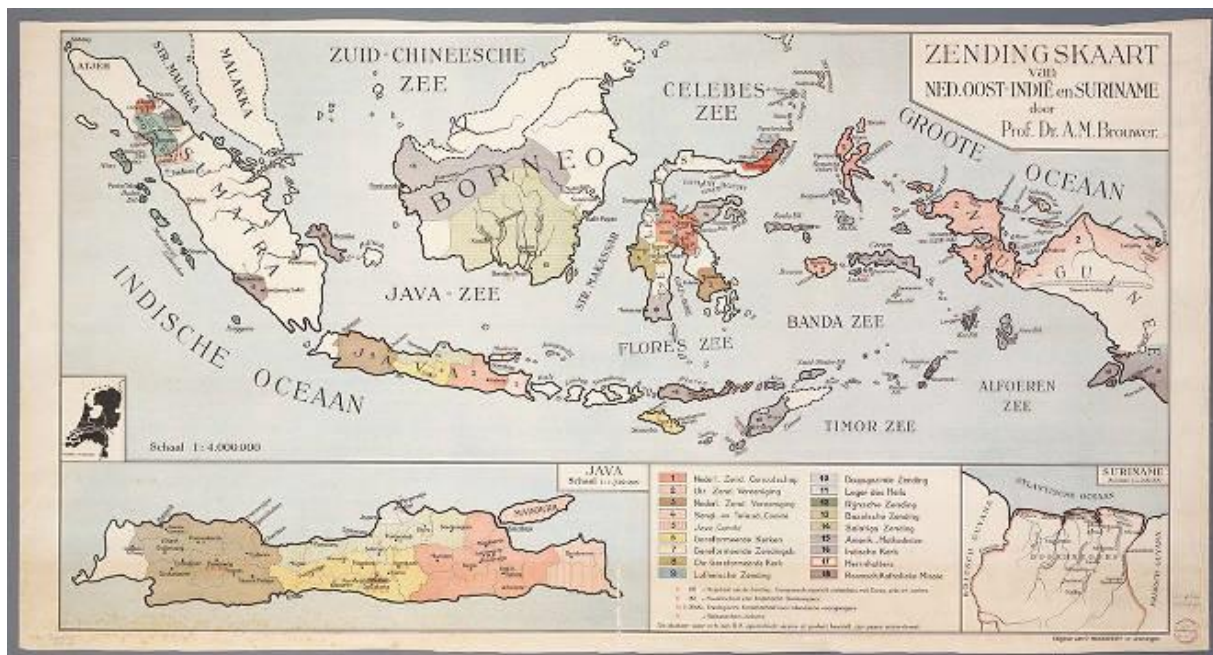


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# GENDER INEQUALITY IN INDONESIA IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

MASTER THESIS INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

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## Abstract

This thesis studies regional differences of gender equality development in Indonesia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The research question that is posed, is: to what extent have religion, institutional environment and economic structures affected the development of gender inequality in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali from 1930 to 2000? To answer this question, a mixed method has been used together with a comparative historical analysis. The results suggest that West Sumatra has had a relatively stable level of gender equality throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with already a rather high level of equality in the 1930s; that West Java has had the lowest level of gender equality between 1930 and 2000, staying consistent in that regard; and that gender equality in Bali was quite low in the 1930s, but that it has developed the most out of the three regions, leading to a gender equality in the 2000s that was of similar levels as in West Sumatra. Furthermore, the results have shown that power plays a central role in religion, the institutional environment and economic structure, which means power is a central concept in the development of gender equality. This thesis also argues that religious ideologies and practices have mostly had a negative influence on the development of gender equality, but that they can also stimulate female empowerment. Moreover, the institutional environment has been influenced by religion and culture, which makes it important to study those aspects to fully understand the influence of particular institutions on gender equality. This thesis shows that inheritance rights and marriage institutions have empowered women in West Sumatra, but they have negatively influenced gender equality in West Java and Bali. Additionally, there is a correlation between the level of economic development and the level of gender equality. Lastly, economic development leads to more opportunities for women to become financially independent, which on the one hand results in more gender equality, but which can also reinforce subordination of women through patriarchal ideas present in the workplace.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Problem statement

Indonesia is not one of the most gender unequal countries – but while there has been some progress, there is still room for improvement, according to UN Women (n.d.). In 2021, women only held 21% of the parliament seats. In 2020, there were only 33,6% of the indicators available that were needed to monitor the gender focused SGDs. Also according to Larasati (2021), the law in Indonesia is still gender-unjust and discriminatory. Women's rights are still not fully protected: there are women who do not have the right to work, and if they work, their salaries often differ from those of their male colleagues. Nisak and Sugiharti (2020) add to this by stating that in Indonesia, gender equality causes women to still lack access to various resources, which leads to women being more vulnerable to poverty. That, in turn, results in women having less access to health care or energy and electricity than men. Gender inequality in Indonesia thus becomes visible in various aspects of society.

Furthermore, within Indonesia, there are regional disparities with regards to (gender) inequalities. Nugraha and Prayitno (2020) look at the regional differences within Western and Eastern Indonesia. They argue that the inequality between rich and poor in the West is higher than in the East: the differences between the Western provinces are thus bigger than the differences between the Eastern provinces. Their results show that the increase in electricity distribution and investment reduces inequality, while the development of road infrastructure had the opposite effect: it contributed to an increase in inequality. Sihombing (2019) looks more broadly at the differences between Western and Eastern Indonesia as a whole. She goes more specifically into the gender inequalities, showing with the Gender Empowerment Index (GEI) and the Gender Development Index (GDI) that gender inequality is higher in Eastern Indonesia than in Western Indonesia. Sihombing argues that this correlates with poverty, which is higher in Eastern Indonesia than in Western Indonesia. Sihombing does not propose a direct causal relationship, but she does mention that countries which have above-average inequality, also have higher extreme poverty rates, in comparison to more gender equal countries. In short, next to gender inequality being visible in several aspects of Indonesian society, the degree of gender inequality varies within Indonesia.

This inequality between men and women has deep historical roots. Robinson (2008) argues that different patterns of gender orders have prevailed in recent Indonesian history, and that these patterns have resulted in the differences of power between men and women, which led to social inequalities. These gender orders and regimes are products of history, but they are also subject to change, according to Robinson. Part of the historical roots of gender inequality are for example the constructions of gender differences that invoke biological specificities. Other historical forces that played a role in renegotiating and reworking the gender orders include for example Islam and feminism.

Various scholars argue that it is important to understand the historical roots of gender inequality (Dilli, 2015; Huber, 2015; Leacock, 1983). Their arguments will be further elaborated upon below. The main objective of this thesis is thus to study the historical roots of gender inequality in Indonesia, and to understand the causes of regional disparities in gender inequality. This is relevant, because aggregate gender equality indices fail to grasp depth and complexity of gender inequality, and they also overlook the regional disparities within countries.

### 1.2 Research questions

To what extent have religion, institutional environment and economic structures affected the development of gender inequality in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali from 1930 to 2000?

- a) How has gender inequality developed in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali from 1930 to 2000?

- 1) Looking at sex ratio?
- 2) Looking at literacy gap?
- 3) Looking at labour participation and wage gaps?
- b) What was the role of religion and western influence in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali in relation to the position of women and how did it change between 1930 and 2000?
- c) How did the institutional environment, in particular with regards to inheritance rights and marriage laws, change in relation to the position of women in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali between 1930 and 2000?
- d) How did the economic structures in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali develop in relation to the position of women between 1930 and 2000?
- e) What are the differences and similarities between the development of gender inequality in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali from 1930 to 2000?

### 1.3 Theoretical framework

This section will shortly discuss the theoretical framework on which the thesis will be based. It will explore the concept of gender inequality: what is gender inequality exactly, and how can it be measured? Then, it will be discussed what the possible historical roots are of gender inequality. Last, the concept of power within gender relations will be discussed.

