RASULULLAH & RESPONSIBILITIES

Gender justice perceptions in and through education in Banda Aceh

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This thesis: Rasulullah & Responsibilities was submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of Master of Science in the field of International Development Studies at the Graduate School of Social Sciences, University of Amsterdam.

The cover illustration is borrowed from online deviantart artist ‘Zakyash’

All pictures presented prior to every chapter have been made by the author, Lisa Stumpel. The pictures never portray any respondents, or people affiliated with the research.

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January 2014
Acknowledgements
A thesis like this is never the product of one person’s effort. I would like to dedicate this paragraph to express my gratitude to everyone involved. First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Mieke Lopes Cardozo. The opportunity to go to Banda Aceh and take part in this research has been a most incredible adventure from the start. Her guidance and academic comments, as well as showing understanding and personal support in times necessary has made the process of making this thesis an interesting and exciting learning experience of which I am proud to share the end product now.

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge my local supervisor in Banda Aceh, dr. Eka Srimulyani. Her support with finding respondents and unlimited enthusiasm and interest in the project has invaluable.

I would also like to thank my second supervisor Graciella Paillet for taking the time and interest to contribute.

I would like to sincerely thank all the people of the International Centre for Asian and Indian Ocean Studies. Without their help, friendliness and overall support our time in Banda Aceh was undoubtedly more challenging.

Also I am very appreciative of all respondents who have invested their time and interest to contribute to this study. Ultimately, this could not have been possible without them. Which brings us to Fitri. A special shout out to this lady who has become a friend abroad.

My fellow student researchers in the field, and friends Genny Wenger and Clayton Naylor need to be mentioned as well. You both are now part of some of my fondest memories.

Finally there are my friends and family. Elisabeth, Roos, Wies, Genny, Jero, Tibbe, and especially Mam, Bap, Guus: It has not been the easiest of times for me, and without your tremendous faith, constant readiness to stand by and unmatched love and attention this would not have been possible.

I consider myself very lucky to have experienced and accomplished my time as a student. With this thesis, I now close a phase of my life. I am curious to what the future will hold in store for me.
Glossary

Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indonesian words</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tr>
<td>Agama</td>
<td>Religion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bagus</td>
<td>Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buka puasa</td>
<td>Open fasting – breaking of the fasting at sunset during Ramadan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pancasila</td>
<td>Philosophical foundations Indonesian government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesantren/Dayah</td>
<td>Islamic boarding school – Javanese/Acehnese</td>
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<td>Ulama</td>
<td>Religious leader</td>
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<td>Swasta</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<td>Negeri</td>
<td>State</td>
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<td>Laksamana</td>
<td>Admiral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apa itu</td>
<td>What is/is what</td>
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<td>Serambi Mekkah</td>
<td>Verandah of Mecca</td>
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What has struck me most about the women of Banda Aceh is their colorfulness. Next to being incredibly friendly, their bright, eccentric, patterned, bejeweled, fashionable hijabs and overall appearances are unavoidable. Prepared to adjust to Islamic wear, I brought a scarf which could serve as headscarf during my field research there. It was black. Soon did I notice this color was dull, and bringing only one headscarf could not qualify as ‘being prepared’. There is an incredible amount of attention paid to the shopping, selecting and selling of colorful and pronounced headscarves to distinguish yourself as a woman. Instantly, I learned that wearing a headscarf is yet another expression of identity and a lot of time and effort is invested. And interestingly it proved quite difficult to follow this trend. Ultimately, it is another addition to a

1 Particular way of wearing a headscarf.
women’s wardrobe through which you can show what you like: another chance to express yourself, inextricably linked to your religion: the Islam.

However, a chance to express yourself as a woman, of course, is not just a matter of selecting one certain headscarf over another. It is way more than that, and much more important. Next to the freedom to shop, and go outside, it is also connected to having a voice, or being recognized as having different needs than males. Being equal to men, and having similar opportunities. To work, for instance, or to go to school and university, to name another. This brings us to the theme of this research: gender justice. And in particular how gender justice perceptions are formed through and within the education system in the city of Banda Aceh. Although the introduction and photo paint a hopeful picture, it was not long ago that a decades long conflict affected women’s freedom severely. Followed by a devastating tsunami that ‘brought’ peace. Currently ruled by shari’a law, Banda Aceh can be characterized as both a post conflict and post crisis area, with a fragile peace. Gender justice is a crucial component in maintaining and establishing a lasting peace. And education, in turn, has an important function in shaping ideas of gender justice which confirms the relevance of researching these topics.

The purpose of this study is thus to uncover in which ways the current perceptions of gender justice take shape, and how these perceptions are influenced by public high school education in the city of Banda Aceh. The title 'Rasulullah & Responsibilities' reveals two important aspects which are dominant in understanding the perceptions of gender justice in this case. Islam and a focus on responsibilities towards each other and society. Through answering the research question: **How does education influence gender justice in Banda Aceh, analyzed through perceptions of different relevant educational actors?**

After this introduction this thesis will proceed explaining about the fieldwork location Banda Aceh. A description of the history, the recent conflict, tsunami and an overview of the current education system in Banda Aceh will be presented in chapter two. This chapter is followed by an overview of the theoretical framework which this research entails in chapter three. Hereafter, chapter four will be dedicated to the methodology of this research. Chapters five, six and seven are analytical chapters in which the data found is reflected upon and analyzed. Finally, these chapters will lead up to the conclusions, which will be elaborated on in the final part of this thesis. In this section answers to the research questions will be formulated.

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2 Note spelling, 'veil'
Introduction
Aceh province is located in the most northern part of Sumatra island in Indonesia. It lies along the Melaka straits which has long been a main route to the main lands of Southeast Asia (Ross 2005: 39). This location has greatly influenced the history of Acehnese. The Acehnese history is characterized by many years of war and conflict. Early in the 20th century a Dutch governor described the Acehnese people as having ‘a fanatical love of freedom, reinforced by a powerful sense of race, with a consequent contempt for foreigners and hatred for the infidel intruder’ (Reid 2004: 302). This quotation describes the themes of centuries of rebellions and wars. Map [1] shows the location of Aceh in Indonesia. Map [2] provides a more detailed overview of the Aceh Province and shows the location of the capital city of Banda Aceh, the location of this research.
This chapter will provide a (short) overview of the history of the province, the ancient wars and recent conflict, the devastating tsunami and how these events have influenced the women of Aceh. Since this thesis is concerned with education, a description of the education system in (Banda) Aceh will also be presented.

2.1 History of Aceh:
Golden Age, sultanates, Islam and heroines

Although the history of the Aceh province can be traced back to the year 700 (Askandar 2005) for the purpose of this thesis it is more relevant to start at the sixteenth and seventeenth century. It is in these times of ‘emperical greatness’ that the Islamic identity of Aceh truly took shape (Riddell 2006: 39). These centuries are also known for the sultanate rule of men as well as women.

Aceh’s position in the Southeast Asian region significantly changed in the beginning of the sixteenth century when ‘the great Muslim state of Melaka’ fell to Portuguese domination in 1511. This event indicated the start of a major reshaping in the area, with several north Sumatran ports struggling to capture ‘lucrative trading activities’ which, before, were dominated by Melaka (Riddell 2006: 39). In the decades following 1511 a number of Acehnese sultans have undertaken several military actions to continue to expand the port of Aceh at the expense of neighboring cities. The sixteenth century was characterized by the strengthening of Aceh through attacking and conquering cities, sultanates and ports surrounding it. By the time it was 1590, Aceh was recognized as a ‘significant political power’ as well as the ‘intellectual and spiritual center of Islam’ in the southeast Asian region of that time (Riddell 2006: 40). Trading pepper to Europe made Aceh the main commercial Muslim centre of the region (Khan 2010: 3).
The flourishing period lasted throughout the seventeenth century in which the last 60 years the Sultanate Aceh was ruled by women.

In is also during these centuries that Aceh became known as *Serambi Mekkah* which translates as ‘verandah of mecca’. This Islamic identity seriously took shape when the great sultan Iskandar Muda took the throne in 1607 (until his death in 1636). In the first years of his reign he reinforced the legal system, basing it on Islamic principles. This development coupled with the growth of the port Aceh resulted in a status recognized as ‘the great core city of Islam’ (Riddell 2006: 49). Since the political and commercial significance of Aceh was rising, many pilgrims travelled through on their ways to and from Arabia. Influencing the locals through teaching and, in doing so drawing on ‘elements from other Islamic areas (…) adapting them to local contexts’ making Aceh rise as a prominent player in the ‘world Islamic stage’ (Riddell 2006: 49). To this day Aceh is ‘more devoutly Islamic’ compared with the rest of Indonesia. Aceh is the only region in Indonesia which has the right to implemented and apply the shari’ a legislation system, Islamic law, with religious police to ‘monitor compliance among Aceh’s Muslim communities’ (Milallos 2007: 290).

**Warriors of the 18th-19th century**

In the history of Aceh, women have had numerous important and prominent positions. Like the queens described above Aceh has a rich history of women involved in war and conflict. The heroines well-known lived between the seventeenth and nineteenth century. The greatest legacy is provided by the ‘heroic trinity’: Laksamana Malahayati, Cut Meutia and Cut Nyak Dhien (Clavé-Çelik 2008: 10).

Admiral Malahayati (picture 1), who lost her husband in combat herself was reported to have ‘created a seaborne army of widowed women’ also known as Armada Inong Bale and has defeated the Dutch twice in battle in the seventeenth century. Cut Meutia and Cut Nyak Dhien (picture 2) have also been presented ‘as continuing the fight of their dead husbands, sometimes exceeding them in passion and constancy’ (Clavé-Çelik 2008: 10). There have been many more women warriors in the nineteenth century, such as ‘Pocut Baren (1880-1933), Pocut Meurah Intan (d. 1937), Pocut Meuligo (n.d.), Teungku Fakinah (d. 1933) and Teungku Cutpo Fatimah (d. 1912)’ however they are less known since they do not portray the typical heroine who was often from noble descent, beautiful, brave and died a martyr death (Clavé-Çelik 2008: 10).

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3 Admiral
4 Status designation for women of nobility.
5 Widows Armada
2.2 Post fire and water: Recent Conflict 1976 – 2005 and the tsunami

After the independence of Indonesia from former colonizers in 1949\(^6\) Aceh province was included in the republic of Indonesia. For two reasons this was disappointing for the Aceh province: firstly they did not agree on the *pancasila* foundation of the constitution and secondly, they were not interested in becoming forged into the province of north Sumatra (Askandar 2005). The precursor to Aceh’s independence movement began in 1953 with a rebellion known as Darul Islam, aiming to require an autonomous state within the Indonesian government. However, this changed in the 1970’s when the Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*, GAM) started the demand for complete independence. Founded by Hasan M. di Tiro the GAM has on and off been influential. In general there are three distinctive phases recognizable during the conflict, namely 1976, 1989, and 1999 (Ross 2005: 45, Sherlock 2003). It is in the second period that the national Indonesian authorities responded with military offensive called ‘Military Operations Zone (Daerah Operasi Militer, DOM), which has ushered a time of ‘violence and unrestrained and unaccountable military actions’ and during the years of DOM there have been many ‘allegations of atrocities and human rights abuses by both sides in the conflict’ (Sherlock 2003). During a decades long conflict many lives were lost, a staggering 12 000 Acehnese were killed and accounts of rape, torture, intimidation and beatings were numerous and uncountable (Askandar 2005, Sherlock 2003).

\(^6\) Dutch recognition of an independent Indonesia. Sukarno declared the republic of Indonesia to be independent from the Netherlands in 1945.
Conflict and women

In general it has been recognized that armed conflict affect women and men differently, moreover, women in these situations of armed conflict are identified as a critical area of concern by the United Nations (UN) (Gardam & Jarvis 2000). Discrimination against women exist in every society, though during times of conflict different aspects of these discrimination are exacerbated. Examples are the increase of (sexual) violence, a shortage to access valuable supplies and food, loss of social status and the reinforcement of stereotyped gender roles (Gardam & Jarvis 2000: 5-37). In the case of the conflict in Aceh there have been reports of rapes, torture and hostages directed specifically at women. However, it is difficult to find scientific references explaining the state of women during this particular conflict. From personal conversations during the fieldwork, it has been mentioned that women have been discriminated on basis of gender. It is also reported that, since the Acehnese heroines described earlier are very idealized stereotype, it has been hard for women and female combatants to ‘re-integrate and claim their place in post-conflict Acehnese society’ (Clavé-Çelik 2008).

Peace agreement and the ‘Tsunami is a blessing’

On the 26th of December, 2004 a seaquake measuring an incredible 9,3 on Richter scale occurred only 100 km outside the coast of west coast of Sumatra (Titov et al 2005, 2045). The seaquake resulted in a massive tsunami which devastated the coastal areas of a number of countries (see map [3]). The Aceh province, and it’s capital Banda Aceh in particular, was ‘most affected by the tsunami because of both its proximity to the earthquake epicenter and its large coastal population’ (Doocy et al 2007: 146) (picture [3]). Mortality numbers in the Aceh province differ between an estimated 130 000 and 150 000 deaths, almost 40 000 persons missing and slightly over 500 000 people displaced as a result of the tsunami. Even though ‘instantaneous’ disasters such as this are expected to cause deaths more uniformly than in other disasters, there is evidence that there is a significant differentiation by age and gender. Female victims and deaths distinctly outnumbered males. In certain regions ratio’s between female and male deaths being 3:1 (Milallos 2007, Doocy et al 2007, Felten-Biermann 2006).

In the aftermath of the tsunami women are also at risk to being ‘pressed into marrying earlier than in the past and into having more children closer together, with significant implications for their education, livelihoods, and reproductive health’ while ‘it is also more difficult for women to access money and emergency supplies’ because males are ‘recognised as
head of the household, which has meant that women have been unable to collect entitled relief cash and good’ (MacDonald 2005).

