to restore the social balance disturbed by the dominance of patriarchal culture.

Fakhruddin al-Razi, when dissecting the meaning of the creation of man from one soul (QS. An-Nisa/4]:1, describes philologically that the essence of the origin of humanity between man and woman is completely equal and commensurate, without any element of innate superiority of one sex over the other.[69] In line with this theological foundation, Mohammad Hashim Kamali, emphasized that the principle *of musāwah* is a fundamental pillar in Islamic governance that obliges the state to guarantee equal civil and political rights for every citizen, so that the active involvement of women in the legislature becomes a moral imperative for the achievement of true public justice.[70] This sociopolitical argument is enhanced by the analysis of Muslim feminist Amina Wadud, who argues that the Qur'an inherently carries the spirit of absolute gender justice. She emphasized that the neglect of women's public leadership capacity in the modern era is a form of denial of monotheism and the moral will of the Qur'an which requires an equal partnership between men and women in managing worldly affairs.[71] Thus, this linguistic and gender-perspective approach to *musāwah* succeeds in reframing affirmative intervention from a mere electoral political strategy to a humanist theological imperative that actualizes universal social justice on the stage of modern democracy.

Knowledge Dimension: Cognitive Awareness of Affirmative Action

Affirmative action policies in Indonesian politics, especially the minimum quota of 30% female representation in legislative candidacy, are corrective instruments to overcome historical gender inequality in the political arena. In the context of Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI), this issue is significant because PTKI not only functions as an academic institution, but also as a space for the production of religious discourse and normative legitimacy for public policy. This study explores five main dimensions: (1) knowledge, (2) attitudes and perceptions, (3) support and behavior, (4) campus and social environment support, and (5) legitimacy of Islamic values towards women's affirmative action in local politics.

The findings of the study show that the level of knowledge of the PTKI academic community regarding the meaning of affirmative action is in the medium to high category. The majority of respondents understood that this policy

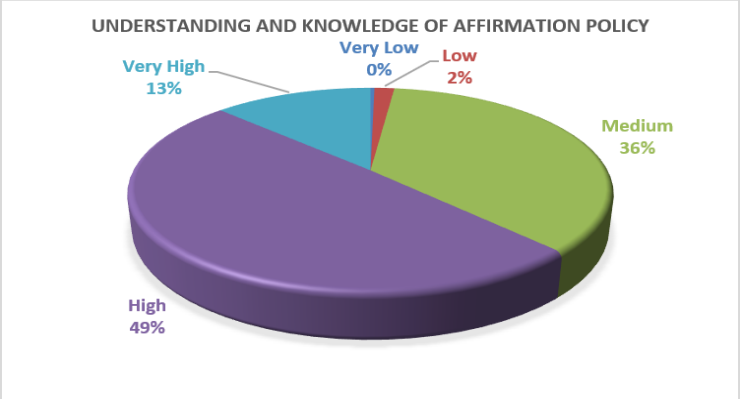
[69] Fakhruddin al- Razi and Muhammad ibn Umar, "Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir (Mafatih Al-Ghayb)," Beirut: Dar Ihya Al-Turath Al-Arabi 3 (1999).

[70] Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Freedom, Equality and Justice in Islam* (Islamic Texts Society Cambridge, 2002).

[71] Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (OUP Us, 1999).

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was not just an administrative mechanism, but a response to long-standing structural inequalities. This is illustrated in the following diagram:

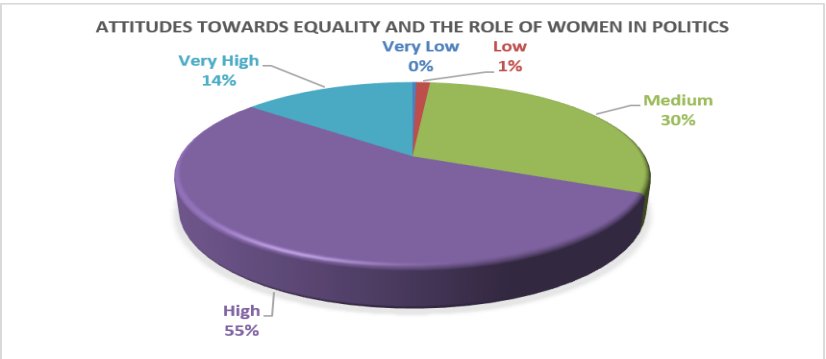


Differentially: Lecturers show the highest level of understanding, indicating their capacity as epistemic agents of gender mainstreaming. Students are dominated by the neutral category, showing an understanding that is still superficial. Education personnel show a relatively higher gap in political literacy.

Qualitative data confirm that involvement in political activities improves conceptual understanding. Respondents who were active in student organizations or political activities showed better ability to relate affirmative action to substantive justice, the Election Law, and the dynamics of power representation. However, the high neutral category indicates that gender discourse has not been fully internalized as an analytical framework in PTKI's academic consciousness.