#### What is gender inequality and how can it be measured?

Lorber (2001) describes gender as “a social status, a legal designation, and a personal identity. Through the social processes of gendering, gender divisions and their accompanying norms and role expectations are built into the major social institutions of society, such as the economy, the family, the state, culture, religion, and the law-the gendered social order” (p. 15). Gender inequality can thus be defined as inequalities between the social statuses between men and women, as differences between the norms and roles that are ascribed to men and women, in the various domains of daily life. Indeed, Lorber describes how gender inequality can take many different forms, and how that depends on the social organization and economic structure of a particular society, and on the culture of specific groups within that society. Lorber states that gender inequality can disadvantage men, but it is usually women who have the disadvantage relative to men who are in a similar situation.

Munira et al. (2018) argue that the problems of gender inequality are entangled and intertwined with the social and cultural structure and the political construction of Indonesian society. They can thus not be seen as separate from each other, but gender inequality problems should be seen as rooted in the social, cultural and political structure – which is a product of history. Furthermore, Munira et al. state that gender inequality problems are interlinked with the concept of power relations in society, which relates to what Huber (2015) mentioned about the role of power within gender inequality.

Gender inequality becomes visible in multiple aspects of life – there are many examples to be found in Indonesia. There is a gender gap in education, which is a serious concern at both provincial and city levels (Setyadi, 2022; Harahap et al., 2020). The sexual division of labour in communities is unfair to women, whose primary role is in the household environment (Larasati, 2021). Other examples of gender inequality can be gender gaps in wage (Lorber, 2001), access to health care, economic resources, political decision-making power and power in the private sphere (Dilli, 2015).

Now that gender inequality has been conceptualized, the question that naturally follows is: how can it be measured? There have been several indices developed to measure gender inequality. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) which was later replaced by the Gender Inequality Index (GII). The GII uses three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market. The health dimension uses as indicators

the maternal mortality ratio and the adolescent birth rate. For the empowerment dimension, the indicators are female and male population with at least secondary education, and female and male shares of parliamentary seats. The labour market dimension concerns female and male labour force participation rates (UNDP, n.d.). This index is thus an example of how gender inequality can be measured. There are other examples, like the Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), which is also developed by the UNDP (UNDP, 2023). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) developed the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), which measures gender-based discrimination in social institutions (Ferrant et al., 2020).

However, all these indices have been developed relatively recently and do not measure gender inequality before 1995. This is often due to data constraints. Therefore, Dilli et al. (2016) have developed the Historical Gender Equality Index (HGEI), which measures gender equality in 129 countries between 1950 and 2003. The HGEI uses four dimensions: health (indicators are female life expectancy and sex ratio), household autonomy (indicator is marriage age ratio), political power and representation (indicator is parliament seats ratio) and the socio-economic domain (indicators are average years of education and the labour force participation ratio).

Nevertheless, the HGEI goes back to 1950, which means that there still is no index to measure inequality before that. Besides, the indices are aggregate measures, meaning they give no insight in the complexity of deeper historical roots of gender inequality, nor do they give attention to regional disparities. Therefore, for this thesis, gender inequality will be measured using the following dimensions: health, education and the economic domain. For health, the indicator will be the sex ratio. For education, the indicator will be the literacy gap. For the economic domain, the indicators will be the labour participation and the wage gap. These domains and indicators have been chosen, because they give more insight in the gender inequality situation in history while also taking historical data availability into account.

### What is gender inequality rooted in?

Since gender inequality is intertwined with so many domains of women's daily lives, it is also rooted in those domains historically. Dilli (2015) mentions economic development and institutions as the two main determinants of the positions of women and thus of gender inequality. First, the state of economic development of a country has an influence on gender inequality and vice versa. If the sexual division of labour is unequal and women do not get equal employment opportunities, economic development can be hampered. As Cohen (1984) states, intensification of gender inequalities builds on the existing sexual divisions of labour. Second, institutions concern the institutional environment which does or does not provide equal opportunities for men and women: the institutional environment consists of for example law or political policies. Furthermore, cultural factors, like the organization of family systems or long-term cultural preferences towards men, also have consequences for gender inequality (Dilli, 2015). This relates to the role of social norms and values: these determine the position of women too, which is disadvantageous for women's position if norms and values are favourable towards men like in patriarchal societies. These norms and values can be persistent in long lasting institutions (Dilli et al., 2016). Religion is another important aspect in influencing gender inequality, as mentioned in the previous section. Islam has been held accountable for the disadvantageous position of women. However, as various scholars show, Islam supports gender equality – the main problem lies with the masculine interpretation of the sharia, and how gender is constructed socially and culturally in particular societies (Munira et al., 2018).

Moreover, gender inequality is rooted in colonial legacies – in Africa for example, patrilineal systems in land inheritance were introduced during the colonial period. The case of inheritance is even more interesting in Indonesia. As Dilli (2015) shows, Indonesia was in 1920 one of the few countries with



gender equal inheritance. However, this changed over the years: in 1980 and 2000, Indonesia did not have gender equal inheritance anymore, despite a lot of other countries who progressed the other way, as can be seen in Figure 1 below. This question of inheritance systems is an example of how gender inequality in Indonesia developed throughout the years. This example can be connected to the influence of institutions, since they are the driving force behind the enforcement of inheritance laws (Kameri-Mbote, 2002). However, it has to be noted that there are disparities within Indonesia regarding equal inheritance. Minangkabau society for example, which is a part of West Sumatra, has a matrilineal system (Nasir et al., 2021). It is thus important to consider the regional disparities within countries when looking at the aspects of gender inequality.

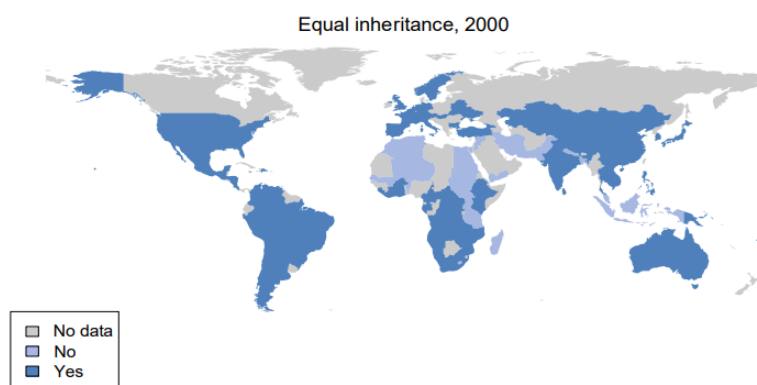


Figure 1. Gender equal inheritance, 2000 (Dilli, 2015)

Furthermore, Huber (2015) argues that it is important to acknowledge biological sex differences as well when interpreting the origins of gender inequality. Dilli (2015) also states that in some theories, the roots of gender inequalities are attributed to biological differences between men and women.

To conclude; gender inequality is rooted in many aspects of societal history: in economy, in institutions, in politics and policies, and in social and cultural norms. Not all aspects will be considered for this thesis, considering the time and data constraints. The focus will be on the influence of religion, the institutional environment and economic structures on the development of gender inequality. These factors have been chosen because they cover a considerable range of potential influences or effects on the development of gender inequality in history.

### What role does power play in gender relationships?

Power is an important concept when studying gender equality. According to Lorber (2001), “gender is a system of power in that it privileges some groups of people and disadvantages others” (p. 9). This is also in combination with other systems of power, like social class or racial categories. The power of the gendered system lies in the fact that people act based on their position within the gendered structure, without questioning it or reflecting on it. So, what does it mean for a woman to have a powerful position, or to have power?

Radtke et al. (1994) discuss several perspectives on power in gender relations. One of the ways power can be defined, is as the ability of a person to impose his or her will on others, despite resistance. This can be done through deterrence, either in the form of withholding normally regularly supplied rewards, or by punishment. Both are thus negative sanctions. This is a behavioural model of power, in which the exercise of power is placed within the theory of social exchange: the actions of independent individuals are motivated by the returns they expect from others. Power can also be simply seen as “the ability to get what one wants” (Radtke et al., 1994, p. 3). Another way power is constructed is as a relational



entity. A power relationship then is a relationship where, when there is a conflict of values, or a course of action, between two people, and one individual complies with the wishes of the other out of fear of deprivation of values or valued things. These ways of defining power are all relevant in discussing power in gender relationships. Furthermore, it is important to underline the fact that all social practices are shaped by power, including the reproduction of traditional gender relationships. This reproduction of gender relationships happens all throughout history, which is thus accompanied by reproduction of unequal power relationships. The question of women's power throughout history thus relates to their ability to get what they want, them complying with other's wishes, and them being imposed other's will.