Despite the horror of the tsunami, the devastation of the area and negative effects for women, from personal conversations during the fieldwork period it became clear that people often referred to the tsunami as a ‘blessing’ or ‘wave of peace’ as well (Gaillard et al 2008). This is explained since the it ‘brought the attention of the world to Aceh and ignited again the sparks for peace between the warring parties, this time pushed by humanitarian concerns and the need to set aside the confrontations and help the victims’ and peace became a ‘real possibility’ (Askandar 2005, Milallos 2007: 289). For the first time, Aceh was less closed off from the world and all parties involved have been forced to work together (Gaillard et al 2008). This diplomacy resulted in a ceasefire that was quickly inaugurated and with help of Finnish negotiators a peace agreement was finally established between Aceh and the Indonesian government.

**Gender Mainstreaming and Shari’A Law**

The post-tsunami period in Aceh is characterized by the slogan ‘build Aceh back better’ (Jauhola 2010: 174). While this obviously refers to the building back of Aceh after the devastating impact of the tsunami, literally in the form of infrastructure and housing. But it is also figuratively, through building back better ‘ideas, ideals and norms’ (Jauhola 2010b: 34). This latter sense of the slogan has also been used by NGOs after the tsunami and conflict who have been involved in promoting gender (Jauhola 2010b: 33). Gender and its key components in the reconstruction period in Aceh has been explained as follows:

‘promotion of gender equality are the production of ‘gender sensitive’ information for ‘gender responsive’ programme planning, and the promotion of sex-disaggregated statistics (...) The ‘ultimate goal [is]: the full engagement of women and men as equal partners in the social, cultural and economic development of Aceh and Nias’” (Jauhola 2010b: 40).
In 2001 the *shari’a* law was formally implemented in governance and legislative processes in Aceh. Which entails that any practices or arguments made to ensure the gender mainstreaming as defined above, have to be based on the interpretations of the Quran in order to ‘gain any respect in public’ (Jauhola 2010b: 40).

**Education in Banda Aceh**

Since the scope of this thesis is on education and its influence on gender justice perceptions in Banda Aceh, it is useful to present a small overview of the education system in the region. The figure below is focused on the city of Banda Aceh and derived from interviews and observations during fieldwork. There is a distinction between religious education and public education. The most important distinction is that the religious education is overseen by the ministry of religious affairs, while the state organized schools are monitored by the ministry of education. They are separate bodies within the education system. Since this research only includes the public state regulated education, a short description of the left side of the figure will be made. The curriculum that is used in schools is based upon a nationally designed curriculum, which is overseen by the provincial level. In Banda Aceh a distinction is made between private and public state schools, which are indicated by an ‘S’ (*swasta* for private) or ‘N’ (*negeri* for public). Included in this study are high schools, which are grades ten to twelve. High schools in Banda Aceh are either ‘SMA’ type or ‘SMK’ with the latter being vocational school. The majority of schools visited in this research are of the SMA type, but one private and one vocational school are also included. More explanations about the schools are provided in the methodology chapter.
Figure [1]: Education system Banda Aceh (Clayton, Stumpel, Wenger 2013).
Introduction
As this research is concerned with exploring the meaning and perceptions of gender justice within the education system in Banda Aceh, Indonesia and how it leads to female participation in society which is crucially important for achieving and maintaining peace, it is useful to first shape a theoretical framework through which the concept of gender justice is explained. This theory chapter will firstly develop an understanding of gender justice through reviewing different mainstream theories and approaches as presented by Nancy Fraser (1995, 2005, 2007) and Anne Marie Goetz (2007). Secondly, drawing on the work of Jing Yin (2006) and Masooda
Rasulullah & Responsibilities

Bano (2009), who focus on the Asian society and context, some critiques will be presented in order to engage with the theories described. As the scope of this research is the education system, thirdly, the connections between education and gender justice will be reviewed and made relevant for this research by presenting the connection between education and conflict. Fourth, the chapter elaborates on the ‘two faces of education’ (Bush & Saltarelli 2000) and will be logically followed by discussing the importance of gender justice in society for maintaining and achieving stability and peace in society. Finally, this chapter concludes by introducing the epistemological and ontological premises on which the research is based, and in this way bridging theory and the methodology of conducting research.

3.1 Gender justice

Gender justice is a broad and much contested concept (DeJaeghere et al 2013). Gender is generally understood to be a ‘cultural construct’ (Fraser 2007: 24) and is thus subject to be explained in many different ways, according to and influenced by time and contextual factors. Moreover, women (or men) cannot be defined as a ‘coherent’ group. The group referred to as gender cuts across race, ethnicity, class and status creating different conceptions between people (Goetz 2007). The same applies for the definition of ‘social justice’.

In order to employ this concept the following sections will explain the definition of gender justice important for the argument developed here and furthermore clarify connections between gender justice and education. Through presenting this framework it will become clear how crucially important gender justice within education is, especially in context of post-conflict societies. The final sections of this chapter will thus be dedicated to the relation between women empowerment and its importance to achieve and maintain a peaceful society.

Four approaches to gender justice

In general there are four approaches to be recognized when conceptualizing gender justice (DeJaeghere et al 2013). First approach of theories about gender justice focus on articulation of gender justice in institutional terms (DeJaeghere et al 2013: 3), reviewing what is the concept of gender justice. The second theorization stream is mostly concerned with the different dimensions in society in which gender justice occurs (ibid.) the focus of interest is on where of the concept. Thirdly, there is a strand emphasizing the question of how to define gender justice: the importance of a universal definition and the ‘acknowledgement of the significance of locale’ (ibid.) arguing to take this as a starting point for theorizing about gender justice. Fourthly there is an approach to gender justice paying attention to the whom: relationships and subjectivities as the key component (ibid.). Although these approaches are presented as separate, they tend to
overlap and connect to each other (DeJaeghere et al 2013: 3). In the following section, gender justice will be defined drawing on these different theories.

**What is articulated by gender justice, and where does it occur?**
Nancy Fraser defines the meaning of justice as 'parity of participation' (2005: 73). And that 'overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners in social interaction' (ibid.). The parity of participation principle can be narrowed down to gender justice addressing the work of Ann Marie Goetz: ‘the ending of—and if necessary the provision of redress for—inequalities between women and men that result in women's subordination to men’ (Goetz 2007).

In order to remedy these injustices Fraser proposes a three dimensional analytical model of redistribution, recognition and representation (1995, 2005: 73). Fraser relates justice to the economic, cultural and political realms of society, recognizing that social injustices and the disadvantage of certain groups arise in these three different dimensions. Gender injustice is likewise viewed as the occurrence of inequalities that enable people to build economic, human, social and political capital (Goetz 2007). Fraser’s framework became particularly famous for rethinking the social justice notion of redistribution, characterised by resource based remedies such as reallocation of economic wealth. Assuming that in order to achieve a socially just society Fraser stressed the importance of adding the dimension of recognition in which social and cultural necessities are introduced, and later representation which relates to political needs and justices (Fraser 1995: 69, 2005) and can be recognized in the definition of Goetz (2007), her remedies include notions of access and control ‘combined with agency’ (Goetz 2007). The additional value of presenting Goetz definition lies with the notion of ‘accountability’ (ibid.).

"Gender justice requires that women are able to ensure that power-holders—whether in the household, the community, the market, or the state—can be held to account so that actions that limit, on the grounds of gender, women's access to resources or capacity to make choices, are prevented or punished. The term 'women's empowerment' is often used interchangeably with 'gender justice', but gender justice adds an element of redress and restitution that is not always present in discussions of women’s empowerment" (Goetz 2007)

Gender (in)justice is proposed to be a multidimensional concept. It does not solely base on any of the three dimensions, rather it is found in every (Fraser 2007: 26). The author explains this view using the example of approaching gender justice as a bivalent collective which 'may suffer both socioeconomic misdistribution and cultural misrecognition in forms where neither of these

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7 Although in this thesis gender is most often associated with the position of women in society, it is recognised that gender issues concern both females and males in societies. For the purpose of this study and the focus lies on women
injustices is an indirect effect of the other, but where both are primary and co-original (...) gender [is a] paradigmatic bivalent collectivities' (Fraser 1995: 78).

The question of how to define a concept of gender justice, as attempted above, is often scrutinized for the lack of acknowledgement of the influence of the local. There is definitely sense in developing a general, universal, definition of the meaning and contents of gender justice in order to focus on the practical and to cooperate on larger scale in an effort to accomplish global gender justice. However, the importance of local context is often missing in these considerations. Especially the non-formal and private spheres are easily ignored (DeJaeghere 2013: 4). The move from pure economic understandings of justice towards cultural, political understandings and the notion of accountability surpasses parts of this criticism, however, informal family relations and the ways in which these units continue gender (in)justices needs serious acknowledgement. Gender is mainly socially constructed, and is influenced by norms and values as well as stereotypes. A stereotypical patriarchal mindset dominant in society often leads to gendered ideas of justice and should be scrutinized (Goetz 2007). Religion also tends to matter a great deal regarding relations between women and men in society. It is thus difficult to propose a global theoretical model such as presented by Nancy Fraser, since this approach assumes a universal nature of the (in)justice occurring in society (Robeyns 2010: 10) e.g. economic injustices. This dilemma is especially true when presenting western notions of gender justice within non-western societies. In the context of this research it is useful to explore how Islamic foundations influence gender relations in society. Especially since there is often a 'notion of public and private separation for men and women' which relates to previously presented critiques on the domain of gender justice (Srimulyani 2007: 95). I will elaborate on this topic below, engaging with literature presenting a different –non-western-view.

The question of who in connection to theorizing about gender justice is a question of subjectivity. Relations between people and the forming of identities are central in this approach. Again this approach stresses the importance of formal and informal relations, and the socialization of people and subjective experiences (DeJaeghere 2013: 5).

3.2 Engaging with gender justice: western perspectives versus the rest of perspectives
Several dilemmas arise when theorizing about a definition of gender justice. The different approaches to understanding and defining gender justice presented above are exemplary. In the
following section a number of relevant critiques will be presented as to finally depict a comprehensive view of the matter of gender justice.

As mentioned before especially the tensions between universal and particular definitions in relation to the formal and informal sites in which gender (in)justice occurs have been key areas of discussions and debates. Since this research takes place in a non-western society within an Islamic framework it is essential to consider some of the critiques touching upon these issues.

Yin (2006) describes how gender justice is most often approached from a Eurocentric western perspective and is especially biased towards Islamic contexts assuming that ‘Arab women can be liberated only through dissociating themselves from Arab men and their culture’ (Yin 2006: 76). Although the Banda Acehnese society cannot be defined as an Arab society, it is indeed very Islamic and is ruled under shari’a law (Kurniawati 2010). Moreover, there is a crucial difference between western and non-western women with regards to history, livelihood conditions and needs:

For many non-Western women, especially for those in developing countries and regions, everyday life is a struggle for survival. (...). Moreover, fashioning a collective resistance requires a communal past, however, imaged and idealised (Shohat 1992). Notions of universal womanhood and common oppression cannot offer the communal past between non-Western women and Western women. However, non-Western women do share a communal past with non-Western men. Rather than viewing non-Western cultures completely oppressive, a more productive way of conceptualising non-Western feminism movements may lie in a thorough re-intervention into, and refinement of, those non-Western cultural traditions in dynamic and complex relations with other cultures. (Yin 2006: 76)

In order to better understand gender justice perspectives in non-western societies a number of critiques are presented. These critiques characterize what is western/Eurocentric about the dominant gender justice perspectives.

Firstly there is the assumption of individualism and deconstruction. In this perspective justice is perceived as equality between people, and the absence of discrimination on grounds of class or gender. Thus it is promoted that women and men are seen as individuals in order to be treated with similar respect and granted similar opportunities (Yin 2006: 77). In order to achieve this goal persons are not to be ‘reduced to any kind of group or category’ and what follows is a deconstruction of collective identities and social relations up to the point that people are perceived as atomistic biological objects (Yin 2006: 77). However, according to Yin it is through social relations that people gain political and historical agency. Moreover, the assumption in this reasoning regards gender justice as form of negative freedom: it is the absence of discrimination (accomplished through deconstruction) rather than achieved equality and empowerment resulting from social interactions. Likewise, this individualistic view of
gender justice does not take into account ‘conception of rights as a collective good that requires
different kinds of rights and restrictions of individual freedom for greater social goods such as
harmony, peace and ecological sustainability’ (Parekh 2002 in Yin 2006). Secondly, the strong
embeddedness of the notions of rights in this framework raises a tension between the rights for
the individual and the rights for the greater community: ‘the sense of entitlement rooted in
individualism and the lack of respect for the rights of others’ (Yin 2006: 79). This rights based
approach ultimately entails that there is no allowance to be genuinely ‘concerned for
environmental issues’ such as a shared ‘communal consciousness’. This is hard to imagine when
women’s rights are solely conceptualized as individual liberties, instead as a form of feminism
and empowerment in which women are perceived as ‘truly equal participating members in a
polity or community’ (Yin 2006: 79).

The critiques described above are especially relevant since this research is operating in
a non-western Islamic society. Previous research explains how development interventions
aimed at empowering Muslim women based on this Eurocentric framework tend to be
characterized by limitations (Bano 2009). The notions of women as individuals in society and
focused on themselves and their entitlements to rights is a completely different view on gender
justice than the women in Muslim societies tend to promote. Moreover, the economic freedom is
rather perceived as a burden, sexual liberty increases vulnerability and are even ‘viewed as
counter-productive to the women’s own well-being’ (Bano 2009: 11). Men and women are
viewed as equal and the Islamic society is designed to optimize the strengths of the genders
Bano 2009: 12).

Finally, the term ‘gender’ itself can become problematic when used in non-western
Islamic societies since it is so inextricably connected to western perspectives on what are the
right and wrong ideas of relations between men and women in society. Introducing
developments explained through this notion often leads to suspicion and fear of losing one’s
own identity and culture. It is thus crucial to recognize ‘the need to engage with alternative
conceptions of female empowerment, both as a moral prerogative of different communities, but
equally importantly because of the greater practical relevance of these alternative conceptions
in the given context. At times, these local conceptions of womanhood—being more sensitive to
local realities—are more conducive to negotiating space for change8 for women from within the
system than are ideas of Western feminism promoted from abroad’ (Bano 2009: 19). One of the
aims of this thesis is to draw on data to create a conceptualization of gender justice in Banda
Aceh.