Affective Dimension: Attitudes and Perceptions Toward Women's Political Participation

Women show a slightly higher intensity of support, which can be explained through gender solidarity theory and structural experiences of discrimination. This is illustrated in the following diagram of the results of the research**:**



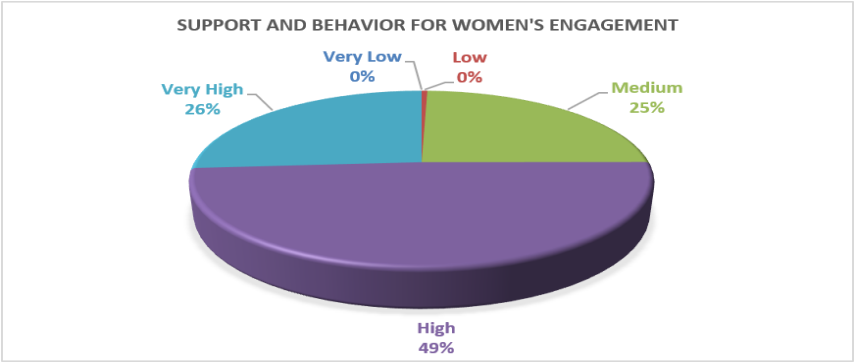
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Generationally, respondents aged <25 showed the most progressive attitude. Lecturers showed very strong support, indicating the internalization of scientific and normative values about equality.

Qualitative data showed that respondents considered women to have significant moral and social capacity, especially in issues of family welfare, education, child protection, and social justice. This perception marks the weakening of traditional gender stereotypes within PTKI.

Conative Dimension: Behavioral Commitment and Political Support

The results of the study show that the academic community's conative support for affirmative action policies is in the high category. The majority of respondents expressed their willingness to support the implementation of women's representation quotas, participate in activities that promote women's political roles, and accept women as political leaders at the local level. The dominance of the "agree" and "strongly agree" categories in the conative indicators shows that respondents not only understand the urgency of affirmative policies but also show readiness to implement them in action. This indicates that the value of gender equality has become part of the behavioral orientation of the academic community of PTKI. This is illustrated in the following diagram of the results of the research:



The distribution of the high support category looks dominant, very high looks significant, low and very low near zero. Women show stronger readiness for action than men. Students have the highest willingness to be actively involved, while lecturers express support through scientific legitimacy and normative argumentation.

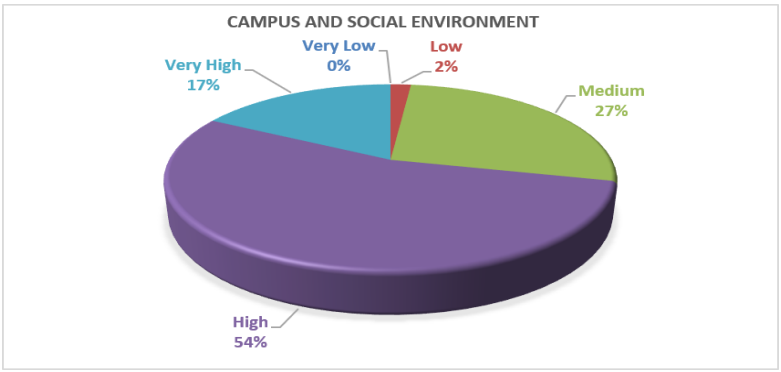
Campus and Social Environment Support

The aspect of campus and social environment support is an important dimension in mapping the extent to which the Islamic religious higher education (PTKI) ecosystem in South Sulawesi plays a role in strengthening the

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implementation of affirmative action policies for women in the local political realm. The findings of this study show that the campus social context, which includes academic culture, interaction of the academic community, and gender equality values internalized in the campus community, has a real influence in shaping respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and political behavior tendencies towards women's involvement in politics.

In general, the results of the study indicate that the PTKI campus environment tends to provide positive support for gender mainstreaming and affirmative policies. This is reflected in the high proportion of respondents who show acceptance and approval of the idea that women need to be given more space to participate in politics through affirmative action mechanisms. An academic culture that places the values of egalitarianism, justice, and equality as part of the scientific ethos seems to be one of the main factors that sustain the high level of support. From a social perspective, interactions between students, lecturers, and education staff show that support for women's involvement in politics is not only motivated by normative considerations, but also by a pragmatic understanding that women's political representation is positively correlated with the quality of democracy and inclusive public policy. This social awareness is getting stronger among students and lecturers, who in the study tend to show a higher level of support than education staff. This shows that exposure to academic discourse, organizational activities, and political literacy also strengthens support for affirmative policies. This is illustrated in the following diagram of the results of the research:

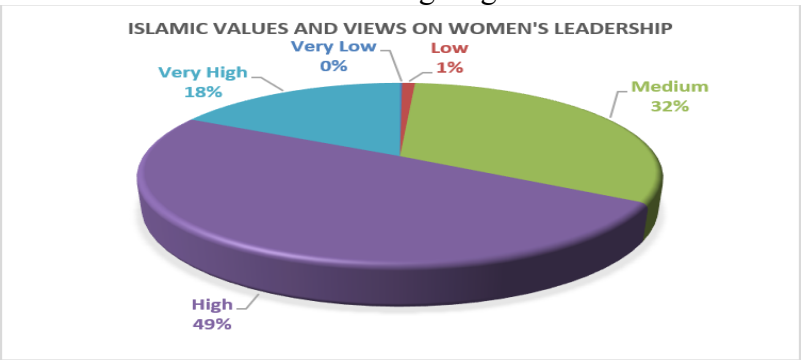


The distribution chart shows that most respondents rated environmental support in the High (54%) category, followed by Medium (27%), and Very High (17%). Only a small fraction rated support to be in the Low category (2%), while the Very Low category (0%) did not appear in the data. These findings as a whole illustrate the relatively conducive conditions of the campus and social environment in encouraging gender equality in the political field.

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Islamic Values and Normative Legitimacy

The findings of the study show that the PTKI academic community in South Sulawesi has a very positive level of acceptance and meaning of Islamic values that support women's affirmative action policies in local politics. This assessment is reflected in the distribution of data in the diagram which shows the dominance of the high and very high categories in the respondents' perception of the issue. This is illustrated in the following diagram of the results of the research**:**



The graph shows: Very High: 18%, High: 49%, Medium: 32%, Low: 1%, and Very Low: 0%. Overall, 67% of respondents were in the high and very high categories. This shows that the majority of the academic community of PTKI considers that Islamic values and views have a positive correlation and provide moral and normative legitimacy to affirmative action policies to increase women's involvement in local politics.

The majority of respondents view that Islamic teachings, as reflected in the literature of fiqh *siyasah*, *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, and the principles of social justice, support the opening of space for women to participate in the political sphere. This support is understood as part of the principle of *al-'adālah* (justice), the purpose of protection and benefit *(maqāṣid al-syarī'ah),* the contextual interpretation of religious texts in social change, and the strengthening of the socio-political role of women in modern society. This high level of support shows the alignment between the Islamic values taught at PTKI and the dynamics of public policy that encourage women's representation in politics.

The Quranic Conception of Gender Equality: Theoretical Integration and Empirical Findings

1. Qur'anic Normativity as a Political Moral Structure

The normative foundation of religion in Islam refers to ethical principles that are sourced from the Qur'an and Sunnah, then constructed through the tradition of interpretation and *fiqh*. In contemporary religious political studies, religious norms are not understood as the sole determinant of political behavior, but rather as a moral framework that shapes an individual's cognitive and

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evaluative orientation to public issues.[72] Theoretical analysis of the political dynamics of religion shows that normative foundations never operate in a static vacuum. It is a discursive entity that is continuously constructed, negotiated, and actualized by social agents through their cognitive structure. When the academic community of Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI) in South Sulawesi uses Qur'anic narratives to support affirmative action, they are rearranging the public's evaluative orientation. Religious norms are no longer seen as rigid dogmas that limit, but are transformed into an emancipatory and humanist moral framework.

The biggest challenge in the implementation of women's political rights often stems from the reductionist textual understanding of the concept *of qiwāmah* in the Qur'an (QS al-Nisa/4:4). The verse, which historically-contextually governs the sociology of the Arab family in the 7th century, is often forcibly drawn into the realm of micropolitics to legitimize the prohibition of women from becoming public leaders. Traditionally, this concept has often been drawn from the domestic sphere (husband-wife relations) to justify male superiority in the formal political sphere. Theoretically, academically, the contextual interpretation of *qiwāmah* in sacred texts is functional, conditional, rather than an ontological privilege inherent in a particular gender. In the modern public space, the quality *of qiwāmah* in the form of the ability to lead, support welfare, and uphold justice is measured through the competition of integrity and intellectual capacity, where women have equal rights and potential to achieve it. Asma Barlas argues that the Qur'an is ontologically egalitarian and never institutionalizes an inherent patriarchal hierarchy.[73] The concept *of qiwāmah* in the sacred text is a contextual-social contract based on specific economic responsibilities in the family institutions of the time, so making it a universal justification for rejecting women's political authority in contemporary public spaces is a form of distortion of the liberating morality of the Qur'an.

In the epistemological structure of Islamic law, *al-ʿadālah* is not merely an abstract moral concept, but a categorical imperative that underlies the entire socio-political system. Justice in Islam has a humanist character that rejects all forms of marginalization of gender-based social structures. When associated with *affirmative action policies* (such as the 30% quota of women in parliament), *al-ʿadālah* shifts from mere procedural justice (granting equal suffrage) to substantive justice, i.e., creating the empirical conditions for historically disadvantaged groups to compete equally. The Qur'anic narrative of justice acts as a cognitive orientation changer that reverses cultural resistance into theological moral support. In the classical exegesis tradition, this concept of justice is strongly tied to the fulfillment of human rights without discrimination. Imam Ibn Jarir al-

[72] Rahman, "Islamic Doctrine and Women's Economic Rights: Implications of an Ambiguous Relationship for State Policy in the Muslim World."