#### 1.4 Literature review

The battle against gender inequality is long-standing. Over the last five to six decades, there have been many attempts, both national and international, by governments and organisations to decrease and even eliminate the gender inequalities that affect various domains of women's daily lives (Dilli, 2015). Not only is eliminating gender inequality intrinsically just – it may also be beneficial for the development and wellbeing of societies (Eastin & Prakash, 2013). Despite these national and international efforts, there are still gender inequalities to be found in almost every part of the world. This suggests the difficult structural conditions that hindered the development towards greater equality between men and women. In the last few decades, scholars have been giving more attention to the deeper roots of gender inequalities. One of the central questions is whether and how long-term historical conditions can explain current day outcomes. Gender roles and relations do not change overnight – they are rooted in history. If one better understands the historical conditions that have created the gender inequalities that continue to exist to this day, one can also gain better insight into how these conditions can be changed (Dilli, 2015). The rest of this section will explore the views of some scholars surrounding gender inequality in history. First, it will be discussed how gender inequality is rooted in history generally. After that, the same will be discussed for Indonesia specifically, which suggestions for the influence of religion and economic transformation on the development of gender inequality.

There are various scholars who have looked into gender inequality and its historical roots. Huber (2015) for example argues that long-term relationships of inequalities stem from the fact that “one group has a vested interest in preserving the distribution of resources that the relationship brings” (p. 1). This shows that gender inequality relates with obtaining and retaining a powerful position in society and with the disposition of resources. This means that men, who have historically been used to having relatively more power than women, and more access to resources, have an interest in preserving the relationship of inequality. Furthermore, Huber states that it is important to acknowledge the biological sex differences if one wants to understand the reason why women have always taken such a small part in activities that bring the most prestige and power.

Jayachandran (2015) has looked into the roots of gender inequality in developing countries. She argues that the process of development plays a large role in the relationship between GDP and gender inequalities. This means that the more developed a country is, the higher its GDP is, and the lower its gender inequality is. However, she also points to the importance of considering society-specific factors. Many poor countries today have cultural norms that exacerbate favouritism towards men. These are norms like patrilocality, or concern for women's purity – these norms help explain for example the low female employment in the Middle East, India and North Africa.

Besides these general debates, there are also scholars who have looked into the historical origins of gender inequality in Indonesia specifically. In these research articles, the study of colonisation plays a large role. For example, De Juan and Pierskalla (2017) describe how the Christian missionaries, who

came to the colonies, spread particular ideologies about appropriate roles for men and women. These ideologies shaped gender politics decades after the colonial rule had ended. Muslimin (2015) shows how Islam has played a significant role in the history of the Indonesian struggle for independence. However, Muslimin states that the application of *sharia* can Islamize Indonesia in a regressive way, threatening the basic values of human rights and institutionalizing gender inequality. De Juan and Pierskalla, and Muslimin, thus show how current gender inequalities in Indonesia are rooted in religious history.

Another example of a historical perspective of gender inequality in Indonesia is provided by Elmhirst (1989), who looked into working women between 1970 and 1985, and how they were influenced by capitalism and economic restructuring. From the 1970s to the early 1980s, there were periods of economic restructuring and social change in Indonesia: income-generating possibilities shifted from the agricultural sector to the service and industrial sectors. Through development policy and the state rhetoric, women were redefined as mothers and wives. The possibilities for women to generate income became even more limited, because of the familial ideology of the state that encouraged women to only work at the margins of the waged workforce or even to leave it entirely. This shows how both economic restructuring and policies – with underlying ideologies on gender roles – have influenced gender inequality in history.

From the arguments of abovementioned scholars, the relevance of this thesis also become clear. A lot of the current wicked problems are rooted in history, including gender inequality. A wicked problem is a problem that is systemic, interrelated with other problems in a complex way, and is at the intersection of profit-nonprofit and public-private interests (Eden & Wagstaff, 2021). If the historical roots of wicked problems such as gender inequality are studied, one can gain a better understanding of the problem. It will possibly also shed more insight on potential solutions. Furthermore, as already mentioned in the introduction, the degree of gender inequality varies not only between countries, but also within countries. This variation is often overlooked, with the gender inequality indices being aggregate indices, suited for between-country-comparisons. A comparative study between three Indonesian regions will thus shed more light on the regional disparities.

### 1.5 Methodology

For the research in this thesis, a comparative historical analysis will be made in order to compare the development of gender inequality between West Sumatra, West Java and Bali. Furthermore, the research will contain mixed methods: both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used. This section will further explore the comparative historical analysis method and the mixed method.

So, what does the comparative historical analysis entail? According to Mahoney and Rueschemeyer (2003) it “is best considered part of a long-standing intellectual project oriented toward the explanation of substantively important outcomes” (p. 6). Comparative historical analyses emphasize processes over time, are concerned with causal analysis and make use of contextualized and systematic comparison. Many comparative historical analyses offer explanations that are based on political and social structures and their change. They thus seek to explain present-day outcomes of social and political processes by analysing history in a contextualized way, over an extended period of time. Central to the analysis is the causal argument: causal propositions are carefully tested in comparative historical studies. Indeed, for this research the deeper roots of gender inequality will be studied, and whether and how religion, the institutional environment and economic structures have affected its development.

An advantage of the comparative historical analysis is that “the analytic orientation of comparative historical inquiry keeps the door open for an examination of the broader implications of studies that

ask questions about particular historical cases” (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer, 2003, p. 10), which means that, when one takes into account the so-called scope conditions, attempts at generalization can be made for actual theories. The scope conditions are those conditions that are used to define the similarity of cases so that they are appropriate for comparison. However, some scholars are sceptical that an analysis of only a small number of cases can result in valid causal inferences. There are also concerns about possible biases in comparative historical analysis, which result from the selective use of secondary data sources, or from the selection on the dependent variable. These criticisms have also been addressed by researchers who work with comparative historical analyses, showing that even with a small N, the confidence demands for assessing necessary and sufficient conditions can be met. Methodologists have also argued that the problem of selection bias has been inappropriately applied to various comparative historical analyses. For the analysis in this research, West Sumatra, West Java and Bali have been selected.

Besides a comparative historical analysis, mixed methods will be used in this research: both quantitative data, to measure the development of gender inequality in different domains, and qualitative data, to study how and whether religion, the institutional environment and the economic structure have affected this development. Mixed methods are defined as research in which the researcher collects data and analyses it, integrates the findings, and uses both qualitative and quantitative methods or approaches to draw inferences, all in a single study (Tashakkori & Cresswell, 2007). Migiros and Magangi (2011) argue that when qualitative and quantitative methods are used in one study, they can complement each other and give a more complete overview of the central research problem. Another strength is that the weakness of one method can be overcome by using an additional method in the same study. However, mixed methods can be harder to apply, since the researcher has to understand well how to appropriately mix multiple methods. There are also methodological purists who believe that researchers should work with either a qualitative method or a quantitative method. Migiros and Magangi conclude by stating that it is up to the researcher to make decisions about which (combination of) approaches to use, and how they should be used in a specific study. In this research, mixed methods will be used, because the qualitative and quantitative method complement each other well in this study. The use of these methods together gives a more central overview of the problem: the quantitative data show the development of gender inequality in numbers, and the qualitative data contributes to a deeper exploration of the factors and aspects that play a role in the development of gender inequality.

The last point that needs to be mentioned with regards to the methodology, is that this research will be presented in an analytical narrative that is based on different sources which are ordered thematically (religion and western influence; institutional environment; and economic structure). My own interpretation is kept to the background as much as possible. Only in the chapter conclusions and the final conclusion, I will present my own interpretation and argumentation which is, needless to say, based on the evidence collected from the newspapers, memoirs and secondary literature.

## 1.6 Research regions

As mentioned, the research regions are West Sumatra, West Java and Bali. These regions have been selected since they are located close to each other, in Western and Central Indonesia, but the hypothesis is also that there will be differences between the areas in terms of economic transformation, the institutional environment and religion. For example, despite the similarities between West Java and West Sumatra like grown export crops, there are remarkable differences concerning the economic and social development between the two regions. In 2018, the Gini in West Java was 0.41 as compared to 0.31 in West Sumatra (de Zwart, 2021). Another example can be found in the religious domain: whereas West Java and West Sumatra are Islamic, Bali is Hindu (D-Place, n.d.).