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8 Italics added
3.3 Gender justice and education

The focus area of this research to investigate perceptions of gender justice within the education system in Banda Aceh and how they influence each other. And although it has become clear that it is hard to define and conceptualise gender justice as one singular notion it has become clear it connects too many different aspects and areas of society. Economic, cultural, political, public and private spheres are all touched upon. Education is also related to these different realms of society, namely, education systems operate within the broader environments in which they are situated (Novelli & Smith 2011: 6). Additionally the school system can be seen as a ‘site of engagement between state, non-state and supra-state organisations’ (DeJaeghere et al 2013: 2).

The role of education in socialisation, culture, nation building processes, citizenship and issues of identity, emotion, gender and history have today been recognised as fundamental aspects of education (Robeyns 2006: 72, Novelli 2010: 453). Moreover, the importance of the relation between education and gender is represented by one of the six Education For All (EFA) goals explained by the Dakar Framework for Action: ‘Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality’ (UNESCO 2000)9. Likewise is the example of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These MDGs are established by the United Nations to emphasize development in the global agenda and set goals to reduce poverty, end discrimination of women, eradicate disease and end illiteracy (Unterhalter 2005: 111). The third MDG is to ‘promote gender equality and empower women’ which is measured by the ‘elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education’ (Unterhalter 2005: 111). It shows international recognition of the fact that education and gender justice are inseparably linked; it is both seen as a goal of education itself, as well as a means to achieve gender justice in society.

This relation becomes especially relevant in context of conflict and conflict affected areas where issues of justice and gender justice become issues of peace or war. As has been explained in the previous chapters, the Acehnese society can be classified as being in post-conflict and post-crisis state. Education in these situations is no longer perceived as being ‘fundamentally good for children and youth’ and recent studies show how ‘education systems, structures and processes [can] impact negatively on ethnic relations, gender equity, and on the distribution of resources, political and economic power’ and especially that ‘providing education does not ensure peace’ (Kirk 2007: 189).

9 http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/efa-goals/
Two faces of education and gender

As the previous section shows, there is a relation between education and gender justice. And that this relation becomes especially relevant in context of conflict affected areas. This paragraph will delve deeper into this relation by presenting the 'two faces of education' (Bush & Saltarelli 2000). It will show how the influence of the educational systems (in the construction of a society) can be negative, when it contributes to conflict as a perpetrator and weapon (Bush & Saltarelli 2000, Davies 2005, Greeley & Rose 2006, Novelli & Lopes Cardozo 2008). As well as having positive influence, in which education serves to discharge and mitigate tensions in society.

When the education system worsens hostilities between groups in society it starts functioning as a perpetrator. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) have described this influence of education as the 'negative face of education'. In similar fashion Davies (2005) and Smith (2005) describe the influence of schooling systems on exacerbating violence through very explicit, obvious and implicit impacts. Some of these influences are taking place in the antecedent to conflict, such as worsening relations, others are recognized during violent conflict and reinforce malfunctioning’s. The authors describe a range of impacts through which education becomes a weapon of cultural repression, a process whereby ‘a culturally distinct people loses its identity as a result of policies designed to erode its land and resource base, the use of its language, its own social and political institutions, as well as its traditions, art forms, religious practices and cultural values’ (Stavenhagen 1990 in Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 10). As for the topic of gender, statistics show how conflict concerns especially women and girls: “Fragile states are rarely in a position to provide gender-responsive education; curricula, untrained teachers, minimal resources, lack of support and supervision for teachers and head teachers are all contributing factors to gender inequalities in schooling.” (Kirk 2007: 183). Also, in line with the reasoning above, it must be stated that education systems have a significant role in shaping ideas of gender, which in itself does not necessarily mean they are just or empowering. The critical reflection that access to education for women does not always result in the ability to participate in society is very important (Kirk 2007: 192).

Education can also create equal opportunities, which can prevent escalations of strains between groups in society. Political willingness through implementing funding programmes in order to ensure these equal opportunities can have positive impact on intergroup understandings (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 16). Within schools the development of citizenship education and the standardizing of parts of the curriculum to assure certain guidelines in education can contribute to the disarming of history. This, in turn, should dispose of manipulation of curricula for political ends. Including different histories, within a larger history shows students the different identities
and groups and teaches that they can become active participants (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 19). Finally, the authors link the positive face of education with education for peace programs. Yet emphasizing that an education system is assumed to have a very important role in peace building: ‘not necessarily the oppositional function it plays, but in its ability to maintain and articulate credible alternative visions of the future; visions that are inclusive, tolerant, liberal, democratic and just’ (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 21). In post-conflict Banda Aceh such a peace programs did exist. The foundation of this particular peace program, which was implemented in both public secular and religious education, was to reclaim ‘Islam’s primary principle of peace’ through dealing with subjects such as democracy, honoring rights, social relations, promoting good governance and to ‘call to respect diversity to encouragement to honor gender equity’ (Husin 2013: 136).

This peace programme in Banda Aceh is an example of how basic education can be part of promoting peace (building) through the re-establishment of social bonds and partnerships within communities (Barakat et al. 2013). Furthermore, there is evidence of the fact that there is a relationship between gender equality and education, peace and stability within societies. (Kirk 2007). The relation between gender justice and peace will be further elaborated on below.

3.4 Gender justice education and peace

It is argued that involving women in peace-building is crucial, since sustained stability and peace cannot be accounted for if only one the male part of society is consulted when negotiating on peace. Again, as a means and goal, including women in peace talks can help to assure a diverse and accurate representation of the population as well as giving voice to ‘needs, experiences, demands and hopes of a diverse array of people, in order to form an integral part of an evolving society’ (Karam 2000: 10).

Although there are many different forms of conflicts and contexts, there are a number of ‘basic elements’ recognizable which are indispensable in achieving and maintaining peaceful societies. Karam (2000) describes three elements: gender equality; balanced representation of gender in all sectors and aspects of life and finally; the building of institutions and mechanisms providing the previous two elements. One of such institutions is the education system. Women

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10 The author Azza Karam has focused on the topics of women, religion and peace making. She was born in Egypt, studied in Cairo and has work experience in different countries in the region such as Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Throughout her career issues of democracy, human rights and gender through activism have inspired her ‘She reflects on the shift from a status quo where women were significant forces in peace movements within religious spheres, accepting that role, to more visible roles. She urges a focus on women’s stories as a way to enhance understanding’. Currently she is senior advisor on culture at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). [http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-azza-karam-senior-culture-advisor-at-unfpa](http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-azza-karam-senior-culture-advisor-at-unfpa)
can experience personal and professional development through acquiring skills and knowledge, as well as recognizing their ability to participate, have a (political) voice and being regarded as full participants of society by males, thus ‘access to school is therefore highly significant—symbolically as much as practically—in the efforts to ensure that women as well as men can contribute to positive change, to the strengthening of civil society and to positive change away from state fragility’ (Kirk 2007: 192). It is significant to stress the importance of a holistic approach, in which education is never the single actor in establishing justice and peace, including media, judicial system, unions and security sectors (Bush & Saltarelli 2000: 20). Yet, as it is argued in this chapter, emphasizing that it is a crucially important site in which gender justice can be accomplished. And that gender just societies are a necessary prerequisite in order to achieve and maintain a peaceful society. Since education alone cannot transform societies, but that is should be part of a larger undertaking this study will entail the strategic relational approach as a research strategy. In this research approach the actions and agency of actors will be considered in their situated contexts, and the mutual influence they have on each other. In the following section this approach will be explained in more detail.

### 3.5 Bridging theory and research practice: Strategic Relational Approach

For the purpose of this study gender justice is viewed as a multidimensional concept occurring and created in different spheres in society, represented by universal attention though subject to local interpretations and contexts. In an attempt to research such a broad concept, attention is paid to perceptions of different agents on several levels in society: the political education policies, (gender) expert opinions, and on local educational level in the form of teachers and students. Presented in the previous chapter are western, dominant discourses as well as Asia centric critiques of these gender justice definitions. Both perspectives are relevant for this study. As will become clear in the analysis chapters of this study, the concept of gender justice in Banda Aceh is both interpreted through the concepts of Nancy Fraser, as well as notions recognizable for the Asia specific perspective.

Moreover, the importance of context has been stressed on several occasions: context is an important influence on the ideas of gender justice; context is an important contributor to current debates on gender justice; and finally, the crucial relevance of gender justice in context of (post) conflict societies. It becomes clear that including different actors in society is important but not enough: as shown, gender justice is created between people and is subject to specific contexts. In order to study these complex relations this research draws on the methodological framework of the strategic relational approach (SRA). This approach is a means
to engage with the comprehensiveness of gender justice by considering the interaction between structure and agency. In this approach it is assumed that structure and agency are ‘inherently and inexorably related and intertwined’ (Hay 2002: 116). Since the distinction between structure and agency in itself is analytical, it can be argued they are both present at all times in society. Instead of focusing on the distinction between the two, SRA emphasizes the ‘dialectical interplay’ of structure and agency in contexts and social interactions (Hay 2002: 127). Reasoning this way it makes more sense to make a distinction between actions of actors and the selective contexts they do it in instead of questioning whether each or one exists: ‘the key relationship in the [SRA], then, is not that between structure and agency, but rather the more immediate interaction of strategic actors and the strategic context in which they find themselves’ (Hay 2002: 128). Furthermore, actors in this approach are viewed as reflexive, conscious and strategic. The strategic contexts in which these actors operate, as well is viewed as enabling to privilege some actors over others in society (Jessop 2004: 209). The relation between structure and agency is viewed as for the former having constraining or enabling powers as the latter having reproductive or transforming power (Jessop 2004: 208).

In the next, methodological, chapter of this research the ontological position of critical realism this research attains will be further explained (Sayer 2000). By focusing on the ontological premises of critical realism combined with the epistemological perspectives of SRA it is attempted to form a framework through which the understanding of how education influences gender justice within Banda Acehnese. In the conceptual scheme (figure [2]) a visual representation is made of how the theory described above and the research approaches of SRA are combined.
The schema below should be read as followed. Actors as well as the strategic selective context are 'conceptualised as conscious' which means they both may act intentionally to attempt to realise their purposes and thus both contribute to perceptions of gender justice in Banda Aceh (Hay 2000). Which these perceptions are or what they entail will be elaborated on in later chapters. These perceptions may lead to actions of actors which can be seen as intuitive or explicit. The actions subsequently are characterised as either unreflexive and based upon certain habits and rituals (intuitive) or explicit in calculating and mapping the context in order to challenge it. Finally, the big arrows on the right side of the scheme portray the effects these actions might have on respectively the strategic actors in the form of enhanced knowledge and learning, or on the strategic selective context in the form of a (partial) transformation of it. In this research and through theoretical considerations described above, it is viewed that actions of actors, through enhancing knowledge can actively contribute to a more gender just society. Which, as explained earlier in this chapter, could ultimately contribute to a lasting peace society. The lower part of the schema has dashed outlines since it is difficult to really investigate the direct effects and transformation of the context in the timeline of this research or draw conclusions on the effects of a lasting peace.

In order to create more structure in the research and present a methodological scaffold the ontology of Critical Realism (CR), as the name suggests, is characterized as a critical social science in which it is assumed that ‘social practices are informed by ideas (...) which may have some bearing upon what happens’ (Sayer 2000: 18). CR is viewed here to be complementary to previously introduced SRA research approach since both SRA and CR have corresponding assumptions on the account of dialectics between structure and agency (Jessop 2004: 208).

The SRA is hard to define in terms of one singular approach. This research approach can be regarded as an ontology, epistemology and methodology depending on the way it is
presented and treated in the particular study. In this thesis the SRA is mostly defined as a methodology providing the framework for the analysis. As mentioned before, this thesis considers both the agency of actors as well as the structures in which they operate as crucially influential in order to understand gender justice perceptions in Banda Aceh. As for the ontological/epistemological positions this assumption places itself, as it were on a continuum, in between the two classical distinctions ‘if, for structuralists, structure determines agency, and, for intentionalists, agency causes structure, then for this new group of authors, structure and agency both influence each other. Indeed, they are inherently and inexorably related and intertwined’ (see figure 1, Hay 2002: 116).

CR assumes a stratified ontology in which ‘the real’, ‘the actual’ and ‘the empirical’ are different dimensions which interplay and can be observed (Sayer 2000: 12). The real dimension refers to ‘whatever exists, be it natural or social’ as well as ‘the realm of objects, structures and their powers’ (Sayer 2000: 11). Or in other words, the structural context in society. An important remark must be made ‘the nature of the real objects present at a given time constrains and enables what can happen but does not pre-determine what will happen. Realist ontology therefore makes it possible to understand how we could be or become many things which currently we are not’ (Sayer 2000: 12). This connects to the SRA’s assumption of the strategic selective context which is both constraining as well as (partially) moldable by agents strategic selective actions (Hay 2002). As for this research in Banda Aceh, the most important ‘real’ is seen as the Islamic religion as a social form of structure and power.

The actual ‘refers to what happens if and when those powers are activated’ (Sayer 2000: 12). In other words: it concerns the effects that the structural powers (the real) have on society. This dimension is very relevant in this thesis since the Islamic religion has a tremendous influence on the ways in which gender is perceived and acted upon. This will be elaborated upon in the analytical chapters, but it is useful to already mention here that developments in the interpreting and practice of Islam, the activation of religion, have greatly determined ways in which gender justice is shaped and perceived. The connection to the SRA methodology to this aspect of CR is found in the notion of ‘effects of action’ which is explained as follows ‘agents are situated within a structured context which presents an uneven distribution of opportunities and constraints to them. Actors influence the development of that context over time through the consequences of their actions’ (Hay 2002: 116-117). Through analyzing these effects, it is ‘measured’ if and in which ways actors in society have influenced or transformed the social power structures they live in. Connecting CR with SRA as a methodology in this way gives an additional value in the research approach since it not only reflects on how the real is activated but also how it develops and transforms through reflecting on the actual. And, in this case, research how actions of relevant educational actors affect their strategic selective context.
The final dimension is that of the empirical and it defines the ‘domain of experience’ (Sayer 2000: 12). This dimension has everything to do with actors and their experiences of the real and the actual whether they are explicitly observable or not (Sayer 2000: 12). The focus on actors in society, their agency and strategic actions is another suitable way to uncover the empirical dimensions and understand better how gender concepts develop in Banda Aceh.