[73] Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (University of Texas Press, 2019).

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Tabari, when interpreting the verses related to justice and social trust, emphasized that the essence of justice is to put everything in its rightful place, where the ruler or authority holder is obliged to fulfill the rights of all people regardless of race.[74] In the modern context, when political structures have historically marginalized women, the implementation of affirmative action (such as the 30% quota) becomes a moral imperative to uphold *al-ʿadālah* that is substantive, not merely procedural.

In addition to the concept *of al-ʿadālah*, the concept *of al-maṣlaḥah* also provides a very flexible methodological basis for the dynamism of Islamic law in the contemporary realm. In modern political discourse, benefits cannot be achieved if half of the domestic population (women) are excluded from the public policy-making process. The presence of women in the legislative chamber is an epistemological prerequisite for formulating laws that are sensitive to crucial issues such as maternal rights, child protection, and domestic justice. Therefore, perpetuating gender inequality in parliament is seen as a form of *mafsadah* (systemic damage), while affirmative action is considered the highest manifestation of *jālib al-maṣāliḥ* (attracting benefits) to the state order. *Al-maṣlaḥah al-ʿāmmah* becomes a methodological bridge that dilutes the rigidity of the text. The exclusion of women from the public policy-making process has been empirically proven to give birth to gender-blind legal products and ignore the real domestic and public needs of women. Therefore, women's involvement in the political arena is the main instrument to realize benefits and reject harm (*dar'u al-mafāsid*).

Muslim political thinkers have long associated systemic justice with the stability and welfare of the state. Ibn Khaldun, argues that the establishment of a civilization and political power depends heavily on the moral commitment of the ruler to universal justice and the fulfillment of the common good; If justice collapses and exclusion occurs, then social cohesion (*ʿasabiyyah*) will weaken and trigger political decay.[75] Bringing this idea into the modern era, the state will not achieve the full benefit if half of its population (women) is not involved in formulating public policies. Affirmative action thus transforms from a mere political concession to a theological necessity for the benefit of the people.

These three concepts form a solid rope, the reconceptualization of *qiwāmah* as a dismantling of theological barriers, *al-ʿadālah* as an upstream principle (ideal vision), *al-maṣlaḥah* as a downstream instrument (practical application). Through this kind of analysis, affirmative action is no longer accused of being a product of Western secularization or an external import agenda, but rather legitimately recognized as a moral obligation inherent in the religious ethos

[74] Abi Ja'far bin Al-Tabari and Muhammad bin Jarir, *Tafsir Al-Tabari: Jami 'Al-Bayan 'an Ta'wil Ay Al-Qur'an,* Mesir: Dar Hajar, 2001.

[75] Muhammad bin Khaldun and Al-Allamah Abdurrahman, *Mukaddimah Ibn Khaldun* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al Kautsar, 2001).

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of Islam itself. This structure is in line with the experimental finding that when an issue of social justice is communicated through the language of inclusive divinity, the cultural resistance of Muslim societies will decay and turn into active political acceptance.

This study shows that the majority of the academic community of PTKI in South Sulawesi interprets Qur'anic principles such as *al-ʿadālah* and *al-maṣlaḥah* as normative legitimacy that supports affirmative action for women. These findings are consistent with an experimental study by Masoud, Jamal, and Nugent that found that *framing* policies based on Qur'anic narratives of justice increases support for women's political rights in Muslim societies. Thus, in the context of this study, religious normativity does not work as an obstacle to gender equality, but as a source of moral legitimacy for women's political representation.[76]

2. Gender Equality in Affirmative Policy: *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* Perspective

The *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* approach provides a normative framework for integrating text and context. The principles of protection of human dignity and social justice can be the basis for the legitimacy of affirmative policies as an instrument for the correction of structural inequality. The approach *of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* in contemporary politics in South Sulawesi has succeeded in shifting the paradigm from a legalistic scripturalist reading of texts to ethical-teleological hermeneutics. Through this framework, sacred texts are no longer understood as rigid formal rules, but as a manifesto for the protection of human dignity that is adaptive to the dynamics of modern democracy. This normative transformation gave birth to a collective consciousness in which affirmative action for women's representation was no longer suspected of being a Western secularization agenda but rather recognized as a religious obligation to correct structural inequality. This reconciliation between theological values and representative democracy occurs because *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* is able to dissect the innermost essence of the five pillars of universal protection (*al-darūriyyāt al-khamsah*). The policy of women's political quota actualizes *ḥifẓ al-dīn* (protection of religion) by clearing the image of Islam from oppressive narratives, as well as *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of the soul) and *ḥifẓ al-ʿaql* (protection of reason) by guaranteeing women's right to life, security, and intellectual rights to participate in determining the future direction of the nation.