Moreover, these areas are most likely to have enough historical data to base this research on. The regions at present have different population sizes, sex ratio and level of economic development, as can be seen in Table 1.

	<b>Population (BPS, 2023a)</b>	<b>GDP (BPS, 2023b)</b>	<b>GDP per capita</b>
<b>West Sumatra</b>	2.786.360 men 2.748.112 women	285.378,64 bln	51,56 mln
<b>West Java</b>	24.508.885 men 23.765.277 women	2.422.782,32 bln	50,19 mln
<b>Bali</b>	2.171.105 men 2.146.299 women	245.233,24 bln	56,80 mln

*Table 1. General information research regions, with GDP (per capita) in rupiahs*

### 1.7 Structure of thesis

After this section, the second chapter will give an overview of the data on the development of gender inequality, looking at sex ratio, literacy rates and labour participation. After that, the third chapter will discuss West Sumatra, and the development of religion, the institutional environment – with a specific focus on inheritance rights and marriage laws – and economic structure in relation to the position of women. The fourth and the fifth chapter will discuss these aspects for West Java and Bali respectively. Then, the sixth chapter will compare the development of gender inequality in the three research regions and how that development is affected by the different aspects – religion, institutions and economic structures – and their change throughout the years. Lastly, the seventh chapter will discuss the results and draw a conclusion in order to answer the research question.

## Chapter 2. Development of gender inequality in numbers

This chapter will give an overview of the data in Indonesia relating to the three chosen indicators of gender inequality: sex ratio, literacy rates and labour participation. Data on the sex ratio throughout the years in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali has been found, but there was a lack of data for the indicators literacy rate and labour participation for the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, the development of these indicators will only be shown on the basis of two points in time: 1930, and somewhere at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### 2.1 Sex ratio

The sex ratio of a country has often been linked to the case of missing women, implying female neglect and thus gender inequality (e.g. Sen, 1992; Dilli, 2015). Thus, for this thesis, sex ratio is also used as an indicator for gender inequality. The sex ratio has been calculated for 1930 (Departement van Economische Zaken, 1936), 1970, 1980, 2000 and 2010 (Statistics Indonesia, 2017), in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali. Figure 2 shows the sex ratio, calculated in males per 100 females.

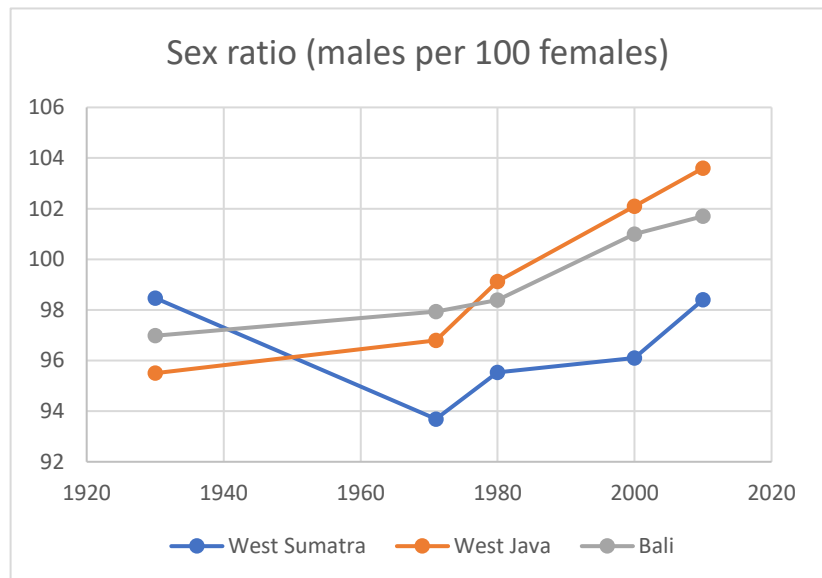


Figure 2. Sex ratio in Indonesia throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century (adapted from Departement van Economische Zaken, 1936; Statistics Indonesia, 2017).

From the figure it becomes clear that in throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were more women than men. In 1970 in West Sumatra, the number of women was even relatively high in comparison with the number of men. Only after the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of men increased in the three areas. It can thus be concluded that at least between 1930 and 2000, there was no case of missing women in either West Sumatra, West Java or Bali. The sex ratio thus does not indicate any gender inequality disadvantaging women.

### 2.2 Literacy rates

Table 2 shows the development of literacy rates over time in the three research regions. The literacy rates in 1930 are the calculated average of people who could read and write in Indonesian language and Dutch language – so that may be the reason why the literacy rates were very low for both men and women. The gender gap was relatively large in all the research regions. In West Sumatra, there were relatively more females who could read and write than in West Java.

	West Sumatra		West Java		Bali	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>1930</b>	17,01%	3,66%	14,69%	1,38%	8,85%	0,44%
<b>2010</b>	98,01%	96,66%	97,02%	93,99%	92,26%	82,53%

Table 2. Literacy rates (aged 15 years and over); West Sumatra, West Java and Bali; 1930 and 2010 (adapted from Departement van Economische Zaken, 1936; BPS, 2012)

Figure 3 shows the literacy rates of children in 1930: aged one-and-a-half to fifteen years. The results are interesting, considering the fact that young females had a higher literacy rate than adult females –

if it is compared with the data in Table 2 – whereas young males had a slightly lower literacy rate than adult males.

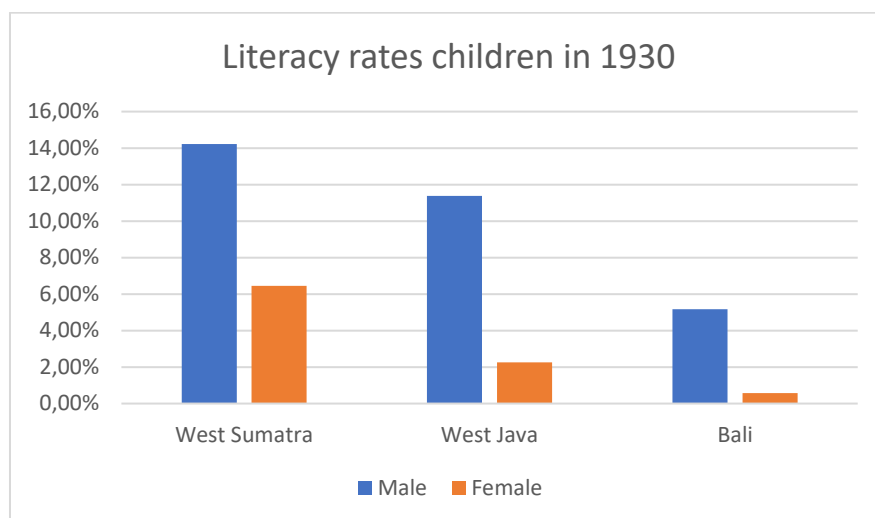


Figure 3. Literacy rates children; West Sumatra, West Java and Bali; 1930 (adapted from Departement van Economische Zaken, 1936).

Table 2 shows that in 2010, the literacy rates are a lot higher in all the research regions. In West Sumatra and West Java, the gender gap is relatively small in comparison to Bali, where there is a difference of almost ten percentage points. This suggests that when taking literacy rates as an indicator, gender inequality is higher in Bali than in West Sumatra and West Java. Furthermore, West Sumatra seems clearly more equal than West Java; both in 1930 and 2010.

### 2.3 Labour participation and the wage gap

The last indicator for gender inequality used in this research is labour participation. Table 3 below shows the numbers. In 1930, the gender gap was relatively low in West Sumatra comparison to the gender gap in West Java and Bali: almost half of the women was at work. This suggests that West Sumatra was more gender equal than West Java and Bali in 1930.

	West Sumatra		West Java		Bali	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>1930</b>	52,70%	42,70%	46,40%	12,90%	49,40%	11,50%
<b>2018</b>	80,66%	54,81%	82,96%	42,25%	82,94%	70,14%

Table 3. Labour participation; West Sumatra, West Java and Bali; 1930 and 2018 (adapted from Departement van Economische Zaken, 1936; BPS, 2023c).

