

ISLAMIC POLITICAL COMMUNICATION ETHICS AND GENDER JUSTICE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PRINCIPLE OF AL-MUSAWAH IN THE REVISION OF THE ELECTION LAW

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze gender-based political communication and the fulfillment of women's rights from the perspective of political philosophy and ethics, particularly in the context of revising Indonesia's Election Law. The main focus of this research is to understand how women's social positions, lived experiences, experiential knowledge, and power relations influence political communication processes and public policy formulation within a democratic system. This research employs a qualitative library research method by examining books, academic journals, laws and regulations, and scholarly works relevant to gender issues, political communication, democracy, and political ethics. The findings indicate that gender-based political communication is a crucial normative and ethical instrument for realizing substantive, just, and inclusive democracy. Based on Standpoint Theory analysis, women, as a structurally less dominant group, possess unique perspectives derived from their social and political experiences; however, these perspectives are often marginalized in legislative and decision-making processes. This study emphasizes that affirmative policies, such as women's representation quotas in the revision of the Election Law, are not merely legal-formal mechanisms but also represent moral recognition of women's lived experiences and corrective efforts to address power imbalances, thereby contributing to the strengthening of justice principles, gender equality, and respect for human rights in Indonesian democracy.

Keywords: *Gender-Based Political Communication, Women's Rights, Election Law*

Introduction

Human rights constitute fundamental principles that guarantee every individual recognition, protection, and fair treatment without discrimination. Within this framework, equality between men and women is an inseparable part of efforts to uphold human rights. However, in social reality, women continue to experience injustice in various spheres of life, including social, economic, legal, and political domains. These inequalities are

not merely individual in nature but are also structural, as they are influenced by value systems, social norms, and public policies that have not yet fully supported gender justice (Triwahyuningsih, 2018).

In social and cultural contexts, gender injustice is often legitimized by norms and traditions that place women in subordinate positions. Women are frequently perceived as more suitable for the domestic sphere, while the public sphere, including politics, is regarded as a

male domain. This socially constructed understanding, which has been transmitted across generations, causes gender role differences to be perceived as natural or inherent, whereas in essence they are the result of social and cultural processes. Such perspectives constitute the root causes of the emergence and persistence of gender injustice in social life (Putri et al., 2024).

Along with the development of society, feminist movements have emerged as responses to these inequalities. Feminism plays a significant role in fostering awareness of the importance of women's equal rights in education, social life, and political participation. This movement affirms that women possess dignity, freedom, and equal rights as complete human beings. Nevertheless, feminism is still frequently perceived narrowly by certain segments of society as merely a movement of resistance, without a comprehensive understanding of its underlying philosophical and ethical foundations, particularly within the social and political context of Indonesia (Ilaa, 2021).

In the political sphere, the state's commitment to fulfilling women's rights is reflected in various regulations, one of which is Law Number 2 of 2008 on Political Parties, which mandates a minimum quota of 30% representation of women in representative institutions. This

affirmative policy aims to increase women's political participation and to address gender representation disparities within the democratic system. However, in practice, this policy has not yet been fully effective in eliminating the barriers faced by women in politics. Gender stereotypes, limited access to political resources, and the lack of structural support from political parties remain major obstacles to women's political engagement (Nursyifa et al., 2023).

In the context of contemporary democracy, particularly in the period leading up to and during general elections, the issue of gender equality has become increasingly relevant. Elections function not only as mechanisms for the contestation of power but also as indicators of respect for women's human rights in political participation. Gender equality cannot be measured solely by the quantitative aspect of women's representation; rather, it must also be assessed through the quality of participation, including women's involvement in decision-making processes, access to political education, and equal opportunities to influence public policy. Women's political participation has been proven to contribute to the formulation of more inclusive policies that are responsive to the broader social needs of society (Marinică, 2023).

Based on the foregoing discussion, it is essential to examine gender-based political communication and women's rights from philosophical and ethical perspectives, particularly in the context of revising the Election Law. This examination is relevant for assessing the extent to which the values of justice, equality, and respect for women's dignity have been accommodated within regulatory frameworks and political communication practices in Indonesia, as well as for identifying the ongoing challenges in realizing a gender-just democracy. Previous research conducted by Arhansyah et al. (2024) indicates that the history of women's political rights struggles in Indonesia has experienced significant development since the reform era, particularly through the implementation of a 30% quota policy for women's representation in legislative candidate lists. However, the study also emphasizes that the implementation of this policy continues to face cultural, social, and economic barriers. Gender stereotypes that perceive politics as a male domain remain deeply entrenched, resulting in women often being regarded as less competent or unfit to occupy political leadership positions.