More profoundly, the fulfillment of the other two pillars, namely *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (protection of offspring) and *ḥifẓ al-māl* (protection of property), can be achieved in a just manner if women occupy strategic positions in the legislature to formulate gender-friendly economic, reproductive health, and child protection

[76] Mohamed, "Islam, Politics, and Women in the Public Sphere : Between Institutions , Movements, and Practices."

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regulations. The integration of these five *aspects of maqāṣid* as the basis of political morality has a strong legitimacy from the roots of the multidimensional Islamic intellectual tradition. Fakhruddin al-Razi, in his capacity as a classical mufasir, while reflecting on the principle of universal justice in the Qur'an, affirms that all laws of God are inherently revealed for the benefit of the servant (*maṣāliḥ al-ʿibād*), where the fulfillment of just human rights in the public sphere is the highest manifestation of the will of the *shari'a*.[77] In line with al-Razi, Al-Mawardi projects that the main function of political leadership (*al-imāmah*) is as an instrument to maintain the nobility of religion while managing worldly affairs (*ḥirāsat al-dīn wa siyāsat al-dunyā*), a mandate that demands the equitable arrangement of state institutions to be able to protect the rights of all citizens without exception.[78] Meanwhile, Mernissi emphasized that when the formal political structure of the past failed to realize this justice due to gender bias, it was necessary to conduct a historical autopsy on the Islamic political tradition. She proves that the marginalization of women from the stage of power is not the original will of egalitarian Qur'anic normativity, but rather the product of the distortion of the post-prophetic patriarchal elite that imprisons the message of Islamic liberation for the sake of dynastic politics.[79] Through the mutually supportive theoretical interweaving of the three thinkers, affirmative policy obtains a solid epistemic confirmation, it is an effort to restore women's legitimate public rights historically, theologically, and politically in order to achieve the universal benefits aspired to by the sharia.

In the context of South Sulawesi, the findings of this study show that respondents who adopt the *maqāṣid* approach tend to have a more positive affective and conative attitude towards women's affirmative actions. Thus, the *maqāṣid* serves as an epistemic bridge that allows consistency between Qur'anic normativity and the demands of modern representative democracy.

Citizenship Literacy and Local Political Practices

1. Citizenship Literacy in the Theoretical Framework of Religious Democracy

Civic literacy includes not only the procedural understanding of political institutions, but also the normative capacity to assess the legitimacy of public policy and political participation based on the values of justice, equality, and

[77] Fakhruddin Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir* (Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1990).

[78] Abdul Muien et al., "Politik Islam Al-Mawardi's Thoughts & Its Relevance to Contemporary Political Systems," *TAPIS: Journal Teropong Aspirasi Politik Islam* 22, no. 2 (2025), p. 128–52.

[79] Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam* (Perseus Books Cambridge, MA, 1991).

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human rights.[80] In religious societies, civic literacy often works in a dialectic between religious norms and democratic norms.[81] Contemporary research shows that religion does not inherently impede democracy, but can rather be a "*moral repertoire*" that supports inclusive participation when interpreted contextually[82]. Within this framework, the PTKI community can be understood as an epistemic group that produces Islamic-based citizenship discourses to strengthen the legitimacy of women's affirmative policies. The findings of the study show that the majority of respondents understand the 30% women's quota policy, but their meaning is not purely procedural. They attribute it to the principles *of al-ʿadālah, al-musāwāh*, and *maqāṣid al-syarīʿah*. This indicates that civic literacy in PTKI is integrated with religious literacy. In line with Fox, religion functions as a mediating variable that shapes political attitudes, not a single determinant; Women's affirmative support emerged as a reinterpretation of Islamic values in constitutional democracy, not a secular liberal adoption.[83]

2. Citizenship Literacy and Attitude Formation towards Affirmation

Empirically, there is a positive correlation between policy literacy and affirmative action support. Respondents who obtained information through lectures, campus discourse, and intra-campus organizations showed higher approval than those who accessed sporadic information from popular media. Higher education serves as a catalyst for civic engagement,[84] and political education to increase tolerance and support for equal representation.[85] These findings strengthen the thesis in the context of Indonesian Islam: religion-based higher education can expand the normative legitimacy of gender equality policies.

But literacy does not automatically result in unconditional support. Some respondents were ambivalent because on the one hand they accepted equality but criticized quotas that were considered formalistic or not capacity-based on the other. This ambivalence reflects "gender traditionalism in transition", which is the transition phase between patriarchal norms and modern equality values. Therefore, literacy in PTKI is deliberative, namely attitudes towards affirmation

[80] Alscher, et.al., "Civic Education, Teaching Quality and Students' Willingness to Participate in Political and Civic Life."

[81] Anwar Mhajne and Gregory W. Saxton, "Gender Egalitarian Attitudes and Support for Islamist Parties in the Middle East and North Africa," *Journal of Women, Politics and Policy* 43, no. 2 (2022), p. 227–44.

[82]Mohamed, "Islam, Politics, and Women in the Public Sphere: Between Institutions, Movements, and Practices."