This is confirmed by Figure 4 and 5, which show the gender wage gap in West Java and Sumatra in 1930 – specific data for West Sumatra or for Bali was unfortunately unavailable. The Figures show that the gender wage gap in West Java was much larger than in Sumatra. Moreover, the female wages in West Java were lower than in Sumatra. Both the data on labour participation and the gender wage gap in 1930 suggest that West Sumatra was relatively gender equal in comparison to West Java and Bali.

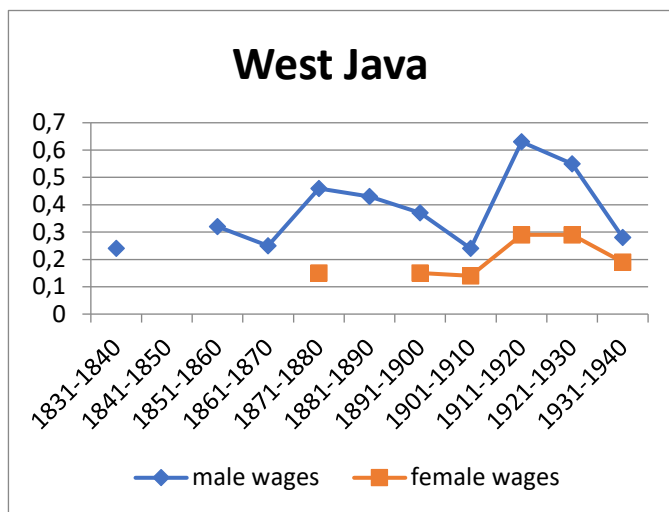


Figure 4. Gender wage gap, West Java, 1831-1940 (adapted from Teeuwen, 2017)

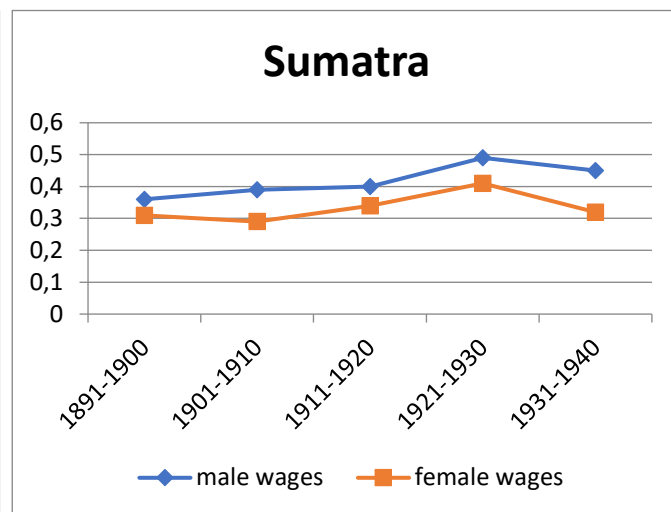


Figure 5. Gender wage gap, Sumatra, 1891-1940 (adapted from Teeuwen, 2017)

Table 3 shows that in 2018, both male and female labour participation shares in the three research regions have increased. However, in West Sumatra, the gender gap has increased: there work relatively more men than women, in comparison to 1930. In West Java, the gender gap has decreased, but there still work less women in comparison to West Sumatra. What is striking is the labour participation of Balinese women: 70% of them are part of the labour force. The gender gap in Bali is thus a lot smaller than in West Sumatra and West Java – and even smaller still in comparison to Bali in 1930. So West Sumatra continued to have higher female labour participation than West Java into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but participation of women had risen spectacularly in Bali. These results thus suggest that, when taking the gender gap in labour participation as indicator, Bali is the most gender equal by 2018.

## 2.4 Conclusion

In the 1930s, the indicators suggest that West Sumatra was the most gender equal: the literacy rates were the highest, just like the female labour participation. Furthermore, the gender gap for labour force participation was very low, and the gender wage gap was very low as well. For the 2000s, the results are not so straightforward. The literacy rates suggest that Bali is the most gender unequal, whereas the labour participation suggests that Bali is the most gender equal. Overall, West Sumatra seems more stable as an area with relatively lower gender inequality, both in the 1930s and up to the present. The data shows that West Java is an area with rather consistently higher gender inequality compared to the other two areas. With regards to Bali, there has been a dramatic improvement from the highest gender inequality in 1930 to similar levels of gender equality as in West Sumatra. The results of these measured indicators will be further discussed, and linked to religion, the institutional environment and economic structure, in Chapter 7.



## Chapter 3. West Sumatra

Sumatra is home to several distinct cultural groups – one of those cultural groups is the Minangkabau, who mostly live in West Sumatra. The Minangkabau have been – and still are – studied a lot by various researchers, since they are the largest matrilineal society in the world. This culture traces back to at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Next to being a matrilineal society, the Minangkabau are also an Islamic society. This tension between the female-oriented socioeconomic structures and the male-oriented religion is what has interested scholars for a long time (Levenson et al., 1992).

Indonesia's economy has been steadily growing over the past few decades, even among a global economic slowdown – this is because of improving domestic demand and a continued export growth. West Sumatra also contributes to the steady economic growth of Indonesia. The contribution of the industrial sector to the GDP is quite low: it only reached 10,97% in 2015. West Sumatra does have diverse tourism potential (Putri et al., 2020).

The rest of this chapter will discuss how Islam and western influence, inheritance rights and marriage institutions, and economic structure have affected the position of women in West Sumatra between the 1930s and 2000s.

### 3.1 Religion and western influence

West Sumatra is thus home to the Minangkabau, a cultural group of people known for their matrilineal inheritance structures, which points at a gender equal environment. For the Minangkabau, both their traditional *adat* and Islamic ideology is important. So Islam, which is often associated with a subordinate position of women, seems to clash with the matrilineal society of Minangkabau. The question that will be discussed in this paragraph is, does Islam indeed weaken the position of women? Or is it vice versa? The question of Western influence will also be discussed: does it strengthen the position of women throughout the years, or is it the contrary?

To analyse the position of women in West Sumatra in the 1930s in relation to Islam and Western influence, two sources have been studied: the Memoires from Dutch officials ruling in the Dutch East Indies, who were tasked with documenting relevant data for their successors. These memoires are retrieved from the Inventaris van de Memoires van Overgave, 1852-1962, which can be found in the Nationaal Archief. The other source consists of several newspapers from the 1930s and later on, which can be found at Delpher. A disclaimer has to be made regarding the newspaper articles. In the 1930s, the Netherlands had quite patriarchal views on gender relationships (Leyenaar, 2009). These views are visible in the newspaper articles that have been written about the matriarchy in Minangkabau. Moreover, since Indonesia was a colony of the Netherlands, the western patriarchal views also had an influence on gender relationships in Indonesia. However, this influence will only be briefly discussed, since the focus is mainly on the influence of Islam. Furthermore, the newspaper articles from around 1930s were written when the Dutch East Indies were still colonies of the Netherlands, and the newspapers actually came out in the Dutch East Indies, which makes them valid sources. The articles from 1950s and later on were written when Indonesia was not a colony anymore, which means that they have been written from an outsider perspective. However, they are still included, because some of them include interviews with Minangkabau people and others represent the world's view on Minangkabau's matriarchal society. The remainder of this paragraph focuses on the relationship between Islam and the position of women.

#### Islam strengthening the position of women?

There are reasons to believe that Islam strengthened the position of women in the 1930s. There are various examples where it becomes clear that Muslims did not see women as subordinate. The

*Sumatra-bode* (1930) shows an article about the Ayishah congress – the women's department of the Muhammadiyah, which was an Islamic party in West Sumatra. The article reports on a public meeting in Minangkabau. In this meeting there was also a discussion on the role of women. One of the attendees thought that women are weak, and that it was the woman's duty to raise her children in a way suitable for Islam. Another woman reproached men in general that they sometimes view women as inferior – which is not according to Islam, since Mohammed always honoured and respected women. She even stated that without cooperation of women, Islam would have been like a locomotive without water. This article on the public congress meeting shows how within Islam, there were different views on the position of women. This is also reinforced by an article from *De Sumatra Post* (1936), which talks about Islam and Christian missionaries in the Batak-lands. This article blames Christians for treating women as if they were inferior, while it says that in that regard, no danger exists within Islam – for treating women as inferior, that is. However, most Muslims also did not want their wives to have a job, a thought in line with Islamic ideology. This article thus shows that according to Islam, women were to be treated as equals – which is not reflected by the way Islamic parties attacked the matriarchy, by openly criticising the matrilineal society because it was not in line with Islamic ideology.