In line with this, Irawan et al. (2024) argue that political contestation, particularly in simultaneous general elections, constitutes a crucial moment to

evaluate the fulfillment of women's human rights in political participation. Gender equality in this context concerns not only the numerical representation of women but also the quality of their participation, including access to political resources, leadership training, and tangible support from political parties. These findings further reinforce the urgency of studies on political communication and women's rights as integral components of efforts to achieve a gender-just democracy.

The primary challenge of gender-based political communication in Indonesia lies in the insufficient mainstreaming of women's rights perspectives within political communication practices, particularly in the periods preceding and during electoral processes. In practice, women are still frequently positioned merely as symbolic political objects rather than as equal subjects of political communication. The representation of women in campaign messages often remains stereotypical, emphasizing domestic, emotional, or supplementary images instead of leadership capacity and political competence. Moreover, political narratives circulating in the public sphere, both through mass media and digital media, continue to be dominated by masculine viewpoints, resulting in women's voices, interests, and lived experiences being inadequately and unjustly accommodated

within political agendas and electoral regulations.

From the perspective of Islamic ethics, all human beings are created in an equal position without distinction based on gender, race, or social status. This principle is known as *Al-Musāwah* (equality), which affirms that men and women possess equal rights, dignity, and responsibilities in social and political life. Such equality does not imply uniformity of roles; rather, it represents the recognition of equal human worth as the foundation of social justice.

The principle of *Al-Musāwah* is aligned with the concept of justice (*‘adl*), which constitutes the primary foundation of Islamic political ethics. The Qur’an emphasizes that human dignity is not determined by gender but by piety and social contribution. Accordingly, women’s political participation constitutes a moral and social right that cannot be restricted by patriarchal cultural constructions.

However, in the political reality of Indonesia, the practice of such equality has not yet been fully realized. Women continue to face various structural barriers that limit their access to spaces of power. The dominance of men within the political system reflects the suboptimal implementation of the principle of *Al-Musāwah* in democratic life.

The urgency of this study is further reinforced in the context of the revision of

the Election Law, as such regulation does not merely govern technical electoral aspects but also reflects the philosophical values and political ethics upheld by the state. To date, revisions to the Election Law have tended to emphasize procedural and quantitative aspects, such as electoral thresholds, electoral systems, and representation quotas, without being accompanied by the strengthening of gender-perspective political communication ethics. As a result, discriminatory, manipulative, or dignity-undermining political communication practices toward women continue to recur without clear sanctions. Therefore, philosophical and ethical analysis is essential to assess the extent to which revisions to the Election Law are capable of ensuring fair, dignified political communication that respects women’s rights as political subjects, while simultaneously promoting the realization of a substantive and gender-just democracy.

Method

This study employs a library research approach with a qualitative methodology. The qualitative approach is selected because this research aims to comprehensively understand and analyze the concept of gender-based political communication and the fulfillment of women’s rights from philosophical and ethical perspectives, particularly within the

context of revising the Election Law. Through library research, the researcher is able to examine various normative ideas, theories, and conceptual frameworks that have developed regarding gender equality, women's human rights, and the principles of justice and ethics in political communication practices (Moleong, 2019).

The research data were obtained through an examination of a wide range of relevant literature sources, including books on political philosophy and political ethics, scholarly journals, academic articles, undergraduate theses, master's theses, research reports, and online publications discussing political communication, gender and women's rights, democracy, and electoral regulations in Indonesia. The qualitative approach enables the researcher to conduct inductive analysis to explore the meanings, values, and ethical principles embedded in political communication practices and electoral policies, as well as to examine how these values influence the position and representation of women in the political sphere (Sugiyono, 2019). This study emphasizes descriptive-analytical analysis, focusing on patterns of gender-based political communication, the construction of political messages related to women, and the ethical and philosophical implications of electoral regulations for the fulfillment of women's political rights. Through in-depth literature analysis, this

research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the urgency of gender-just political communication and its relevance in supporting a more inclusive revision of the Election Law that is oriented toward the protection and respect of women's human rights (Moleong, 2019).

Result and Discussion

The concept of gender-based political communication and the fulfillment of women's rights within the context of democracy in Indonesia can be understood as an effort to achieve gender equality in the political sphere through a communication process that is fair, inclusive, and transparent. Gender-based political communication emphasizes the importance of considering gender attributes in every process of articulating aspirations and public policies so that women's rights are not neglected and so that women are able to participate actively in political decision-making processes. This approach is grounded in the view that genuine democracy must be capable of guaranteeing the participation of all citizens without discrimination based on gender; therefore, women's rights as citizens must be fulfilled ethically and philosophically within the national political system (Saputra et al., 2020).