[83]Jonathan Fox, *An Introduction to Religion and Politics: Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2018).

[84] Zaure Baizhumakyzy et al., "Fostering Democratic Engagement: Factors Shaping Youth Political Participation in Kazakhstan," *Frontiers in Political Science* 7, no. July (2025), p. 1–17.

[85] Mujani, "Behavioural Approaches to Muslim Politics: The State of the Art."

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formed through the negotiation of religious values, consideration of political capacity, and perceptions of local political practices.[86]

3. Local Political Practices and the Reality of Patronage

Another key dimension is the interaction of civic literacy with local political practices which are still influenced by patronage, clientelism, and kinship networks. The literature suggests patronage limits the effectiveness of affirmative policies[87]. In this study, some respondents assessed that the main obstacle was not the normative legitimacy of women, but the oligarchic local political structure. This demonstrates structural literacy: the awareness that barriers to women's representation are institutional, not theological. This argument is in line with the concept of patronage democracy.[88] Affirmative action can be reduced to a formal symbol without structural transformation. Therefore, many PTKI members articulate critical support, accepting affirmations as a first step, but demanding deeper institutional reform.

Gender and the Political Role of Women and Tafsir of the Qur'an: *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah* Perspective

The relationship between normative beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors can be explained through the theory of planned behavior,[89] that normative beliefs form evaluation, then evaluation produces attitudes, and attitudes influence intentions and behaviors. In religious democracy, normative beliefs are rooted in religious ethics that provide a moral framework for judging public policy. This study shows that the normative beliefs of the PTKI community are sourced from *al-ʿadālah, al-musāwāh,* and *maṣlaḥah*, which are the evaluative basis for affirmative action. The majority of respondents interpreted the policy as a corrective instrument in line with Islamic ethical goals. This is consistent with the argument that religion influences politics through the construction of meaning and legitimacy, not deterministically.[90]

The transformation of beliefs is also seen in the internalization of Qur'anic justice which correlates with support for women's representation. However, ambivalence arises when support for equality is accompanied by criticism of quotas that are considered non-meritocratic. This reflects the tensions of

[86] Kaye-Essien, "The Socio-Political Context of Citizen Activism: An International Comparative Perspective."

[87] Martín Ordóñez, "Driven by Clients: A Variant of Clientelism and Its Consequences for Democracy," *Latin American Research Review* 60, no. 2 (2025), p. 298–316.

[88] Zetterberg et al., "Democracy and the Adoption of Electoral Gender Quotas Worldwide."

[89] Alscher, Ludewig, and McElvany, "Civic Education, Teaching Quality and Students' Willingness to Participate in Political and Civic Life: Political Interest and Knowledge as Mediators."

[90] Fox, *An Introduction to Religion and Politics: Theory and Practice*.

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egalitarianism and meritocracy in affirmative policy[91] and value system-based attitude dynamics.[92] At the behavioral level, the majority of respondents expressed their willingness to support women in political contestation and normative advocacy on campus. This is in line with civic voluntarism that education and social networks increase participation.[93] But there is a gap between concrete attitudes and actions, influenced by the perception of local patronage structures and oligarchs that suppress the effectiveness of individual support.[94] This means that the conversion of attitudes into behavior is influenced by the political opportunity structure.

In this regard, Rusdaya Basri, a professor of Islamic law at IAIN Parepare, asserts that from a legal perspective, affirmative action for women in the political realm is not merely a compromise to meet the demands of modern democracy; rather, it possesses strong ontological and epistemological roots within the Qur'an. This connection can be explained through four key concepts: *musāwāh* (ontological and existential equality), '*adl*, *maṣlaḥah*, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. Such a policy serves as a Sharia-compliant intermediary instrument (*wasīlah*) for realizing the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. Since *musāwāh* and '*adl* represent ideal-normative values while political inequality is a sociological reality, affirmative action acts as a bridge grounded in *fiqh al-wāqi*' (understanding reality) to translate Qur'anic ideals into practical political action.[95]

In a similar vein, Barsihanoor, a professor of Islamic thought at UIN Alauddin, explains that the principle of gender equality in the Qur'an must be situated within the framework of *musāwāh, 'adl, maṣlaḥah,* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. These four concepts demonstrate that Islam does not structure the relationship between men and women based on the superiority of one gender over the other, but rather on the foundations of justice, responsibility, competence, and public interest. Fundamentally, the Qur'an positions men and women as human beings who equally possess human dignity, moral responsibility, and the right to participate in social life. Therefore, equality does not necessarily imply biological uniformity; instead, it signifies equality in terms of human values, opportunities, responsibilities, and access to the public sphere. When reading the Qur'an, he also

[91] Kim and Fallon, "Making Women Visible: How Gender Quotas Shape Global Attitudes toward Women in Politics."

[92] Rahman, "Islamic Doctrine and Women's Economic Rights: Implications of an Ambiguous Relationship for State Policy in the Muslim World."