In order to go from these abstract considerations regarding the nature of research towards the practice of doing research compatible ways and methods must be used. In the case of CR and SRA there is a relatively wide range of methods available since it mostly depends on the ways the objects of study are defined (Sayer 2000: 19). In this case the research is mostly concerned with understanding, perceptions and interpretations – and how these aspects relate to their situated contexts. Since gender justice is a complex concept influenced by many aspects of society, this research approach which considers both contextual factors as well as actors and their agency seems appropriate to apply in this research. The research could also be qualified as ‘intensive’ in which certain research questions and methods (i.e. qualitative) are preferred over others. Questions often are variations on ‘how does a process work in a particular small case… ’ or ‘what produces a certain change’ as well as typical methods are interviews and qualitative analysis (Sayer 2000: 21).

4.2 Methods and Respondents

The research design is best described as a case study: the detailed and intensive focus on one particular group which is being analysed (Bryman 2001: 49). As mentioned above the focus in these designs is on the interpretation, and the meanings underlying the operating of the case in focus (Stake 1995: 8). Important characteristics to mention is that a case study research is not instrumented to understand all cases but rather to comprehend this particular one in this certain context (Stake 1995: 4). This study focuses on a grass roots perspective in order to understand how education contributes to gender justice through interviewing and observing relevant (educational) actors in order to understand their perceptions of gender justice. Instead of assuming that these actors will be representative for the whole of Aceh province, on the contrary, the sole focus is on the city of Banda Aceh.

Interviewing, focus group discussions and (participatory) observations

Methods of research included semi-structured in depth interviews, focus group discussions and (participatory) observations. I will briefly discuss all of these methods.

The most (important) data was collected through interviews. The semi-structured nature assured a clear thread to guide the interview while maintaining a level of consistency
Rasulullah & Responsibilities

throughout the different interviews. This structure left enough opportunity for the interviewee to tell me more about certain topics and to take me on leads which proved to be interesting. In total I have conducted 25 interviews with five different ‘types’ of actors in Banda Aceh. These included policy makers, experts and academics, activists, teachers and headmasters. The interviews were recorded as much as possible, however in some cases the subject of religion (and/or in combination with gender) made some teachers reluctant to consent for audio taping. In all cases, and especially in these, extensive field notes were made. Recorded interviews were transcribed. A useful overview is provided in table [1] below. The vast majority of interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, with a few exceptions when interviewing some experts.

This draws attention to the role of the interpreter. Via the International Centre for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies11 (ICAIOS) we were provided with an English graduate student who would, against payment, help interpret the Bahasa Indonesian interviews. Interesting to notice is that this student is female, since it is regarded more culturally sensitive for women to work with fellow women. The use of the word ‘interpreter’ rather than translator is founded upon the notion that the interpreter does not objectively translate, rather already adds a level of interpretation by translating concepts according to his or her own cultural background (Temple & Edwards, 2002). Next to the English answers (interpretations) provided during interviews, transcribed interviews were translated on the basis of text by previously mentioned interpreter and two extra students (again against payment, and consulted via ICAIOS).

Four focus group discussions were conducted in four different schools with nineteen students between the ages 15 and 17. Ten students were female, and the remaining nine were male. After the discussions we gave the students a number of trinkets as a way of saying thanks.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>school</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Recorded</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>23 july 2013</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 girls, 2 boys (5)</td>
<td>SMA 4</td>
<td>24 july 2013</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 girls, 3 boys (5)</td>
<td>SMA 1</td>
<td>26 july 2013</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 girls, 2 boys (5)</td>
<td>SMA 13</td>
<td>27 july 2013</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table [1]: overview focus group discussions

Observations are less explicit to mention since they were constant during school visits. There is one occasion when we (me and my fellow student researcher Genny Wenger) were invited to participate in an English lesson on SMA 4. It was very interesting to observe real time lessons and interactions between teachers and students. Other examples are that focus groups were conducted in schools and often in class rooms. This gave unique insights in cases such as class

11 http://www.acehresearch.org/ ‘s a joint effort between three Acehnese state universities (Universitas Syiah Kuala, IAIN Ar-Raniry, Universitas Malikussaleh) and several international academic institutions. ICAIOS endeavours towards this vision by facilitating an Acehnese academic community that is able to produce quality research that can directly contribute towards the advancement of Aceh’s social and political development’ (ICAIOS 2009).
decorations, rules and regulations posted in the form of posters. Overall these metaphorical 'research glasses' through which daily life was often perceived provided a certain level of insight in the context and daily life practices of Banda Aceh and its inhabitants. A final note on the 'participatory' nature of these observations have to do with the fact that I had decided to wear a headscarf. While this seems arbitrary, it is not: doing research, as a non-Muslim woman, on gender relations in society made it interesting to observe how people reacted to me. I will elaborate further on this in the reflections section, later in this chapter.

<table>
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<th>Function</th>
<th>Date interview</th>
<th>Recorded</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>SMA 7</td>
<td>30 July 2013</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>SMA 14</td>
<td>31 July 2013</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table [2] Overview of respondents
Analysis
Analyzing the data was done by using the research software Atlas.ti, as well as 'by hand'. In the initial stages of analyzing interviews were labelled by type (teacher, student, expert, etcetera), followed by relevant content. In each 'type', key interviews were selected to uncover seemingly important patterns and themes. After this phase, these themes were given a code or categorization such as 'responsibilities' or 'strategic selective context' and were then reflected on the extensive field notes of other (not transcribed) interviews. Going through the field notes, again provided relevant information which was in turn reflected upon key interviews. The interaction between going back and forth between interviews and field notes, analyzing and selecting what is important and not, finally resulted in the structure of the analytical chapters forthcoming.

Respondents
Gaining access to the field, and meeting with respondents was done in two different ways. In the initial phase of the research me and my local supervisor agreed it would be most relevant to start with interviewing experts, academics and policy makers. For one, these respondents were relatively easy to contact since my local supervisor has a great network of people who were willing to talk to me, and responded easily to text messages. Secondly, it was logical to first learn more about the gender justice concept in the Banda Acehnese society by experts in this field. After this initial phase, it proved more difficult to gain access to schools. After finding an online overview of all public high schools in Banda Aceh, and their addresses the best technique to get in contact with schools proved to be spontaneously showing up. Even though ICAIOS provided us with necessary documents (stating my status as a voluntary assistant of the institute) due to bureaucratic reasons several schools denied access nonetheless. The best way to acquire respondents in public high schools in Banda Aceh went through the process of snowballing. (Biernacki & Waldorf 1981: 141). In total eleven out of sixteen public high schools were contacted, out of which four completely denied access.

Schools, teachers and students
In the process of snowballing to get to the respondents, the schools headmasters were key gatekeepers. Once a headmaster denied access to the schools in order to conduct interviews I had to move on to another school. Starting at the level of teachers, and trying to arrange an interview without the headmasters consent often lead the teachers to cancel appointments. However, when a headmaster did allow for me to interview them and a number of their teachers, they proved very helpful and the vast majority of headmasters and teachers provided
telephone numbers and names of more teachers and principals to contact. Even though I have, on many occasions, explained how important religion and hence religious schools are in Aceh, I have chosen to only include public high schools. Public high schools in Banda Aceh are very ‘Islamasized’. Next to the fact that students pray aloud before class, and proper Islamic wear is required. School uniforms thus include headscarves. Not including religious schools did thus not mean the Islamic context would be ignored.

Since the subject of this thesis is gender justice it seemed logical to me to interview teachers to which this subject was relevant. For instance, I did not interview any math or biology teachers, though I focused on two courses respectively ‘agama’ and ‘PKn’. Agama is religious teaching and topics included worshipping, Islamic attitudes and behavior, training and socialization, shari’a law, and the Quran. Even though it is a public school, the sole religion taught about is the Islam. The other course PKn is translated as civic education and is inspired on the Pancasila ideology on which the national government is based [see figure 3]. The course deals with government legislation, democracy and character building. Since this ideology does not propose which god to follow and in the social justice ‘statement’ does not differentiate between the genders or advises how this should be assured I was interested to research if there was one or different perceptions of gender justice present in these public high schools. It is also these two courses that are teaching in the context of Islamic pluralism which can be characterized as ‘inviting Muslims not only to accept human differences but above all to embrace and celebrate this diversity’ regarding both physical or cultural diversity such as different religions (Husin 2013: 121).

Students who participated in the focus group discussions were always provided by teachers and headmasters. Focus groups took place in classrooms after school, or in teachers offices when conducted during school times.

4.3 Reflections and limitations
All research and content analysis suffer a number of limitations. Recognizing these limitations and reflecting on the role of the researcher can add to the credibility of the research (Bryman 2001: 197).

In order to assess the credibility of this research it is useful to present a framework of indicators that are relevant and appropriate for qualitative data (O’Leary 2004: 57). Indicators of ‘good research’ have to do with a consistent approach of methods, authenticity,
transferability, auditability and the managing of subjectivities. I will briefly discuss these issues in reflecting on this research. Through recording, transcribing, keeping of a fieldwork diary and intensive and extensive documenting of fieldwork notes the methods have been approach in consistent matter. By reporting back to the field through a midterm presentation and final presentation of the findings for ICAIOS and other respondents and academic invited, it is assumed that the methods are used in reflexive manner, attempting to ensure a level of authenticity.

Since this is a case study focused on a limited number of respondents within the urban setting of Banda Aceh it can be argued that the conclusions are not generalizable. The analysis evokes interesting ideas and discussions, and there are many lessons learned in this research through detailed descriptions of data in the following chapters. The transferability therefore is found in the concluding reflections and recommendations (O’Leary 2004: 63).

Finally, the rigorous and elaborate descriptions of choices made regarding methods ensures for the auditability of this research. Explanations have been extended in order to account the transparency. Through considering the entailing of credibility of the findings and conclusions the research has attempted to account for the value of this study (O’Leary 2004: 63).

**Limitations of the research**

The most obvious limitation is time. There is always a certain time frames in which research is conducted, and this case was no different. However, a number of events have limited the already short research period. During the time (June 16 – August 22 2013) schools had summer holiday (June 16 – July 7) in which they were closed. Secondly, the important Islamic fasting month Ramadan coincided with the research time (July 9 – August 7). Next to life taking a slower pace and praying becoming an even more important aspects of the daily routine, schools also adjusted in opening hours. In the first weeks of Ramadan schools closed between twelve and one o’clock instead of between three and four. Leading up to the last week of Ramadan and the party of *Idul Fitri* schools closed for religious holidays and remained closed until almost a week after. Gaining access to schools thus became harder and influenced the saturation of the data.

Another limitation is the lack of pesantren, religious schools, that I attended. Three reasons play part in this decision. Firstly, me and my local supervisor agreed that many research has been done on Islamic education in Indonesia (Pohl 2009, Srimulyani 2007, 2008, Hefner & Zaman 2007, Lukens-Bull 2001) and it would thus be interesting to focus on public high schools. Secondly, public high schools in Banda Aceh are very ‘islamised’ and could thus be argued to also reflect a relevant image of how religion influences certain perceptions and actions by teachers and students. And finally, gaining access to these schools in general was more difficult,
time restraints discussed earlier and especially the importance of Ramadan as a religious holiday have caused that religious schools were even more closed than normally. Really accomplishing a comparative study between the two types of schools and aiming for similar amounts of data on each side was not feasible. However, including interviews with headmasters, teachers and a discussion with students of pesantren would have greatly enriched the data and could serve as additional information that would have allowed to make a broader analysis.

Finally there is the limitation of space. All the research was conducted within the urban area of Banda Aceh. Personal conversations with my local supervisor and others have marked that data found in the city is most likely not generalizable to the greater Aceh province since different ideas could be more dominant. The inclusion of different areas, urban as well as rural, would enrich further research.

**Reflections of researcher**

It proved very difficult for me as a western, non-religious women with similar appearances to shake of biases people in Banda Aceh had towards me and be completely neutral in this research. Even though I as a researcher have done my best to not be biased and adjusted to proper Islamic wear. I was often associated with two things that probably have influenced some of the data. Firstly, because of my western appearances I was associated with the western ideas of gender (being ... in short mention this here). This was problematic since this was seen as a thread towards the Acehnese identity. The second association the respondents were often concerned with my personal associations of gender and Islam. They indicated that people from the west more often than not are dominated by the Arabic association of how women are being treated in Islamic societies. This has, according to the people in Banda Aceh, lead to a negative image of women’s rights and thus gender justice in Muslim societies which they did not recognize themselves in at all, as will become clear in the analytical chapters. These subjectivities most often manifested themselves as the metaphorical ‘elephant in the room’ and once the interviewee asked me a question about it and I replied by saying I was just interested in the subject and did not look for a wrong or right answer the subject was left at rest. It is better to speak of ‘subjectivity with transparency’.

Finally, I would like to direct some attention to my personal experience as I was wearing a headscarf while doing gender justice research in an Islamic society. Although I was told it was not necessary to wear a headscarf, it was obvious people opened up more when I did. Since I seemed to become an interesting phenomenon (being western while wearing a headscarf) people, in general, found it interesting to address me with comments (‘adaptation, good!’) or questions (‘are you Muslim?’). For me this was evidence that people ‘accepted’ me more when I made an effort to ‘fit in’ which was helpful during interviews and observations.
Reciprocity
I have tried to express my thankfulness and give back to the ICAIOS staff and respondents on several occasions. We have appeared on an English spoken radio show during Ramadan called ‘ramadan talk’ in which Ramadan and Muslims around the world were discussed. Me and Genny Wenger were invited to discuss our experiences in The Netherlands and America. I was delighted to contribute.