From the perspective of political philosophy and ethics, the fulfillment of

women's rights is not merely a legal-formal issue but is also closely related to moral values and distributive justice that underpin the democratic system. Political philosophy asserts that the success of democracy lies in its commitment to the protection of human rights, including women's rights to express opinions and participate in political processes. Consequently, both society and political leaders are required to act ethically in addressing patriarchal cultural barriers and gender stereotypes that frequently obstruct women's access to political spaces. The principles of justice and equality must serve as the foundation for building fair political communication so that women's rights are genuinely fulfilled and morally recognized within the context of Indonesian democracy, which is striving to strengthen a pluralistic and inclusive system (Priandi & Roisah, 2019).

The Principle of *Al-Musāwah* in Islamic Political Communication Ethics

The principle of *Al-Musāwah* constitutes a primary normative foundation in Islamic political communication ethics, requiring the recognition of equal rights for all individuals in expressing political aspirations. Within the context of gender-based political communication, this principle affirms that women's voices possess the same moral legitimacy as those of men in the process of public policy formulation.

Islamic communication ethics do not justify the domination of one group over another through discursive manipulation or the silencing of political participation. Therefore, the marginalization of women in political communication contradicts the principle of equality, which constitutes a fundamental value in Islam.

Affirmative Policies as the Implementation of *Al-Musāwah*

Policies on women's representation quotas within the electoral system represent a practical manifestation of the Islamic principle of equality. In Islamic ethics, justice does not always imply identical treatment; rather, it involves providing corrective measures for groups that have been structurally disadvantaged. Affirmative policies function as ethical mechanisms to rectify imbalances in power relations that have historically disadvantaged women. By expanding opportunities for representation, the state seeks to realize the value of *Al-Musāwah* substantively within the democratic system.

According to Nursyifa et al. (2023), the implementation of gender-based political communication in Indonesian democracy must also be grounded in ethical awareness and political philosophy that uphold diversity and social justice. This ethical dimension indicates that advocating for women's rights in politics is not merely a matter of fulfilling quotas or formal

legislative requirements, but also of upholding political morality that prioritizes justice and human dignity. Consequently, democracy founded upon such philosophical and ethical principles will not only strengthen women's participation but also reinforce the foundations of a political system that upholds justice, human rights, and commitment to universal moral values.

Al-Musāwah and Standpoint Theory

The principle of *Al-Musāwah* demands that such perspectives be recognized equally within political communication and legislative processes. Equality must be understood not only in terms of formal opportunities but also in terms of substantive influence over political decision-making. Thus, the integration of Standpoint Theory and the principle of *Al-Musāwah* strengthens the argument that revisions to the Election Law must guarantee fair political communication spaces for women.

Based on theoretical review, this study employs Standpoint Theory, as articulated by Sandra Harding and Patricia Hill Collins (Ekowati & Puspitaningrum, 2023). This theory is used to understand how social position influences individuals' perspectives, experiences, and communication patterns in interpreting social and political realities. Within the context of gender-based political

communication, Standpoint Theory helps explain that women, as a group that is structurally positioned in less dominant roles, possess distinctive perspectives derived from their social experiences. These perspectives are crucial to consider in political communication processes and public policy formulation, particularly in discussions and revisions of the Election Law that are oriented toward gender justice and the fulfillment of women's rights. Standpoint Theory applied as the analytical foundation for gender-based political communication and women's rights in the revision of the Election Law includes the following dimensions (Ekowati & Puspitaningrum, 2023).

1. Social Position

Women's social position in gender-based political communication significantly determines their level of access to the public sphere, decision-making processes, as well as their involvement in the formulation and revision of the Election Law. Within the context of Indonesian democracy, social constructions and patriarchal cultural norms continue to place women in subordinate positions, resulting in women's voices and experiences being insufficiently and unequally accommodated in political communication and legislative processes. From the perspective of political philosophy and ethics, this condition

contradicts the principles of justice, equality, and respect for human rights that constitute the foundation of democracy (Adriani & Maulia, 2024).

According to Rambe et al. (2025), when viewed through the lens of political philosophy—particularly the concepts of justice and equality—such conditions are inconsistent with the principles of substantive democracy, which require equal participation of all citizens without gender-based discrimination. Ethically, a just political system should provide equal communicative spaces for women to articulate their aspirations, influence public policy, and actively participate in public decision-making. Therefore, affirmative policies such as women’s representation quotas and the regulation of nomination systems in elections serve as ethical corrective measures to address inequalities in women’s social positions. These policies aim not only to increase numerical representation but also to strengthen democratic legitimacy by ensuring that political communication and legislative processes reflect the diversity of women’s experiences, needs, and rights as equal political subjects.