[93] Aisha Ibrahim Yusuf and Amina Aliyu, "An Exposition of Youth and Political Participation in Katsina Local Government Through the Lens of Civic Voluntarism Model," *African Journal of Humanities and Contemporary Education Research* 20, no. 1 (2025), p. 119–33.

[94] Sara de Jong et al., "Agents of Order? Brokerage and Empowerment in Development and Conflict," *Journal of International Development* 35, no. 3 (2023), p. 385–400.

[95]Interview with Rusdaya Basri, Professor of Islamic Law, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, October 12, 2025.

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see the importance of distinguishing between terms referring to biological sex and those referring to character or social position.[96]

Echoing this sentiment, Aisyah Kara, a Professor of Hadith at UIN Alauddin, emphasizes that the principles of *musāwah* and *al-'adālah* align perfectly with the spirit of the Qur'an and the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. The *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* itself prioritizes justice, public interest (*maṣlaḥah*), and the preservation of human dignity. Thus, from a Qur'anic perspective, gender equality is not merely about granting equal rights; it is also about ensuring that no party whether male or female is subjected to injustice. It is important to remember that while the Qur'an was revealed within a specific social context, its spirit consistently advocates for justice and respect for all human beings. When discussing political matters, this implies that both women and men possess equal access and opportunities to participate in the public sphere without discrimination. The Qur'an establishes no explicit, universal normative prohibition against women's political participation. On the contrary, various Qur'anic principles such as *musāwah*, *al-'adālah*, *khilāfah* (stewardship), *shūrā* (consultation), and shared moral responsibility provide a foundation for the involvement of both men and women in public life. This is where the principle of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* becomes crucial. Gender equality should not be understood as making men and women identical in every respect; rather, it is about guaranteeing justice, public interest, dignity, responsible freedom, and proportional access to the public sphere.[97]

Nevertheless, the implementation of political affirmative action and gender equality for women faces challenges rooted in deeply ingrained social and cultural constructs that are often misinterpreted. This is particularly relevant in Bugis-Makassar society, where the concept of *siri'* signifying shame or honor prevails; *siri'* is often interpreted to mean that a woman loses honor if she becomes a leader in the public sphere and holds authority over men. These patriarchal social and cultural constructs are what hinder women's political roles a reality found not only among the Bugis-Makassar people but also in other communities across Indonesia.

In this context, Indo Santalia, a Professor of Islamic Thought at As'adiyah University in Sengkang, explains that the root of the social and cultural constructs tending to marginalize women lies in the interpretation of the Quran. A prime example is the concept of *qiwāmah* found in Surah An-Nisa, verse 34, which states that men are *qawwamun* (leaders, those responsible, or protectors) over women. Throughout the history of exegesis, the meaning of this verse has shifted significantly from its original context. Classical exegetes such as Al-Tabari and Al-Qurtubi generally interpreted *qiwāmah* as a functional relationship tied to two

[96]Interview with Barsihanoor, Professor of Islamic Thought, UIN Alauddin, October 10, 2025.

[97]Interview with Aisyah Kara, Professor of Hadith, UIN Alauddin, October 10, 2025.

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conditions explicitly mentioned in the verse itself: specific advantages (*bima faddhalallahu*) and the responsibility for financial support (*bima anfaqu min amwalihim*). This implies that, even in classical readings, male leadership was conditional and contextual rather than ontological or based on an absolute, innate nature. However, in the evolution of post-classical *fiqh*, articularly through interaction with the established patriarchal social structures of pre-Islamic Arabia *qiwāmah* came to be interpreted more broadly as a general male authority over women in both the domestic and public spheres.[98]

In line with this, Ruslan Sangaji, a Professor of Tafsir at the Bone Islamic Institute, supports the aforementioned view. He emphasizes that the Quran establishes equality and a shared origin between men and women a principle embodied in the concept of *musāwah*. Furthermore, the concept of *nafsin wāhidah* (a single soul) serves as a theological basis for the shared human dignity of men and women. This equality carries significant implications for the political sphere; if both men and women are viewed as moral and social agents, there should be no cultural or structural barriers unfairly restricting women's political participation. Consequently, affirmative action regarding women in politics is viewed as a tool for achieving equality, even though patriarchal cultural constructs are acknowledged as a significant cultural obstacle. In the Bugis-Makassar context, this necessitates a reinterpretation of cultural values values that may have previously been interpreted in ways that restricted women's agency, including in the realms of leadership and politics. [99]

Thus, based on the preceding discussion, it can be asserted that the concept of gender equality in the Qur'an encompassing terms such as *musāwah* (equality), *al-'adl* (justice), *al-qiyāmah* (standing/status), and *al-maṣlaḥah* (public interest) should not be understood solely in terms of utility or support for women's political roles.[100] Rather, the affirmation of women's political participation as emphasized by academics and scholars from Islamic higher education institutions in South Sulawesi must be grounded in the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law). This framework establishes the goals of Islamic law regarding the realization of justice, gender equality,[101] and the upholding of honor

[98]Interview with Indo Santalia, Professor of Islamic Thought, Universitas As'adiyah, Sengkang, October 11, 2025.