In one school we have contributed by joining an English lessons. The students were invited to ask questions and discuss our countries. In another high school a headmaster insisted we would join the *buka puasa* celebration, which was an event organized by the school to celebrate the breaking of fast at sundown and join a meal together. Although we were treated as honored guests and were seated on the first row, the honor was completely on my side and it turned out to be one of the dearest experiences in the period.
Introduction
In the previous theoretical chapter, it became clear how this study adapts the SRA research approach in order to gain insight into the concept of gender justice within education in Banda Aceh. In the following sections an attempt is made to understand the strategic selective context of Banda Aceh, in which issues of gender justice and education are situated. In this research approach it is assumed that, as well as actors, contexts have a sense of being strategically selective: the context itself ‘presents an unevenly contoured terrain which favors certain strategies over others’ (Hay 2002: 129). This does not mean the outcomes of strategies are determined, however, they are strategically selected (ibid. 130). Especially in Banda Aceh, as this chapter will show, the context influences a great deal of actors’ agency. It is thus useful to first understand the situated context in which the strategic educational agents operate in order to come to grasps of the actions they entail. This research will focus mostly on social-cultural conditions, as will become clear since these are most relevant for the study of gender issues. Ideas on gender justice cannot be interpreted without understanding the context and structures
in which they are created. This chapter will thus attempt to answer the sub question 'how can we understand the strategic selective context of Banda Aceh regarding gender justice and education?'. Firstly, this chapter reviews and presents ways in which the concept gender is perceived, followed by the importance of religion to finally conclude in answering the sub question.

5.1 From gender ignorance to gender allergy

As became clear in the introductory chapters of this thesis, the start of gender ‘interest’ in Banda Aceh followed after the tsunami and peace talks in 2005. From this moment on, NGO’s from all over the world were involved with this concept to ground practice in attempting to ‘build Aceh back better’ (Jauhola 2010b).

Gender ignorance

As the majority of experts and academics confirm gender issues, or at least, issues concerning the discrimination of women were widespread and not questioned during the conflict. Mister Wibawa12, self-proclaimed feminist explains how he became a gender activist: ‘ten years ago [2003] gender was rejected. People refused it. Women were discriminated by the culture, implementation of religion, politics, in all aspects13. The director of the Women Study Centre (Pusat Study Wanita, PSW), a study center next to university established in 1984, confirms this by saying: ‘before the tsunami we could speak of gender allergy [ignorance], there were many problems within the culture for women, a lot of family violence’. For the purpose of this analysis I have changed the word allergy to ignorance, since it seems more appropriate: after the tsunami the most significant transformation occurred considering the issues of gender (which will be elaborated on below). However, before this time, the issues as presented by the respondents were ignored, unquestioned and hardly acted upon. ‘Ignorance’ seems better applicable rather than ‘allergy’, since this latter metaphor presumes a reaction to a phenomenon which is overt and distinct. The following quote emphasizes the latent character of gender based discrimination: ‘the background is that when I was reading the newspapers I noticed there were no topics on women, and even if there was an article about women, it was written by men. So I started to wonder why and I found out that women didn’t read newspapers. They had no access. The fact is [women] are voiceless, because they have been marginalized and ignored; their problems are just being hidden. Everything seems left in the silence’ (Wibawa, male, feminist).

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12 All names have been changed in order to ensure anonymity of the respondents.
13 Interviews have been conducted in English or Bahasa Indonesian. Translated interviews have only been altered to correct grammar (more information regarding translation practices is found in the methodology chapter).
Citra, a female (fashion) design teacher at public vocational high school who is involved in several gender activities explains how and why women were also absent in politics. In doing so she bridges the issues of gender and the role of education: two points: first education is developed for men. Men continue their education from elementary school until college, but some women stop before or after high school because they get married. This affects society because men are smarter since they have more education, they have the chance to play big parts and have good jobs and more opportunities in society because of the education. That is why they are the policy makers; secondly, men do not yet understand the application of gender, it is a new development in society. The changes have to be maid step by step. This final quote explains how gender could have been absent. Women were not included in the public debate and due to a lack of higher education they were not able to gain more say and participate. Simultaneously this absence resulted in a lack of knowledge and affirmative action. It is thus more relevant to characterize the context of Banda Acehnese society as having a certain gender ignorance.

**Gender buzz and now an allergy?**

Currently there is a different view on gender in Banda Aceh, as gender expert, university lecturer and gender researcher dr Dwi points out: 'it is now flowering, because many [international] organisations who were aiding were paying attention to gender and involving women, it was everywhere. It was a real buzzword'. This is highlighted by the emergence of the Gender Unit (GU). This newly founded (July 2013) organization is a research organization on gender issues embedded within IAIN Ar-Raniry university in Banda Aceh. Nirmala, the director of the GU, explains her aim: 'it is to conduct and study issues of gender in Banda Aceh, such as values, religious interpretations, performance of lecturers. It also needs to serve as a coordination and collaboration hub between the different existing centers, such as PSW'. This shows the relevance and more open treatment of the subject of gender nowadays, as she continues saying: 'there is more awareness now, there are] more centers and it shows the relevance of the GU'.

Although it is possible to openly discuss issues concerning gender, new problems arise. The majority of expert and academic respondents, explicitly said to be cautious with the word 'gender' itself since it has western connotation. I was warned that using this word itself could lead to annoyance and have a negative effect on collecting data. Dr Agung, male researcher, expresses a more cynical view: 'gender is a buzzword to get funding' and adds 'people think so much, [have] pre-assumptions, of Islam and society, it is not like Taliban here'. Previously mentioned dr. Dwi analyses this presumed annoyance 'the idea of gender is western. The Islam identity, after the conflict, is much stronger, we do not adapt to outsiders system, gender is considered as [an] outsider and western. That is why some people still resist, they refer to our own
history – we already had gender justice, we had queens before, we do not have gender justice problems. There is still some resistance from higher education background. Our difference to the Arab world is exactly why it is good to study gender here’. This is emphasized by Melati, lecturer on university and founder of PPD ‘people especially the political establishment and the Ulama\textsuperscript{14} certainly are not fond of this term. That term is one thing, doing is another. My books are very gender oriented. Anything I do even with the Ulama was very gender conscious’ talking about herself she admits ‘because you don’t want to be labeled, and I am certainly very reluctant to label myself as such. (...) I have so many articles on gender (...) by the time you produce book on women you will be a woman promoter, I do not want that’. This quote illustrates again how the term gender, instead of the content of the concept can lead to difficulties. Using the term can create reluctance from religious leaders and as such result in the opposite of the desired effect to gain more equality between men and women.

I would like to argue thus that it is more suitable to speak of an ‘gender allergy’ now than before. While the term is openly discussed, and a number of organisations concerned with these issues arise, the term itself – rather than the content subject – raises problems for being western and threatening the Islamic identity, which is also recognized by Yin (2006) as presented in the theoretical chapter. When the term gender is coined, as the example of the researcher who does not want to be labelled as a gender expert explains, the discussion focusses on accusing the western notion when ‘especially when we [are] accusing [people] of this western idea we have to look into our own resources’ (Melati, expert). Interesting is thus this paradox: although gender as a term is susceptible of allergic reactions there are also new initiatives and activities recognizable such as the GU.

5.2 Islam as strategic selective context: three perspectives, history and two stipulations

In order to understand the context in which the educational actors operate and perceptions of gender justice are shaped, a great deal of attention should be paid to the Islamic religion. I have purposely separated the gender part of this chapter presented above and the following sections in which the Islamic religion, practices, and identities will be discussed in order to emphasize the fact that stereotyped associations between the Islamic religion and female discrimination should be scrutinized and disconnected. Although respondents do address this issue, and confirm there has been discrimination through mistaken understandings of Islam it should be emphasized that this is not the default. Being a researcher from western, non-religious descent,
with likewise appearance, has in multiple occasions led especially expert respondents to express the need to question ‘my stereotype Arab associations’ with gender and Islam. More extensive reflections on my personal role as a researcher are found in the methodology chapter.

The structure of Islamic religion is explained by Lestari, university lecturer and expert on Islamic Quran and its interpretations: ‘there [are] three discourses in Islam: the normative; the interpretation and the practice. The first, normative, is a universal discourse and based on the narrative of the holy book. The second, interpretation, is a subjective notion and is based on how people understand Islam. Third, is how people practice Islam’. She adds to this: ‘the holy book is ‘bagus’\(^{15}\), women and men are equal but the interpretation and practice are difficult. It depends on people’ (Lestari, female, expert). This explanation above reflects on how the Islam can be implemented in discriminating or negative ways. During the conflict, in the context of Aceh, the focus on second and third ‘discourses’ are how subjectivities gain power. The understanding and practices of Islam can be very different to what is described in the holy book. In later sections this will become more clear with an example of a verse in the Quran. As well as the expert quoted above, the director of the GU agrees how gender is often not contextualized, and interpretations of Islam are often very relative and can lead to paradoxes in society. She explained how practice and narrative often do not comply in society: ‘in Quran it says that [the] husbands is [the] leader. This does not mean that women need approval of husbands to go somewhere. In practice though this often is the case. The interpretation is wrong’. Lestari emphasizes this by explaining: ‘ when [the] husband goes anywhere, women can also go there. Freedom and equality. But the practice is that a husband can go anywhere and the wife should stay at home. Most of the people understand it that way. Before getting married we should know the narrative very well’. Especially during the conflict years, as Melati explains further: ‘history [has] sometime denied women their rights because of cultural preferences. For example the war in Aceh has influenced the way [in which] women were being treated and the authoritarian regime of Suharto era this also has influenced the way are treated in this country’. However, she recognizes a ‘new awareness’ of women’s rights and stresses an important notion that in general was very prevalent with all respondents, namely that the people of Banda Aceh ‘have to look into our own history and we find our history is as rich as the history of western civilization’ in attempting to shape the content of the concept of gender.

\(^{15}\) Bagus = good
Islamic pride and identity: historical heroines

The Islam is very important to all respondents in Banda Aceh. The religion serves as part of their pride and identity formation. Many have explained how the history, especially with regards to gender perceptions, is a very important aspect when explaining why they are so fond and proud of their Islam ‘if you look in the history of Islam at the time of the Prophet, women were very involved, women were very engaged’ (Melati, expert, female). The current interpretations of Islam and gender as explained by the respondents will be elaborated upon in the next chapter. In the coming sections the Islamic history and the importance of this specific context for the research will be explained in twofold: firstly, the pride and identity of religion is omnipresent in Banda Aceh since their rich and prolonged history regarding the Islam: ‘Gender is related to how it is promoted, the issue of identity is strong in Aceh, and after [the] conflict organisations from the outside came and introduce this while people thought about good positions women had in history and thought there is no need for gender justice’ (Nirmala, female, expert).

Secondly, the respondents position themselves in the context of legendary heroines who have fought in battles in ancient times: ‘we are very proud of that history and plus, we had so many admirals, women engage[d] in the revolution. Those are – they are capable women, they are very intelligent women. Even historically if you look at that history of Aceh, women are there’ (Melati, expert, female). These historical female figures have been mentioned in the first part of this chapter as well, as part of the allergic feel for the term ‘gender’, and is thus important to explain in further detail. The respondents refer to women as Cut Laksamana Malahayati and Cut Nyak Dhien who have fought battles at sea as well as in the Aceh province, and against oppressors in the past such as England and the Netherlands. These historical heroines are also a source of annoyance towards western interference – hence gender – as this policy maker told me specifically to not have any ‘presumptions’ about Islam and women since ‘we had many queens in the past’ and added ‘as I said historically we probably, probably we are the only area in the entire world ruled by four sultana’s [queens] for 59 years’. The policy maker is referring to the sultanate of Aceh which lasted from the 15th century up until the 19th. In these flourishing times Aceh became the center of Islamic scholarship and trade. This unique historical context is of great importance for current gender justice perceptions and is often mentioned as source and condoning circumstance as will be discussed in the next chapter.

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16 See chapter two.
Indisputable: Segregation of men and women & male leaders in the household

In the final sections of this chapter I think it is important to discuss a number of indisputable aspects of daily life that are presumed by Muslims. Firstly there is the notion of segregation of males and females in certain aspects in society and secondly there are clearly divided roles recognizable for men and women regarding their private sphere. During observations it becomes clear how the separation of men and women in Acehnese society is apparent in almost all aspects of everyday life. It is clear during religious practices, for example, during prayer time men and women pray in different rooms (and sometimes during Ramadan, at different times).

During Ramadan celebrations at high schools, women and men, boys and girls would be seated in different parts of the audience when listening to speeches and songs. After, during *buka puasa*\(^{17}\) men and women would sit in different rooms having their first meal after sunset.

To stay with the subject of schools: in *pesantren* schools girls and boys are completely separated in different sections of the schools or classes (Srimulyani 2007). In state schools, however, the students are in one room. The separation does continue: boys are on one side of the classroom and the girls on the other.

During focus group discussions this behavior was often repeated, as explained by some students 'you never mix, no, we always sit like this. It is the way it is' (student) as is shown on the picture. Even during presentations for scholars during our fieldwork, it is notable that females and males separated themselves in different areas of the room.

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\(^{17}\) Breaking of the fast at sunset during Ramadan
This culturally decided behavior and actions can be related to and is perceived as influenced by the strategic selective context. As Nirmala of the GU explains ‘interaction between men and women are restricted’ and further notes this is often problematic when it comes to career opportunities for women since ‘men sit in the coffee shops and discuss work with each other, and then women are not there, so how can they compete?’. This last quote raises a fair question of how to realize a gender just society in which women and men have equal opportunities when they operate separately from each other, as well as the question on how to accomplish such equality while maintaining this specific trait of Islamic practice and identity. In the final analysis chapter I will return to these questions.

Secondly there is the notion of clearly divided tasks and roles women and men are supposed to take on regarding their private lives. As has been presented in the previous section, the holy book Quran states that males should be the leaders in the household. This is an important contextual feature since it impacts the lives of women and men, partly beyond their own agency. As a religious education teacher explains ‘not in all places we can apply gender balance of female and male roles. Overall in Islam [the] male is [the] leader, he is the leader in the household and also with inheritance for instance, males usually get more since they are expected to provide for a household while females have somebody providing for them’ (teacher Agama, female, SMA4). This notion is not perceived as something unequal, rather it is horizontal: women are as important as men in the household since ‘good nation comes from good women at home too, when they teach good values, children will succeed’ (headmaster SMA4, male). Although girls are now attending school as much, and even more, than boys do when it comes to higher education they are still under represented.
The sections above have presented an overview of a way to understand the strategic selective context in which this study and the educational actors operate. The ways in which this strategic selective context can be understood is themed around the developments of how the concept of gender justice is perceived as well as perceptions and developments of the Islam as religion.