In the 1980s, women seem to have quite a strong position within *adat*. Girls are very welcome to their parents, since they can continue the matrilineal family. The more girls a family has, the stronger it will be. Marriages are arranged by the older generation, but the mother of the girl also take initiatives in this process. Interesting enough, the divorce rate is quite high in Minangkabau – without mentioning exact statistical data. Moreover, a married and middle-aged woman is an important person in the house and the family. Furthermore, in the 1980s, Islam and *adat* are increasingly integrated with each other. On the one hand, the two are so intertwined that it is hard to know which tradition arises from which way of thinking; but on the other hand, they are incompatible in certain crucial aspects. Despite those contradictions, they continue to exist side by side. In both ideologies, women belong to the sphere of the family and the house; but in Islam they are much more dependent on the men in their lives than in the *adat*-system. The official view is that Islam and the *adat*-system are in a harmonious relationship, as also stated at the beginning of this paragraph. However, conflicts are unavoidable, seeing as they are both essential elements of Minangkabau culture and as they contradict each other in various aspects (Schrijvers & Postel-Coster, 1977).

Furthermore, the general western view has been that women have a powerful position in Minangkabau's culture, even influencing Islamic ideologies in some ways. This becomes clear from an article from *De Volkskrant* about music, Islam and women in Minangkabau (Calis, 1986). Calis wrote about the *indang*, which is a combination of singing, prayer, dance and percussion. This was at the time one of the most popular forms of communal religious practices within Islam. Because of the strong position of women in Minangkabau, this practice could also be exercised by groups of women, which was everywhere else unusual. This example is interesting because where the other articles showed mostly how Islam influenced the position of women in a rather negative way, this article shows how Minangkabau traditions have influenced Islam in a way that is positive regarding the position of women.

In the 2000s, there seemed to be a harmonious relationship between Minangkabau customs and Islam. At first, when Islam entered West Sumatra and the Minangkabau region, the religious values clashed with the Minangkabau customs. For example, within Islam it is tradition that the wife lives in the house that is provided by her husband, whereas for Minangkabau, it is custom that the husband lives in his wife's family home. However, over time, a relationship developed in which Islam and the Minangkabau customs complemented each other. The understanding was that the Sharia, Islamic law, confirms the practices that were dictated by the customs, since the customs came first. An example of how a conflict

between Islam and Minangkabau custom is solved, concerns inheritance. Inheritance can be distributed in higher and lower inheritance. The higher inheritance, which is for example the family home, then can belong to the tribe, while the lower inheritance, which refers to the income of husband and wife, can in turn be distributed according to the Sharia. This example of two forms of inheritance shows the shared influence of *adat* and Islamic ideology. The impact of the matrilineal system not only extends to inheritance, but also to marriage, guardianship and property (Tono et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the teachings of Islam which do not clash with the customs are preserved, while the contradictory teachings – like excessive consumption of liquor – were gradually phased out. When Islam was introduced, the deeply rooted customs of the Minangkabau people were discovered, but despite that, the religion was immediately embraced. Thus, acculturation occurred between the Sharia and Minangkabau customs, in which Muslims took ideas and characteristics from *adat*, and *adat* took ideas from Islam (Aziz et al., 2020).

Minangkabau's matriarchy thus gives women certain power: since they inherit the house and, if they are in the family, the *sawah's*, their opinion matters surrounding these properties matters as much or even more than the husband's, who do not own the house or the *sawah's*. This suggests a relatively gender equal relationship, or even a relationship in which the woman has more decision power. Women are thus given access to ownership, and men are viewed as respected people in the family and in society. The matrilineal system creates a gender-equitable culture and that is not, and has not been, undermined by Islam (Azzahra et al., 2021). In the 2000s, Islam was thus in a harmonious relationship with the Minangkabau *adat* system, which resulted in women not being undermined by Islam, but in fact being strengthened by it.

### Islam weakening the position of women?

However, there are several reasons to believe that in the 1930s, Islam influenced the position of women in such a way that gender inequality increased. This becomes clear from the continuous struggle between *adat* and Islam. The Memoires shed some light on this: especially G.F.E. Gonggrijp, who resigned as governor in 1932. He wrote how Islam played an important role in politics in Minangkabau, more than in any other area of the Dutch Indies. He stated that a large part of the population was known for being very religious, while it also adhered to the matriarchal *adat*-system, which is essentially not Islamic. He showed that *adat* and religion were in a continuous internal battle with each other. A strong religious revival often caused a clash between the *adat*-system and Islam, which had led to unrest among the local population. Within this unrest, Islam had a more active role – it strived for change. The people adhering to the *adat*-system were more passive, since they mostly opposed the changes to their systems. However, Gonggrijp also wrote that with general discontent, both groups resisted against the foreign government. Finally, he stated that because of matriarchal *adat* – including family property and the position of heads of the family – individuals were bounded. These individuals wanted to break away from these oppressing familial relationships, which could lead to the demise of the matriarchy. A century ago, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this struggle also took place, but eventually the matriarchal system survived. Even if the continuous conflict between *adat* and Islam would not lead to a demise of the matriarchy, it would in any case result in a thorough change to it. Gonggrijp hoped this would happen in a peaceful way (NA Den Haag, 1932). This shows that the matriarchy, which persisted because of the *adat*-system, was in a way attacked by the opposing values of Islam. The strong position that women had in the matriarchy was thus in the 1930s – and the century before – in a way diminished by the influence of Islam, which came to Minangkabau around the 16<sup>th</sup> or the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Asnan, 2019). Before Islam, Minangkabau people were unapologetically part of a matrilineal society. However, after Islamization of Minangkabau people, there have and had been changes to *adat* that were not in favour of the matriarchy.

Furthermore, the Census from 1930 shows a high number of instances of polygamy in West Sumatra. This is shown in Table 4 below: in West Sumatra, relative more men were in a polygamous marriage in comparison with the rest of Sumatra, with at least two wives or more. It is unclear why the relative number of polygamous marriages was higher in West Sumatra than in the rest of Sumatra – it might be related to Islam or cultural habits. However, polygamous marriages generally weaken the position of women, which makes it important to include.

Region	Share of men in polygamous marriage (1< women)
Aceh	4,00%
Tapanoeli	3,73%
East Sumatra	2,07%
West Sumatra	8,68%
Riau	2,66%
Jambi	1,66%
Palembang	2,23%
Bengkulu	1,69%
Lampung Districts	5,45%
Bangka	0,83%
Average	4,22%

Table 4. Share of men in a polygamous marriage, Sumatra, 1930. (Adapted from: Departement van Economische Zaken, 1936)

The influence of Islam on the gender inequality is also reflected in articles about the debate about women's passive suffrage with the government. In this debate, it was discussed whether women should be allowed to become part of the council. *De Indische Courant* (1938) wrote about this debate, in which only one woman was present. In this debate, one attendee read aloud what Islam says about the relationship between men and women. Women's suffrage did not seem forbidden according to this. However, another attendee remarked that in some regions, Muslims could resist against women becoming part of the local council. The present woman stated that the circumstances were favourable in the Minangkabau region – thus pointing at the relatively strong position of women. However, another attendee remarked that membership of the local council was not possible for every woman, without disruption of her family, according to the government. This remark shows the influence of cultural norms and values on the perspective of the position of women. Eventually, the statute about the membership of women of the local council was passed by the government. However, another article from the *Soerabaijasch handelsblad* (1941) wrote about a motion concerning the same subject, but in this case, it was turned down by the Minangkabau council. A vote among the local commissions resulted in a big majority being against the motion of female membership of the council, because it clashed with the ideology of Islam. It thus seems that the government was in favour of women's passive suffrage, but the Minangkabau local council was against it. This shows again how Islam influences the position of women by weakening it, even in the matriarchal society of Minangkabau. The question is, how did this develop over time?