[99]Interview with Ruslan Sangaji, Professor of Tafsir, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Bone, October 15, 2025.

[100]Neng Eri Sofiana, et.al., "Gender-Responsive Construction in Nikah-Kawin Traditions in West Java: A Qiwamah Perspective," *El-Mashlahah* 14, No. 1 (2024), p. 71-94. Viktoriia Kobko-Odarii, et.al., "Reconstructing Gender Equality in Family Law: A Normative and Comparative Analysis of European Family Law Systems in Religious Context," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum dan Pemikiran* 25, No. 1 (2025).

[101]Makmunzir Mukhtar, et.al., "Gender, Inheritance, and the Living Qur'an: The Implementation of Justice for Women in Inheritance Distribution in Aceh, Indonesia," *El-Usrah:*

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and dignity for women's socio-political roles and functions in contemporary society.

Interactively, the alignment of Qur'anic norms and local practices takes place through: (1) normative internalization; (2) the formulation of a deliberative attitude; and (3) contextual behavioral expressions that are limited by patronage structures. This process can be understood as Islamic civic mediation, which is an attitude that expands the argument for the compatibility of religion and democracy and challenging the essentialist view of Islam as a source of resistance to women's leadership.[102] This research shows that the attitude of the PTKI community towards women's affirmative policies is not solely determined by the normative orientation of the Qur'anic text, but is mediated by local political experiences. The debate about religiosity and gender equality in democracy needs to be re-read. Women's affirmative support arose not because of a reduction in religiosity, but because of a reinterpretation of the principles of justice, benefit, and moral equality of human beings. These findings support evidence that religion can be a source of legitimacy for women's political inclusion and propose a shift from the religion versus gender equality model towards hermeneutic mediation of religious normativity.

Theoretically, this study develops the Mediated Normativity Model (MNM), Qur'anic principles, hermeneutic processes (textual, contextual, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*), civic literacy, and exposure to local political practices interact to form attitudes towards affirmative policies. MNM enriches the theory of religious political behavior that was previously dominated by modernization/secularization, by placing religiosity as a source of cognitive-mediated and institutionalized norms. Empirical findings (highest support for contextually oriented groups; resistance to hierarchical-textualist orientation) corroborate that hermeneutics is a key intervening variable in the study of Politics and Religion.

Policy implications include: (a) reformulation of the PTKI curriculum to integrate contextual interpretation, gender studies, and civic literacy; (b) strengthening political literacy based on Qur'anic values as an instrument of inclusive policy support; and (c) the design of affirmative policies that are sensitive to religious context through the framing of Islamic justice values, as resistance often arises from the perception of conflict with religious norms. The novelty statement of this research emphasizes the contribution, theoretical innovation (MNM), empirical contribution from the context of an underrepresented Muslim-majority democracy, a hermeneutic turn that places interpretation as a key variable, as well as the relevance of policies that connect

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Jurnal Hukum Keluarga 9, No. 1 (2026). Ridwan, "Gender Equality in Islamic Inheritance Law: Rereading Muhammad Shahrur's Thought," *al-Manahij* 16, No. 2 (2022).

[102]Mohamed, "Islam, Politics, and Women in the Public Sphere: Between Institutions, Movements, and Practices."

Qur'anic interpretation and public policy design concretely, thus contributing to the global debate on religion, democracy, and gender without a reductionist or apologetic approach.

Conclucion

The study indicates that the attitude of the Islamic higher education academic community toward the affirmation of women exists within a dialectical space between the normative principles of the Qur'an and local political practices that remain influenced by patriarchal socio-cultural structures. Normatively theologically, the majority of respondents emphasized that the reinterpretation of the concept of *qiwamah* and the principles of *musāwāh* (equality), *'adl* (justice), *mashlahah 'ammah* (common good), and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* provide moral legitimacy for women's participation in the public sphere, including politics. The spiritual equality and collective social responsibility of men and women is understood as an ethical basis that does not conflict with women's leadership. Therefore, affirmative action is seen as a corrective instrument to address structural inequality, not a violation of religious norms. However, at the level of social practice and interpretation, ambivalence arises. Some respondents still limit women's political roles through traditional interpretations of leadership and public domestic divisions. Local culture, political patronage, and perceptions of social stability influence the acceptance of gender affirmation, so support is not always linear between normative understanding and practical choice. The quantitative findings showed considerable support, especially in respondents with higher gender literacy and organizational engagement, while qualitative findings confirmed that the variation in attitudes was determined by the ability to reconcile Islamic teachings with local realities. Overall, the effectiveness of women's affirmation depends on cultural and hermeneutic transformation through contextual religious literacy, inclusive political education, and consistent institutional support, with PTKI as a strategic agent of a more inclusive and gender-equitable democracy.

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