The context in which the educational actors operate has transformed from having a certain gender ignorance towards a more gender allergy, in which the structure allows room for discussions and research on the topic but refuses the western connotations which adhere to the term gender. Likewise, there is the notion of Islam which serves as a strategic selective context since it guides many behaviors in society, of which a number are both indisputable and could act constraining such as the strict segregation of the sexes in society and the fact that males are perceived as leaders. However, it is also recognized that the interpretation and practice of Islam are often different from the narrative. The Islamic religion serves as an identity and a source of pride which make it a stable or static structure which is not questioned and has its influence and favours certain strategies over others. As well as the unique history of strong women which provides an interesting source of inspiration for actors and strategies. This shows an interesting paradox in Banda Aceh. While the term itself evokes annoyance and allergic reactions amongst some experts, policy makers, teachers and students simultaneously there is a renewed interest which is combined with new initiatives, activities and organisations recognizable. These practices focus on a revised interpretation of the context and leads to the establishment of, amongst others, organisations such as the Gender Unit.
Introduction
As explained in previous chapters, this study entails SRA as methodological research approach in an attempt to bridge the theory and practice in understanding the concept of gender justice. In this chapter, an analysis will be presented on gender justice perceptions of different educational actors in Banda Aceh. Within this research approach, it is assumed that all action
One of the Prophet wives asks him “Oh Prophet of God, what’s wrong with us, why God doesn’t speak to us, why God only spoke to – speaks to believing men, what’s wrong with us?” and the verse of the Quran came “Oh believing men and women, oh pious men and women” – and after that many verses came speaking to both men and women’ (Melati, female, expert).

The respondents recognize this ‘wrong’ interpretation of the narrative of the Quran, with its mostly negative influences on women in society in previous times. This realization is understood as one of the ways in which these actors use their agency and strategic knowledge through currently focusing on a re-interpretation of religion. Certainly not redefining the Islam, rather emphasizing how ‘Justice is the core principle in Islam. When we talk about justice, it’s not justice you know for men, but also justice for women’ (Melati, expert, female). The ideal world, from a gender perspective, for dr. Lestari, a female expert on Islamic interpretation, would be based on ‘the narrative of the holy book, the right interpretation of islam is ridha, when everybody is happy’ and mr Wibawa adds ‘Islam is based on three pillars: no discrimination, no violence and
is based on love, protection, peace and sharing’. The experts stress the importance of the ‘original’ message of the Islam instead of understandings during the conflict in Banda Aceh as presented in the previous chapter, or the Arab associations they explicitly distance themselves from: ‘if you look the way being treated in Saudi Arabia, I don’t think at the time of the Prophet the way it is now, but this is also a new scene and a new understanding of Islam’ (Melati, expert, female). The Quran verse quoted in the textbox was provided as an example of one of the respondents explaining how it is relatively easy to misinterpret the verses from the holy book. ‘The verse of the Quran spoke for example, all believing men, not just for men. Even using the word men, it implies the pronoun name, but it’s for both men and women. Human beings are created as the representatives of God on earth. So basically that the term means “as representative of God on earth”. That representation was given to both men and women. For that reason women have to have the rights also, to contribute to the well-being of the world’ (Melati, expert, female). What the quotes above argue is that the experts and academics consulted recognize how their strategic selective contexts can be constraining as well as an opportunity and source for action.

Going back in time reveals, according to this female expert, the true understanding of how the context of Islam can contribute to gender just perceptions, and not act as a constraining context: ‘historically within the context of Islam especially at the time the Prophet women were very active in public life. So for that reason I think when we talk about gender equality or women rights, we are not adopting anything new (...) with this argument even the Ulama cannot say otherwise, because they agree on that. You just need to bring them the major themes of Quran in the life of the Prophet and try to speak with the Islamic language to them. And I think if our Ulama is well educated, if our Ulama is more aware of the really great contribution of Muslim leaders in the past, they can learn so much from the history of Islam’ (Melati, expert, Female). Reflecting on their religious context these experts actively opt for a renewed interpretation of their surroundings and thus uncover how gender justice perceptions can be realized.

Equality and opportunities and experts

The most vital feature of gender justice in society for experts and activists comes down to opportunities and especially stressing the importance of the interpretation of the Islam in which men and women are viewed as equal in society. In order to shape this re-interpretation of Islam, the focus lies on creating equal opportunities for men and women within this religious framework and without the loss of indisputable Islamic ideas: ‘If [the] husband doesn’t work, and the wife is working it doesn’t mean that the wife is dominant over the man. It doesn’t change the rule that ‘husband is leader’ it just means that she adds to the household’ (Lestari, expert, female). The director of the GU adds ‘my perspective of gender is when both men and women have the
same opportunities'. Men and women should understand that there is more to the narrative than just clearly divided tasks ‘It is about abilities, because men and women have different abilities. If I have more abilities than my husband I go to work, and I get some money because he does not do that. So he can do some jobs at home. But it is ok for both of them’ (Lestari, expert, female). These explanations of equality between men and women transcends the notion that women’s sole purpose is to care for the family, focusing on abilities and opportunities. While still maintaining Islamic tradition, women are part of society who’s contribution is ‘not just to the families, but to contribute to all well-being, the family of course, but also to the well-being of the world and to the well-being of all human beings’ (Melati, female, expert). It already shows an important distinction between home life and work opportunities. And that while Islamic rules apply in the household, it does not necessarily mean they do so in a broader context of society. However, these ideas are quite progressive and it raises questions whether it is just the expert opinion or if more people on different levels in society think alike. As for the city of banda aceh, asking public high school teachers and their students can help position these opinions in a broader context.

**Education and gender**

All respondents and especially the experts consulted in the sections above (and as treated in the theoretical chapter) recognize education as an important site where change can happen as regards to gender issues as well as stressing the importance of understanding religion in ways that gender equality is possible. Attempting an effective and possibly change of context, education is thus recognized as core focus area. Director of the PSW states ‘teachers and lecturers produce the culture’ and Citra, a female teacher, explains ‘gender mainstreaming is of course very important in education. School is the place to learn, grow up, build a character… if it is not taught in schools, where else? What is learned in school is applied in society’. It is also one of the reasons the PSW and GU combined are designing new textbooks which have a greater gender awareness. And connecting in to the Islam and its interpretation, Lestari continues: ‘At school the students should learn the interpretation of the book. It is ok for a boy to cook dinner. In the holy book it says that husbands have wives and are equal, and that wives should be the best they can. But the practice is sometimes not like that. For example in Arab, the man is sometimes very rude to his wife. So in Aceh we look at the holy book, which is very clear’. It becomes interesting to review if, or and how the expert ideas of gender justice take shape in education practices. In the following section of this chapter, the perceptions of teachers and students will be analysed in order to create a better understanding of how educational actors perceive gender justice in Banda Aceh. It is key to explicitly mention these findings are at most representative for
the urban environment of Banda Aceh. Personal conversations with people in Banda Aceh left me inclined to say that, as throughout the Aceh province more traditional ideas of Islam and thus gender are dominant.

### 6.2 To complete each other: Rasulullah and Responsibilities

It is interesting to see how the teachers and students in Banda Aceh think about gender justice, because education is recognized as an important site which can influence people’s perceptions. While the previous section outlined the perceptions of experts and activists in the field of education, now the question arises if teachers and students think similarly or have completely different ideas. The study consults both religion (Agama) teachers and civic education (PKn) in public high schools and their students, as well as headmasters of the schools visited.

In the title of this section the most important themes are presented: Rasulullah; and responsibilities. The basis of gender justice for teachers and students is founded upon ‘completing each other’. Rasulullah refers to the importance of Islam in shaping these ideas, and is a combination of the words rasol, messenger and Allah, the Islamic god, and refers to god’s messenger known as Muhammed. As one female Religion teacher explains: Rasulullah is our model. Rasul really respects woman because he [was] born from his mothers womb. He also loves his wife very much. Once, he came back home at midnight, but he didn’t knock the door because he didn’t want to awake his wife who already slept. So he slept in front of the door until the morning. That’s how he shows respects to women’ (teacher agama, female, SMA N). Again this quote reflects how women are highly respected in the Islamic religion. It is presented as an example to show how teachers, alike the experts and academics, find inspiration for their perceptions of gender justice in their religion. The concept of responsibilities can be viewed as the link between the former two notions, where both religion and working together is shaped regarding responsibilities towards society. In the following section, firstly the teachers perceptions will be discussed, followed by the students understanding of gender justice and finally, those of headmasters and policy makers.

#### Teachers

For agama teachers the most important explanation of gender justice is best described as a focus on responsibilities. This focus can be seen as a coping strategy of combining their religion with a more modern idea of equality. in which the religious foundations of Islam are respected, while simultaneously the importance of women’s contribution to society is acknowledged. To

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18The choice for these two types of teachers is fully explained in the methodological chapter.
better understand this, the teachers differentiate between the household, the private sphere, and the society as the public area. When it comes to the household, the Islamic tradition in which the husband is the leader is reinstated, ‘male should be leader and female should be submissive in the household. As a relationship between, you know, husband and wife’ (teacher agama, female, SMA N13). The religious teacher explains ‘in Islam, gender is that woman and man help each other’ explaining ‘well, it doesn’t mean that woman have to support the husband when he just sit at home without working or doing anything. Basically gender equality for Islam means: to complete each other, fill the gaps. Help each other, hand in hand’ (teacher Agama, female, SMA N7). As for society, the contribution from women and men should be equal ‘within society both females and males have [the] same role to build [a] stronger future and better society’ (teacher agama, female, SMA N7). The agama teachers stress that they teach their students that, next to being responsible spouses they have a responsibility towards society: ‘I always give motivation for my students, you know particularly for female students, to be the great and strong leaders in the future. If she can handle the good household, she can also be a good manager, or a good leader in the society’ (teacher agama, female, SMA N13). Interestingly it is never questioned women know what to do and want to accomplish a strong household. This teacher uses this notion as evidence for female students to start understanding they have similar skills for other purposes as well, such as being a leader or a manager.

As for the PKN teachers, similar notions of responsibilities can be found in their lessons. Core subjects of civic education are pancasila ideology, legislation and character building. Based on these principles the importance of teaching students that both girls and boys are equal in their rights is one of the focus areas. One particular teacher shares her experiences with her class of the time when she was a female leader in her hometown in a rural area: ‘in civic education, I talk about my experience when I was a leader in an organization in the rural area. I was the leader but I couldn’t take any decision because I am female. Because I am female people said “hey, don’t do this, don’t do that”. It was in 2000, in the rural area. So, every time I made a suggestion or took a decision, the society says: “No, you can’t say this, you can’t do this, because you are the woman.” I share this with my students as an example: this is wrong. It is not suitable from the law legislation: the law says every citizen. So, every citizen means both female and male. No discrimination’ (teacher PKn, female, SMA N13). This shows how in the public sphere, that of society, this teacher tells her students that they are equal and should be treated that way in the positions they have, such as female leaders. The quotes in this section reflect how there is a clear distinction made between religions notions such as the roles of males and females in society and the parts males and females should play in broader society. When it comes to the household, males are leaders. Females have to assure the household is strong. As for society,
they should be treated equally and be able to acquire similar positions. This is explained in
different ways, either through legislation (by PKn teachers) and/or the focus on shared
responsibilities.

**Students; gender apa itu?**

Students also understand that there is a difference between more traditional thinking versus
what they call modern thinking regarding Islam: *'when women can’t do this, can’t do that, it is
very limited. They mostly make women housewives, just housewife, they just look around for a girl
who always stays at home. Traditional thinking! Now, women can do what men can do, that is
modern thinking’* (students, SMA N4). When the students talk about ‘now’ they refer to current
situation in Banda Aceh in which women participate more in society through, for example,
having a job. The roles of males and females in society are more openly mentioned and noticed.
This corresponds with previously mentioned changes in the strategic selective context. The
students are raised in an environment which is dealing with different ideas and ideals about
gender. From a religious perspective they acknowledge there are differences between men and
women *‘in my opinion gender is grace from god that is given to mankind, both men or women. God
offers different things for each gender. The purpose could be different but substantively has the
same goal’* while showing a lot of respect for women through religion *‘why god delegated the
prophet Muhammad? One of them is to increase woman’s dignity’* (students, SMA N1). During the
focus groups the students, through their answers, make a similar differentiation between roles
for men and women in private and public areas: *‘we are living in the Islamic center, in praying,
not in other things, the one who’s supposed to lead the praying is a man’* (students, SMA N4).
While in school, and regarding school practices, extracurricular activities and treatment by
teachers *‘In class all, girl or boy, are the same. If there is a group, lesson with group, study with
group. All teacher mix with boy and girl. It can make our team work good. There is no
differentiation’* (students SMA N4). Like the teachers before the students appear to make a
similar distinction between religious practices in which there is a clear difference between male
and female roles and the public sphere of, in their case, schools. In their high schools they feel
boys and girls are (and should) be treated equally.

One of the girls interviewed is the chairman of the student organization and the class
structures has both girls and boys in responsible positions. Inspired by my local supervisors’
research on girls in *pesantren* education, I was curious to ask the students what their ambitions
in life were. Asking this question seems to uncover unconscious or institutionalized ideal roles
for males and females and it offers an insight in how education can impact the ‘thoughts and
aspirations of individual students’ (Srimulyani 2007: 90). Only one out of nineteen students
added 'I want to be a good wife' to her answer, after speaking about being a business woman. In order to get a good overview of the answers to this question, I have presented these in a table below. Amongst other factors, high school education in Banda Aceh seems to influence the students in a sense that both boys and girls have similarly professional ambitions, in agreement with what they called a more modern idea of Islam and gender.