2. Lived Experience

Lived experience, as a concept in gender-based political communication and women’s rights, constitutes an important foundation for analyzing the revision of the

Election Law from philosophical and ethical perspectives. The personal and collective experiences of women demonstrate their struggles to obtain equal political participation rights, as stipulated in Article 27 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and implemented through Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections, which affirms women’s political rights. The revision of this law, which increases the minimum quota of women’s representation in legislative institutions to 30%, represents not only a form of respect for legal rights but also a moral and ethical recognition of women’s lived experiences in confronting discrimination and marginalization.

In this context, women’s lived experiences serve as moral resources that reinforce the need to internalize the principle of gender justice in political communication, positioning women as active subjects and legislative actors with genuine agency in political processes and the formulation of fair and equitable public policies (Ekowati & Puspitaningrum, 2023).

3. Experiential Knowledge

Within the context of gender-based political communication and women’s rights, the concept of experiential knowledge emphasizes that women’s lived experiences—as citizens, voters, activists, and government officials—constitute

legitimate and significant sources of knowledge in communication processes and public policy formulation, including in the revision of the Election Law (Ekowati & Puspitaningrum, 2023). According to the findings of Junaenah (2014), from philosophical and ethical perspectives, women's experiences in confronting structural discrimination, patriarchal cultural barriers, limited political access, and marginalization in decision-making processes provide moral viewpoints that differ from those of dominant groups.

For instance, the experiences of women at the local government level who encounter difficulties in participating in the formulation of regional regulations or legislative processes due to limited participatory spaces and the dominance of male political elites indicate that the political system has not yet been fully just and inclusive. Therefore, knowledge derived from such experiences must be ethically communicated and accommodated within the revision of the Election Law so that the resulting policies are not merely normative in nature but are also responsive to the realities of gender injustice, while simultaneously strengthening the principle of substantive democracy that respects women's rights and dignity.

4. Power Relations

Power relations within the context of gender-based political communication and women's rights are analyzed through philosophical and ethical perspectives on the revision of the Election Law. The primary emphasis lies on how women's lived experiences serve as moral resources and foundational bases in advocating for equality and justice within the political sphere. The revision of the Election Law, which increases the minimum quota of women's representation in legislative institutions to 30%, is not merely a legal aspect but also reflects recognition of women's positions and lived experiences that have long been marginalized within political power structures.

As evidence, Law No. 2 of 2008 on Political Parties implements a 30% quota for women's representation, aiming to accelerate improvements in power relations and to advance women's political rights. From philosophical and ethical perspectives, this revision is regarded as a moral and normative step toward promoting gender justice and fostering more equitable and balanced power relations between men and women. Based on the data presented in this journal, women's participation in parliament remains low and has not yet reached national targets, indicating that continued structural and moral transformations are necessary. Accordingly, this study emphasizes that

power relations are not manifested solely in formal structures but also reflect changes in moral and ethical values that underpin rights-based political communication and women's lived experiences within the democratic system (Ekowati & Puspitaningrum, 2023).

Conclusion

Based on the theoretical review and discussion, this study concludes that gender-based political communication constitutes a crucial instrument for realizing a just, inclusive, and ethical democracy in Indonesia. By employing Standpoint Theory, the principle of equality (*Al-Musāwah*) within Islamic political ethics serves as a normative foundation for gender-based political communication and the fulfillment of women's rights within Indonesia's democratic system. This study affirms that the marginalization of women in political communication and legislative processes contradicts the values of justice and equality as taught in Islam.

Through the integration of Standpoint Theory and the principle of *Al-Musāwah*, it becomes evident that women's lived experiences must be recognized as legitimate and equal sources of political knowledge. Affirmative policies within the revision of the Election Law represent the implementation of Islamic equality values aimed at creating more just and inclusive power relations.

Accordingly, the application of the principle of *Al-Musāwah* not only strengthens the ethical legitimacy of electoral policies but also contributes to the realization of substantive democracy that upholds human dignity and gender justice. From philosophical and ethical perspectives, the fulfillment of women's political rights cannot be understood merely as a legal obligation or quota compliance, but rather as moral recognition of women's historical experiences of discrimination and marginalization within patriarchal political structures. Therefore, strengthening gender-based political communication and affirmative policies such as women's representation quotas constitutes a normative and ethical step toward correcting power imbalances while reinforcing substantive democracy grounded in the principles of justice, equality, and respect for human rights.

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