Over time, the clash between *adat* and Islamic ideology continued. An article from 1950 (Eindhovens Dagblad) still talked about the clash between Islam and Minangkabau customs, since it was striking that the matriarchal society of Minangkabau had already existed for a long time and was not obliterated by Islamic ideology. It mentions an example of this clash between Islam and Minangkabau customs: within Islam, women without rights can be cast aside. With the people of Minangkabau, women should be recognized as head, and owner of the property – so those two ideas are contradictory. This clash between Islamic ideas and Minangkabau *adat* shows that Islam tried to weaken the position of women.

In the 1960s and the 1970s, several Minangkabau *adat* (customary law) writings, attempted to bring *adat* together with postcolonial and Islamic gender ideologies, showing that a different interpretation of Islam can lead to the extent of women's influence being decreased. In this bringing together of the *adat* with postcolonial and Islamic gender ideologies, *adat* was produced in which power and authority were defined as masculine, and where women's actions were defined as maternal and domestic. The overall impression was that men are the overseers of the ancestral property, and the leader and guide for all matters concerning the household and lineage, while the women were responsible for the household and the care of their children, under the supervision of their husbands. This implies a relationship of power imbalance. On the other hand, *adat* writings showed that women have an equal voice with men concerning all matters, which includes marriage and use of land. It can even be interpreted that women's power is as encompassing and far-reaching as that of men. To conclude, within *adat* texts, multiple interpretations are possible, including the interpretation that men have more power and authority compared to women. With this interpretation, women's leadership roles were muted, and the extent of their influence was diminished (Blackwood, 2001).

In the 1980s, the position of women in *adat* seems to be quite strong on the one hand, but there are also reasons to believe this is not the case. Besides the divorces, polygamy is quite a frequent phenomenon in Minangkabau. In 1968, there were 83 out of 1000 men in a polygamous relationship; this was the highest rate in Indonesia at the time. The polygyny is said to primarily belong to Islamic ideology (Schrijvers & Postel-Coster, 1977). In a polygamous relationship, a woman's position is often weakened. It is a structurally inegalitarian practice (Brooks, 2017). Furthermore, although a married and middle-aged woman is an important person in those and the family, she has also learned that she should not raise her voice in public. The men are supposed to fulfil the traditional roles of family heads and village leaders. Women are thus associated with the small circle of the family and the village round, whereas the men are associated with public life and politics (Schrijvers & Postel-Coster, 1977).

In the 2000s, Minangkabau women seemed to be in a powerful position on the one hand, especially as seen from a Western view. However, they were increasingly defined as wives and mothers, both in national discourses and local ones, instead of in terms of kinship and as full social beings with autonomy and control. According to Blackwood, this was caused both by government experts and Western development agents, and Islamic ideology. So, the idea that Minangkabau women had a strong position because of the matriarchy, should be nuanced by taking into account the different influences there have been throughout history (Blackwood, 1995).

### Western influence and the position of women

The matriarchy was not only criticized by Muslims, but also by writers with a western patriarchal perspective in the 1930s. An example of this is an article by H.C. Zentgraaff (1936) from *De Locomotief*, which is about men in a matriarchal society. This article criticized the prevailing situation. It shows how men did not have a reason to be at home, since both the house and the fields belonged to the women. Men thus left as soon as possible, burdened as they were by the oppression of the matriarchy and the women supremacy. Since the matriarchy clashed with Islamic ideology, religious foremen strived for leadership in order to make change possible. There was always an often-silent struggle between *adat* and religion for leadership, with sometimes the circumstances being more favourable for one, and sometimes for the other. H.C. Zentgraaff stated nearly at the end of the article that the families that originated from Minangkabau marriages were no good. The way this article talked about the oppression of the men by the matriarchy, shows again that the relatively strong position of women in Minangkabau was heavily criticised by both Dutch people with western patriarchal views – like the author – and Muslims. This patriarchal perspective was most probably present among the Dutch colonial officials residing in West Sumatra, which might have seeped through in their way of governing.

However, since the matrilineal society persisted throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, western thought did not influence women's position in that domain. Did it have any other impact in other domains of women's lives after the 1930s?

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century still, Minangkabau seemed to be an exception among the rest of Indonesia. Whereas Java and Bali were deemed traditionalist, Minangkabau was individualistic, rationalistic and commercialized (Kahn, 2020). Furthermore, the matrilineal society had not seen a demise because of Islamic patriarchal perspectives, as Dutch colonial governors thought. The position that women had in Minangkabau in the 1930s seemed to be a more powerful position than that of Dutch women, seeing as several newspaper articles expressed the surprise of the Minangkabau culture in which women had and still have a powerful role.

However, at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women were increasingly defined as wives and mothers, their tasks and roles confined to the domestic area. This was in part fuelled by the Indonesian government, who wanted to support the ideology of women as reproducers, in order to promote the stability and unity of the state. It was also fuelled by theories and practices of development economics, "a product of the historical and social conditions of Europe and America" (Blackwood, 1995, p. 126) – a product of Western influence. In the Western, capitalist societies, ideal womanhood became increasingly associated with the domesticity of the family and the home. Development economists have, under influence of this ideology, reduced everything in the household to the noneconomic and private sphere, which led them to ignore the gender differences in the economic sphere. These theories and practices of development economics have been imported into postcolonial states, which results into the paradigm of the domestic/public division living on in postcolonial contexts like Minangkabau. So, at first sight, Western thought does not seem to have had that much impact in Minangkabau in terms of changes to the inheritance systems, but it has definitely had an influence on the perspective of women being 'just' wives and mothers.

### 3.2 Institutions

As stated in Chapter 1, the question concerning institutional environment will focus on inheritance rights and institutions surrounding marriage. In the previous paragraph, it has been shown that Minangkabau, which forms a large part of West Sumatra, has had matrilineal inheritance for centuries. Despite the influence of Islam on *adat*, the matrilineal inheritance has not changed. Therefore, there will be only a brief discussion of inheritance rights in Minangkabau and after that, this paragraph will focus on the institutions surrounding marriage. The evidence regarding marriage institutions in Minangkabau is gathered from the 'Pandecten van adatrecht', which contains *adat* law concerning several topics for different areas in Indonesia, which is written down by the Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut – Royal Colonial Institute – of Amsterdam (1926). Before a further investigation of the institutions, the reliability of this source needs to be established. The systematic study of Indonesian *adat* law has been driven by Cornelis van Vollenhoven, who was a professor in Leiden. He is known as one of the greatest scholars within Dutch legal science. He had described and analysed the indigenous institutions with a critical and scrutinizing eye of the administrative practices and statutory provisions. This means that the systematic study of *adat* law, as presented in the Pandects of *adat* law, is not an objective study. Nevertheless, he did abstract legal institutions while keeping their ethnological context intact. Van Vollenhoven envisaged autonomy and self-government for Indonesia – however, it is unlikely that he ever visualized an Indonesia that was separate from the Netherlands (Van Vollenhoven et al., 2013). The Pandects of *adat* law are a valuable source as they contain a vast collection of historical institutions – however, it has to be kept in mind that they have been studied with the critical eye of the Dutch Van Vollenhoven, who saw Indonesia primarily as a colony of the Netherlands.



### Inheritance rights and the position of women

The various articles from the newspapers discussed above (e.g. Soerabaijasch handelsblad, 1941; Sumatra-bode, 1930) point out that although Minangkabau had – and still has – a matriarchy where women inherit the house and the fields, it did not always mean that their position was equal to that of men. Rather, their domain was and still is limited to their homes and the care of their children: they are defined as wives and mothers, instead of social beings with power and autonomy (Blackwood, 2001). So, on the one hand, the matriarchy gives women some power, in their inheritance rights of the house and potential fields; on the other hand, this power does not automatically result in a gender equal relationship. This seems to be caused by the influence of Islamic ideology and western colonial patriarchal views.