Table [3] overview ambitions students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur in the fashion sector</td>
<td>Doctor to treat the poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policewoman</td>
<td>Professional football player and lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>President of Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create employments for the arts sector</td>
<td>Scientist and developing religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister of education</td>
<td>Islamic expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister of foreign affairs</td>
<td>Director or engineer of a company or magician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor in rural areas</td>
<td>Air traffic controller for airplanes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese translator and author</td>
<td>Ambassador for Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor to work in the hospital</td>
<td>Politician or German author.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business women and good wife</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ten girls and nine boys were asked these questions in four different schools in the city of Banda Aceh. There were four students from a private (state) high school, ten students from highly ranked schools and five students from an area which was most affected by the tsunami, also with a lower rank. It is interesting to mention that especially the students from the private schools had most ambitious dreams (president of Indonesia) while the ones from the lowest ranked school were more modest (policewoman). These views are regarded as representative for the urban setting in which this research was conducted, though further research must be conducted to reflect if these hopes and dreams are similarly themed in rural areas.

**Headmasters**

Three out of the total of six headmasters interviewed were female. In total there are four female headmasters of sixteen public high schools in Banda Aceh. The representation between male and female leaders of public high schools in Banda Aceh is not balanced equally.

Focusing on gender justice, the headmasters quickly referred to numbers of girls and boys in school, and the ratio of female teachers emphasizing 'I think there’s no problem towards gender issues in this school as female are more dominant in number here' (headmaster, female, SMA N13) and 'the number of female students are much more than male. to be compared, also the teachers are more female, only 11 male teachers and 57 female.' (headmaster, female, SMA N7), and this majority of female teachers is generally true for highs schools in Banda Aceh. The numbers led to headmasters explaining: 'this proofs that there is no discrimination for women in Aceh because you can see a lot of women work in school as teachers' (headmaster, male, SMA N1). Although this seems a very good sign for female participation and importance of public
appearance of women as a way to overcome discrimination this does not naturally mean there is no discrimination. The teacher profession is stereotypically a women's position, and could be regarded as a form of positive discrimination. The fact that women are at school sometimes disguises the fact that women are absent in all other professions and leadership positions. Another headmaster continues 'we see that some women are more talented, they can do [a] good job, they work harder. And some positions are more suitable for women to be the leader rather than male: although women take less positions in the society, when they succeed they give the better result in their work. Good women are the basis to a good nation. At home if she is good mother, she will teach good value to her children. And also if an office is led by a woman who is good in management, so the office will be good too' (headmaster, male, SMA N4).

These interviews show how the principals have similar perceptions as discussed before of other actors on how women could contribute to society, next to establishing a healthy family: 'there is no difference between females or males, I don’t differentiate between male and female students. I give the opportunity for whoever that has the ability' (headmaster, female, SMA N7). This final statement is interesting since it seems to contradict with the statistics of female headmasters. It raises the question why only four out of sixteen high schools have female leaders.

Concluding this section I present an inspiring quote from a particular female headmaster who has won several awards for her efforts as a principal of public schools in Banda Aceh, and has always combined her leadership position with teaching agama for almost three decades now and thus ultimately the perceived importance of religion while also contributing to society: ‘in society, females and males are the same. But in Acehnese culture, mostly males have bigger portion in working than females. I always say to my students that females are not weak. We can be a doctor, and at the same time we can be a mother also. I hope our young generation can see our great Acehnese models, our heroine like Cut Meutia, Cut Nyak Dien. They are super wonder women. Women are not weak. We can do everything if we want to do it. I am the best headmistress for science schools, and also in sport school. Although I teach religion subject. I can also be a great headmistress'(ibu Aisyah). This is a hopeful quote which needs some critical reflection. Although this female in particular is a ‘best case scenario’ for how most teachers, students and headmaster view how gender justice must be perceived, is not possible for this research to conclude that this is the current situation in Banda Aceh.
Policy

A final note in this chapter is on the policy perspectives through data collected in interviews with the minister of education, the coordinator of the Aceh Education Council (Majelis Pendidikan Daerah, MPD) and ‘Aceh Education Progress Report 2010’. According to the minister of education in Banda Aceh, there is no specific gender agenda in the city or province, and there is one general curriculum for all without any explicit gender sensitivity. Furthermore there are no active teacher trainings anymore. There have been several initiatives right after the tsunami, but these came from NGO’s rather than the Acehnese government. Perceptions of gender justice are mostly based on the principle of redistribution, and are concerned with equal numbers of boys and girls in school rather than quality of education and opportunities after education. In the figure below, as adopted from the progress report show the ratio of ‘gender equality’ in different educational levels in schools in Banda Aceh. Again, gender equality in this case is defined as a ratio of boys and girls attending schools. If the bar chart in the figure is more than ‘1’ it means there are more girls than boys present. Which is indeed the case for lower levels. The level S0/diploma refers to high schools. The second level S1, refers to undergraduate school and S2 refers to graduate school. These last two levels do not have the additional ‘diploma’ reference and the question rises if the numbers presented are either measured through school subscriptions, school subscriptions and attendance or through both combined with successful passing with diploma. From interviews with experts and headmasters it seems that girls are indeed overly presented in high school, while they tend to drop out in higher education. One should thus be critical reading this figure, since the numbers seem very gender friendly, however information is lacking.
6.3 Concluding

This chapter shows how the educational actors perceive gender justice within Acehnese society and in public schools. The focus on a re-interpretation of the holy book, shows how the actors included in this study seize the opportunities within their Islamic context. The perceptions of these actors are all situated within the urban area, the city of Banda Aceh. It is not possible to conclude these ideas of actors are representative for the whole of Aceh province. In a way most respondents challenge the notion of women only being a mother, and a certain differentiation is made between public and private spheres in terms of roles and positions one should take. Answering the sub question ‘how can we understand the perceptions of gender justice by educational actors in Banda Aceh, and/or are there any explicit actions recognizable through which the context can be challenged?’ in this research comes down to the notion of responsibilities and re-interpreting Islam. Perceptions are based on core principles in Islam which, according to respondents show a tremendous respect for women and promote equality between men and women. Teachers, students and headmasters use their religion as a source of inspiration to define their ideas of gender justice through making a clear distinction between behavior in the household and towards society. This is seen as a way through which these perceptions are used by the actors to challenge their context. By explaining how women and men should behave towards society, namely, on equal terms and with equal responsibilities. Which is in contrast to the household sphere where strong Islamic principles are maintained. It shows how the respondents identify options in order to realize their intentions for more gender justice.
Rasulullah & Responsibilities
Introduction

In this final analysis chapter the previous two will be bound together through interpreting in which ways the strategic actions of the selective context and the educational actors have resulted in either direct effects on the structure and/or strategic learning of the actors involved. Direct effects include effects upon the structured context and can produce a partial (however
minimal) transformation of the structured context’ (Hay 2002: 133). Strategic learning occurs when the actors involved experience an enhanced awareness of their context ‘and the constrains/opportunities they impose, providing the basis from which subsequent strategy might be formulated and perhaps prove more successful’ (Hay 2002: 133). Ultimately this chapter is attempting to answer the sub questions ‘in which ways is it possible to identify effects of action that influence gender justice by educational actors in Banda Aceh?’. The following sections will thus firstly discuss if and which direct effects of actors actions are recognizable by respondents themselves. It is not possible for me in this thesis to fully measure or analyze which actions led to which effects. Secondly, examples of strategic learning will be presented. Finally, in the concluding sections an answer on the sub question will be formulated.

7.1 Direct effects: the road ahead is peace?

It is difficult to measure the direct effects of actions in the three months’ time frame of this research. This is why this section will mostly reflect upon possible effects instead of drawing conclusions about impacts. The impacts of these direct effects could (partially) transform the strategic selective context, but in order to argue these transformations, there should be a significant transformation recognizable which implies a ‘before’ and ‘after’ dichotomy. This is very difficult to derive from the data collected and the scope of this study. At most, in this section current ideas of gender justice can be presented through reflecting on actions undertaken by the respondents, as well as situations described by them regarding these issues.

It is interesting to mention that the ratio of girls that are now attending schools are more than boys. The female students also indicate to have professional ambitions. The vast majority of girls does not mention that being a mother is their first and foremost dream in the future which would be the traditional division of roles expected in their situated context of Islamic religion. This could possibly be evidence of direct effects of changing perceptions in society: future generations seem to have different ideas and ideals, and especially girls find themselves producing a certain idea of gender justice different from the ideal which, according to experts, used to prevail. Sometimes small, though not unimportant, a teacher explains how she educates responsibilities by letting both boys and girls clean the classroom after lessons to show that ‘it is not only for women to clean’ (teacher PKn, teacher, SMA N13). Again dividing tasks between the genders but not according to traditional standards. This could connect to the notion of working women, mentioned many times by different respondents, which is a relatively new phenomenon: ‘we can see it ourselves, our neighbours, [in our] environment, [that] after the tsunami many more women are working. Before tsunami not many cases but after tsunami it is rising’ (students, SMA N13).
In the initial years after the tsunami, many efforts regarding gender justice were made and one of the direct effects is that now there needs to be a 30% ratio of women in the government: *the rule for every party that follows and joins the election, it is a must to put 30% of the chairs to women* (teacher PPKN, female, SMA N13). Another example is the female vice-mayor of Banda Aceh, which is mentioned multiple times by respondents in order to indicate growth regarding gender justice. As well as the development of a new, more gender sensitive curriculum for high schools and university issued by the GU and PSW. Without getting ahead of reality, it might be best to use the example of POTRET magazine and the Center for Community Development & Education (CCDE) as a best practice scenario and to illustrate the potential of initiatives like these and how it might directly affect the structured context.

**POTRET magazine: building a change for life**

In 1993, he\(^{19}\) decided to direct ‘*all my efforts have the priority and focus on women*’ in order to improve the living standard of women in Banda Aceh. Recognizing many women lived in poverty, wedlock and suffered from a lack of knowledge, skills, and access to financial resources the Center for Community Development & Education (CCDE, a local NGO) was established. The CCDE attempts to educate women from the grass root perspective and provide them with schooling and entrepreneurial skills. This is a way to ensure their participation in society and assist with decision making practices. These principles accumulated in the form of the Potret magazine\(^{20}\), established in 2003. As explained before, his realization that women were completely absent in newspapers, can be viewed as symbolic for the absence of women in the public sphere ‘*women don’t have the media, nowhere to ventilate, women were protected in the wrong way: how can women get richer if not schooled?*’. Gender justice according to him is when there is ‘*no discrimination, women have the right to speak and express themselves, when they have jobs and can develop themselves through education*’. Accomplishing exactly these goals through establishing the journal. By recognizing the context of discrimination, and the lack of women in public sphere, it is through action of education women and providing a platform in the shape of Potret, that it is aimed to transform at least partially the context and increase knowledge of women in Banda Aceh: Potret magazine is a magazine by and for women, and focusses on many different topics and actualities interesting for both males and females and is now available all

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\(^{19}\) In order to keep anonymity, no name or function will be revealed.

\(^{20}\) a grassroots women magazine published in Aceh, Indonesia.
over Indonesia, and in other countries such as Malaysia as well. Although it is impossible to state that the context itself is directly affected, the magazine did indeed happen and is still widespread which is a sign of women participating, learning skills and having a voice.

7.2 Increased knowledge: new puzzles & struggles

Discovering the actors enhanced knowledge of gender justice and how this may affect their future actions seems more possible than measuring direct effects. One of the most important notions is the fact that currently the inspiration for this topic is found in their own history and the previously mentioned heroines. This show a reflexive ability of the actors to understand their context of Islam, and the ‘danger’ of losing their much appreciated identity to western influences. Instead of refusing the concept of gender justice as a western notions and interference, respondents adjust to a strategy which could more successful: a focus on their own history with heroines and the potential of Islamic principles in the holy book. Since gender justice is a relatively new phenomenon, the increased awareness and knowledge about it shows how respondents recognize constraints in society which are yet to be challenged. The development of gender justice, and greater understanding of this concept amongst educational actors leads to the discovery of new puzzles and struggles for women in the Banda Acehnese society. In the following section a number of these issues will be treated.

Insecurity and double burden

As the analytical chapters before show that as well as experts, academics and activists, headmaster and teachers increase to motivate their female students to be ambitious on professional levels and become leaders in society. Since women have not been leaders in the recent history (during the conflict) they are not used to view this leadership position in society as an option in their lives. One of the struggles to recognize is the problem of insecurity of women. Both girls in the classrooms as women in other stages in their life experience this. Girls in classrooms, although often perceived as smarter or more motivated are less active when it comes to class discussions or presentations: ‘male students are more active than female students. Because they like reading newspaper, browsing the internet, reading some books, so they have an extensive knowledge, whereas females tend to be bounded to the textbook. Female students frequently do well on assignments, they had enough sources but they lack presentation. On the other hand, male students had no enough sources for their assignments but they did excellently in presentation’ (teacher PKn, female, SMA N7). As well as later in life, the causes of why there are

http://potret-online.com/ & http://www.ccde.or.id/
not many female leaders in society are explained: ‘another reason for the male dominance is that there is a cultural stereotype: men are the leaders. Women feel inferior and will think “I don’t want to be leader when there’s a man there”, they won’t take leadership’ (teacher, female, SMK N1) and the director of the PWS states as well: ‘women leaders are not confident. They still don’t have the confidence’. This shows that the development of the concept of gender justice leads to this new struggle. How to get women in leadership positions if they do not ‘want’ these? However, the fact that educational actors recognize this as an occurring phenomenon, and the problem can be seen as evidence of enhanced knowledge: when a problem is recognized, measures can be designed and potentially taken to overcome this.

In order to increase confidence and adjust the stereotypes in society, PPKN teachers indicate they often mix boys and girls in group assignments in order to increase discussions and that they can benefit from each other’s strengths: ‘it is important that my classroom is more active without seeing to gender male or female. I decided to make group discussion with mixed members, male and female. So that the discussion will you know hot and active and the students will be more active because if they are mixed they are more active to talk and to present their task and also I do this to stimulate or motivate the female students to be more active in the classroom’ (teacher PPKN, female, SMA N7). As for women outside of school there are initiatives such as trainings: ‘after a training here at the PSW they are motivated and empowered’ (Iman, expert, female). However, more details of the frequency of trainings has not been provided, which makes it difficult to indicate whether this is a common practice or rather exceptional.

What the expert and teacher realize is that there is a lack of active participation by respectively females and students. By recognizing this, these respondents show how they use their agency by turning the increased and enhanced knowledge of the situation into a basis for a subsequent strategy or action such as mixing the debate groups and providing trainings in order to enhance girls participation in the classroom and females positions in society.

As well as insecurity of women, there is another recognized ‘puzzle’ present. The universal phenomenon of when women succeed professionally, and have jobs, they are still the ones that have children and go on maternity leave, which makes often makes it more difficult for them to have successful careers, is also starting to appear in Banda Aceh: ‘another example is in the career, for women they have many holidays, for example they have to give birth so they have to go out of work, so it is hard for them to develop good career. If a man can be a manager in 10 years, for women it can take 20 years because they have to be off of the work’ (teacher, female) this statement is elaborated by both the director of the PSW and the GU saying ‘gender justice is when we see that women have specific needs sometimes’ and ‘gender justice is realized when both men and women have similar opportunities, there is too much differentiation now, and many
problems with managerial positions because there is no maternity leave and childcare’. This concept of ‘double burden’ only becomes apparent when motherhood and active labour participation are combined. According to the experts consulted in this case study, this is starting to surface now. Women simultaneously are still being held responsible for the care of their children, while increasingly working outside their homes. Policy measures must be taken in order to be able to better combine these two roles.

Finally there are several educational actors, teachers and experts, that emphasise the importance of curriculum in order to formulate successful strategies to ensure a more gender just society. The following teacher displays an awareness of the constraints and opportunities in her context by providing this strategy: ‘there is three points important if we want application of gender in the society, the classroom and the family, we need policy for gender in curriculum, teacher trainings: through socialization the government should give teachers awareness trainings, and acknowledge that is starts from the teacher itself’ (teacher, female, SMK N1). Experts have also indicated that curricula is an important aspect, especially in higher education since people who graduate from university are often the ones who make new policies, if there are more women involved in making policies there is chance for change.

The parallel coffee shop
According to a research regarding women and their job opportunities, conducted by the director of the GU in current Banda Aceh there are ‘many opportunities, people are more aware [of gender justice], but in the higher political perspective and those narrative it is not yet possible [for women to get good jobs] due to ’friends politics’. This shows how developments of perceptions about gender justice described in previous chapters have at least increased knowledge of the subject in the society and amongst actors. Though this has not led to the effect that women indeed are participating in top-level jobs.

One of the obstacles, according to that research is the problem of networks. Men in high positions meet each other in the coffee shop and discuss work and job opportunities, and through building these networks they can often offer advice and tips for new jobs amongst each other. Due to structural reasons, women are never at these meetings: the segregation of sexes in society. Recognizing this, the GU director has thought of a strategy to increase the possibility for women to acquire jobs in higher positions in society: ‘the Gender Unit office will function as a ‘coffee shop’ for women, where they can meet each other, and discuss and negotiate about things and so build a network. We will also bring food and snacks to attract more women and make it a nice environment’ (Nirmala, expert, female). This is an interesting example in which the
traditional Islamic principles such as segregating men and women is combined with more modern ideas of gender justice in which women gain more positions in society. This example is presented in this part of analysis since it can be argued how the director of the GU increased her awareness of the strategic selective context she operates in, and especially the constraining aspects of it. Learning about the constraints her surroundings impose, she uses this structure as the basis for a strategy which might prove more successful by: keeping the Islamic identity through not explicitly mixing the genders in the process of increased equality, she is considering to establish a space which is a ‘coffee shop situation’ as explained before, and serves as a parallel.

7.3 Concluding
This chapter has attempted to answer the subquestion ‘in which ways is it possible to identify effects of action that influence gender justice by educational actors in Banda Aceh?’ Using the SRA research approach there are two ways in which these effects of actions can be recognized, namely direct effects and/or strategic learning of actors.

Since this thesis research has a very limited time frame and scope it is very difficult to really measure direct effects of action. However, it is possible to reflect upon actions and expressed ideals of gender justice as presented by the respondents. As became clear the number of girls attending primary and secondary education is exceeding that of boys. Girls also have interesting professional ambitions, which are in contrast with traditional Islamic role divisions. The other example presented in this chapter is the magazine Potret as a way to help women gain knowledge and skills through education. Although it is not possible to say that this magazine has had direct effects or transformed the strategic selective context, it could be argued how the ongoing existence and success of this magazine is only possible in a structure in which such initiatives are accepted, as well as necessary? This implies the strategic selective context of Banda Aceh allows for gender just initiatives to arise as well as maybe recognize the need?

While the impact of ‘direct effects’ of agents actions are difficult to ‘measure’, reflections in this chapter show a certain increase in gender justice through education. It proves more relevant to review the ways in which the knowledge of actors has increased, and if this strategic learning leads to more successful strategies for gender justice.

There are a number of new struggles and puzzles that arise for women in the Banda Acehnese society. The lack of insecurity of women to take leadership positions, as well as girls in class rooms who do not actively participate in class rooms are recognized issues by experts, academics and teachers. As well as the notion of the double bourdon phenomenon, which causes females to be hesitant to participate in paid labour.
Through their increased knowledge, they attempt to formulate strategies to overcome constraints from the strategic selective context. Such as mixing boys and girls in school to increase active participation of girls, the parallel coffee shop to start a female professional network and the acknowledgement of lack of policies, which can be solved by making gender specific curricula in higher education.
Concluding remarks

Introduction
In this concluding chapter attention will be given to the findings presented in previous chapters as well as a discussion of how these findings can be interpreted with regards to the theoretical framework. And finally some recommendations for further research. The research question ‘How does education influence gender justice in Banda Aceh, analysed through perceptions of different relevant educational actors?’ will be answered. The sub questions are answered in the findings section below.
8.1 Findings

- How can we understand the strategic selective context of Banda Aceh regarding gender justice and education?

The ways in which this strategic selective context can be understood is themed around the developments of how the concept of gender justice is perceived by actors in society, perceptions and developments of the Islam as a religion over time and the unique history of heroines in Aceh.

I have argued how the strategic selective context has developed from a ‘gender ignorance’ perspective during war times towards a more ‘gender allergy’ view currently. Throughout conflict times gender as a concept was absent and women’s rights were often violated. After the tsunami and conflict, and during the rebuilding of Banda Aceh, international NGO's introduced gender justice practices and it is now a well-known concept in the city. This creates an interesting paradox which I have designated as a gender allergy: while the term is openly discussed and apparent through activities and initiatives such as the establishment of the Gender Unit, simultaneously it is thought of as a ‘dangerous’ western interference threatening the Acehnese identity.

As for the Islamic religion, this is seen as another aspect of the strategic selective context since it guides behaviors that on some occasions lead to constraining effects for females. Such as the segregation of men and women in society and the notion that males should be the leaders (in society, politics, education and so forth). However, it is also recognized that the interpretation and practice of Islam are often different from the narrative. The Islamic religion serves as an identity and a source of pride, which makes it a stable or static structure which is not questioned while influencing and favouring certain strategies over others.

Finally it is recognized that this context also has potential to serve as an inspirational source for actors such as the unique history of female heroines. The strategic selective context is thus understood to have several constraints and opportunities, but is also regarded as a source of inspiration for educational actors in Banda Aceh on which they focus their actions.

- How can we understand the perceptions of gender justice by educational actors in Banda Aceh, and/or are there any explicit actions recognizable through which the context can be challenged?

The perceptions of gender justice by the experts, academics, activists, headmasters, teachers and students interviewed are focused on a re-interpretation of their Islamic religion. Citing fragments from the holy book in order to emphasise the presumed respect for women and justice for all humans as originally taught by their religion, is a way in which the educational actors guide previously dominant perceptions into a more equality based perception of gender.
justice. Practically, this means that on the one hand, in their actions they distinguish between religious practices in which the indisputable differentiation between men and women should be respected but solely directed to situations within the household. And on the other, the public sphere of society in which women and men have similar responsibilities towards creating a bright future for Aceh. The data of this study on a selection of public high schools in Banda Aceh suggests that, especially PKn teachers, motivate girls in school to participate and become managers and leaders. However, it is very important that the perceptions I present in this analysis should be put into perspective. The ideas are progressive and account only for the educational actors included in this study, in the city of Banda Aceh. Whether these opinions find resonance in the broader province is still to be researched.

- In which ways is it possible to identify effects of action that influence gender justice by educational actors in Banda Aceh?

Effects of action manifest respectively through the strategic actors in the form of enhanced knowledge and learning, or on the strategic selective context in the form of a (partial) transformation of it. As mentioned earlier, the effects of action best recognizable in this particular study are the enhanced knowledge, and strategic learning of educational actors interviewed. Especially experts, headmasters and teachers attempt to formulate strategies to overcome constraints from the strategic selective context. By recognizing a number of struggles which arise such as: the lack of confidence of women to take leadership positions, as well as girls in schools who remain passive, the lack of policies enabling women to combine work with care and the segregation of sexes in society makes it problematic for women to fully participate in society, acquire a useful professional networks or take leadership positions. Formulated strategies include mixing boys and girls in school to increase active participation of girls, trainings to increase security of women in labour participation, the parallel coffee shop to start a female professional network and the acknowledgement of lack of policies, which can be solved by making gender specific curricula in higher education. Again, important to notice is that these findings are based on an intensive case study in the city of Banda Aceh. Whether these strategies, or lack of strategies are recognizable in the greater Aceh region is not discussed here. This research less so pursuits to generalize the findings presented above, but more so raise discussions and analyse lessons learned in this setting.
8.2 Discussion

How does education influence gender justice in Banda Aceh, analysed through perceptions of different relevant educational actors?

These findings lead to the conclusion that education is indeed recognized as an important site in which there are opportunities to influence and contribute gender justice in the city of Banda Aceh. Through using the SRA research approach, the study provides an overview of the strategic selective context in which Islam, history and gender connotations significantly influence the actors interviewed. Subsequently perceptions of different educational actors are presented and how these perceptions are applied through strategic actions. Finally, an attempt is made to create an overview of which effects these strategic actions possibly have on the strategic selective context of Banda Aceh. In the forthcoming sections I will discuss these findings in light of theoretical considerations of gender justice presented in the theoretical framework.

Gender justice perceptions in Banda Aceh connect to different approaches of defining gender justice in the theoretical framework. Since there are indeed greater structural perceptions recognizable in which respondents touch upon recognition of different needs of women (as presented in the last analytical chapter) as well as the need for more female representation in leadership positions. However it is also stressed that the influence of local context is crucial in shaping and defining how gender justice is perceived, especially the islamic context. Indeed, this case in Banda Aceh is another example of how the focus on solely western perspectives of gender justice bypasses the importance of history and religion (Yin 2006). As well as the characteristics of society which are based on complementing each other and working together rather than individualism and deconstruction (Bano 2009, Yin 2006, Parekh 2002). Unilateral ideas, such as Nancy Frasers three dimensional model (1995, 2005), are to some extent appropriate, though in the context of Banda Aceh needs a valuable additional dimension which is presented in the form of 'responsibilities'. In this final dimension, according to the perspectives of the respondents religion can be combined with equality.

Finally, attention must be directed to what these conclusions actually mean for post conflict and post crisis Banda Aceh. There is some evidence that education does indeed have an influence on gender justice in Banda Aceh, and that this influence is mainly for the better. While direct effects are not measurable in this particular research, some types of respondents show they have enhanced knowledge of their surroundings, recognizing how certain developments cause new challenges. These challenges are then analysed and actors reformulate actions in order to be more successful. These specific actions do indicate there are positive developments recognizable towards a more gender just society. Ultimately it is the question whether it is
possible to see if education contributes to or withdraws from greater gender justice in society. And if so, whether this in turn contributes to a lasting peace, since it is situated in a post-conflict affected region. Or in other words: which 'face' of education is to be found in Banda Aceh (Bush & Saltarelli 2002)? It is hard to really distinguish how overall in society education has contributed to transform ideas of gender justice, since these would have to be recognized in the realm of direct effects. These are very hard to distinguish and conclude on based findings in this research. However, it is possible to conclude that there is at least potential, and indeed public high school education in the city of Banda Aceh is playing a part in shaping students minds towards a more gender just society, and thus cautiously refer to positive face of education.

However, it becomes problematic when looking at the possibilities of women after completing high school, since a lack of policies and inherited insecurity due to cultural stereotypes delay full participation of women in society, and the ideal gender justice as depicted by respondents: a society in which men and women have equal opportunities and both work on a bright future for Aceh. This leads me to discuss a range of recommendations for future research.

8.3 Recommendations for future research

Recommendations for future research are the inclusion of more rural settings, investigation of gender justice perceptions in Islamic education and a focus on the curriculum. I will briefly discuss these three recommendations.

On many occasions in this research I have attempted to put findings and conclusions into perspective. This mainly has to do with the fact that the respondents consulted in this research have portrayed rather progressive ideals on the topic of combining Islam, and Islamic traditions with gender justice and female participation in society. This could be due to the fact that the city of Banda Aceh was relatively safe during the conflict and worst affected by the tsunami when compared to the greater province. This could have two implications, firstly, since the city was relatively safe during the recent conflict women have been relatively less discriminated and wronged in that time. Which could indicate they have a less long road to travel with regards to developing and/or adjusting ideas of gender justice and Islam. Secondly, during the years after tsunami a lot of international NGO’s have introduced and worked on increasing gender awareness. While the devastation of the tsunami was heaviest in the city, logically this would mean that NGO’s have been concentrated in this area. In contrast to the rural, greater province in which the conflict was more apparent and the fighting was worse while the tsunami did not reach that far inland and NGO’s introducing gender might not have reached these parts of the province. To get a better perspective on how education influences
gender justice in the whole region of Aceh, especially with regards to considering issues of how this then influences a stable peace, future research must include the rural area of Aceh.

Further researching Islamic schools can be very interesting since Islam is inextricably linked with everything and everyone in society. Also, in Islamic schools all courses and teaching is done from a Islamic perspective. This is a different perspective than that on which public schools are founded, and thus could lead to different perceptions of gender justice and islam.

Finally, future research into curriculum content can be very interesting since especially expert respondents have indicated that this could be a very important aspect in influencing perspectives on gender justice in Banda Aceh.
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