### Marriage institutions and the development of the position of women

From the different *adat* rights, it becomes clear that the matriarchy in Minangkabau also worked through in marriage institutions in the 1930s. For example, once a man and a woman were married, the woman stayed in the home where she was born – as did her husband. The married life consisted of the husband visiting his wife every now and then: more in the beginning of the marriage, and later, it often became more sporadic. However, there were also regional differences within Minangkabau regarding these institutions: in some areas, the wife and husband did live together. In other areas, they lived together for a certain time, after which the husband went back to the house where he was born. These regional differences were said to be caused by Islam – there it was custom for the husband and wife to live together (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1926). This points at the influence of Islam on formal and informal institutions within Minangkabau in the 1930s.

So once a husband and wife were married, what was then the personal relationship between them? There were various laws pointing at a gender unequal relationship. For example, the wife, as the weak one in the relationship, had to be supported and honoured by the husband, the strong one. The Minangkabau wife was the servant of her husband and she could not go out and about without telling her husband. The husband did not have any duties towards his wife. However, the wife owed her husband respect and she had to provide maintenance for him and her children. Interestingly enough, there were also some institutions showing how few rights the husband had. For example, the husband did not belong to the family, even though the children were his. Even though husband and wife were married, the wife still was a part of her ancestral tribe; the job of her husband was to help her on the *sawah's*, and to be fertile. Another rule contradicted this, saying that the husband did not have to be so forthcoming as that he would help her on the *sawah's* or with managing the household, which again points at regional differences within Minangkabau. Furthermore, a married woman had to primarily obey the head(s) of her family, not her husband. The only right they both had towards each other, was that they did not have intercourse with other people. All these rules show that the relationship between husband and wife was quite impersonal, and also gender unequal. Some rules tended to be more in favour of the husband, while some rules were more in favour of the wife. Lastly, it is stated that Islam has contributed quite a lot in reforming *adat* and bringing husband and wife closer together. What is striking is that within *adat*, a man is allowed to have multiple wives, which is an idea that has been introduced by Islam. Before, there used to be perhaps a few instances of polygamy, but this was only for the truly rich (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1926).

There were also various rules concerning property ownership and care of the children within a marriage. Once a man and woman married, the properties did not become automatically communal. The house and the fields still belonged to the woman. Only the things they earned or produced during their marriage, belonged to both the husband and the wife. However, the new family they created together did not have the primary claim on the man's support and assistance; that belonged to his



family of birth. The costs of the household and of raising the children then belonged to the family of the wife. It was never the duty of the husband to provide maintenance for the household and the children, which was and is the case in Islam. Once again there are some differences to be found here: while some rules saw it as the obligation of the husband to provide for his wife and their children, others did not. These differences are most probably caused by the differential influence of Islam within Minangkabau (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1926).

In newspaper articles, the position of women within marriage is also portrayed in various ways, but the focus is mostly on the strong position of women. In the article by H.C. Zentgraaff (1936) in *De Locomotief*, which has also been discussed in 4.1, the matriarchy is criticised. Since the house and the field belonged to the woman, what was there left for the husband at home? So, the only thing that was left for him to do, was to leave, to wander, or to become a merchant or a writer. The men in Minangkabau were oppressed by the matriarchy and female supremacy. However, an article in the *Algemeen handelsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (1924) shows a different perspective. It discusses the supposed ultra-feministic position of the Minangkabau women. The author states that in reality, the position of the Minangkabau women was only unassuming and modest. The man was the head of the family, and as such, he had a powerful voice. This shows a somewhat different view of the gender relationships in Minangkabau in the 1930s.

How did this develop after the 1930s? Both the *Arnhemse Courant* (1952) and *De Volkskrant* (1980) also shared the view that the Minangkabau woman was powerful and in full control. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and up until this day, the coexistence of the matriarchal society of Minangkabau and Islamic religion are an interesting phenomenon to all sorts of writers and scholars. The *Arnhemse Courant* (1952) states that at the time there were five million people living in Minangkabau, of whom barely a million are men. The woman was the head of the family, and the 'owner' of the children. She had to ask the man to marry her, instead of vice versa. If she wanted, she could close the door for her husband so that he could not come back anymore. It has to be noted that the *Arnhemse Courant* involves a reaction to a letter from a reader, and there are no interviews involved. It is thus more of an outsider perspective. However, *De Volkskrant* (1980) does involve an interview with a Minangkabau woman. In this article, fairly the same view is presented, and it becomes clear that the earlier mentioned institutions are still in operation. For example, the article shows that in the 1980s, it was custom for the woman and her family to make a marriage proposal to the man and his family. In this process, the *mamak*, the brother of the mother, played an important role. Furthermore, after the wedding night, the husband could return to his parents' home, which was often the case. He only visited his wife every now and then in the night. In some cases, the husband came to live with his wife, if the marriage went well, but in other cases, the husband left completely. He had no obligation to provide for his wife or children whatsoever. Only if he was a *mamak* in his own family, he would be the head of the children of his sisters, and he would have to provide for them. If this was not the case, the Minangkabau men would wander or become merchants. These facts confirm that many of the *adat* regulations that were present in 1926, were still in effect in 1980.

Den Boer (1995) writes in the *Algemeen Dagblad* about his visit to Minangkabau, and he also shows how in the 1990s, the women had the powerful role in this matrilineal society, and how the men in the family had nothing to say. Married women stayed at their mother's home and their husband only came to visit once in a while. The Minangkabau women Den Boer talked to, confirmed this, and said that the women are the boss in Minangkabau. The article itself is written from an outsider perspective again, in which the nuances in the power balance between men and women are not uncovered. However, the women also confirming that they are the ones who have the final say in important matters, points at the local view of the position of women, that they are still the ones in power. Needless to say, the local

view on the position of women can still differ within Minangkabau, because of a combination of Islamic thought and Western influence.

### 3.3 Economic structure

This section will briefly go over the economic development of West Sumatra between 1930 and 2000, and how the economic position of women developed in that same timeframe.

In the 1930s, the economic situation had improved since the war, and West Sumatra knew a time of prosperity. The per capita GDP in 1930 was 104, and the nominal wages per sector are presented in Table 5 (Bosma & Van Leeuwen, 2022). The national income grew gradually, and native households had barely had any effect from the war years on their financial situation. The total tax burden was relatively light, at least in comparison with Java. On the lowest incomes, the tax burden could be remarkably heavy, but this burden was often shared by family. The comprehensive tax burden on the family was shared with all the family members and divided according to carrying capacity. Family ties thus played an important role in an individual's economic situation (Commissie van Onderzoek, 1928).

Sector	Nominal wages
Agriculture	46,7
Industry	76,8
Services	48,3

Table 5. Nominal wages in guilder cents per day, West Sumatra, 1930 (from Bosma & Van Leeuwen, 2022)

Table 6 below gives an estimate of the national income of West Sumatra in 1927, based on what was known from several important elements of the national income. It becomes clear that agriculture was the biggest contributor to the national income – its share comes down to 89,9%. To put the numbers of Table 5 and Table 6 into more context; the living cost in West Sumatra was fl. 90 in 1927 (de Zwart, 2021, p. 589). In 1928, the average household income was fl. 300 (de Zwart, 2021, p. 588). These numbers show that West Sumatran people were relatively rich.

Sector/category	Income
Agriculture	99.000.000
Fishery	200.000
Cattle breeding	300.000
Wages	1.422.000
Supply/delivery	763.510
National salaries	5.775.000
Brokering	2.500.000
Export	250.000
Total	110.210.510

Table 6. Production estimates in florin, West Sumatra, 1927 (Adapted from Commissie van Onderzoek, 1928)

The Census from 1930 shows the number of men and women that were active in which sector in 1930 in West Sumatra. These numbers are summarized in the table below. As expected, the biggest number of men and women was active in the agricultural sector. What is striking, is that the number of women who worked in agriculture comes very close to the number of working men in the same sector. This might be related to the matrilineal inheritance system, where women have a powerful position regarding property ownership. The rest of the sectors all show a significant difference between the number of working men and women, with the number of men far exceeding the number of women – except for 'other', which also comes relatively close. This shows that there were quite a lot of women still active in wage labour, though the actual profession was often unknown. Nevertheless, the low number of women working in government services shows that the men still had a more powerful

position in the public sphere than women. Overall, although the number of working men exceeded the number of working women, the difference is relatively small, with 54,68% of the labour force being men, and 45,32% being women.

	Men	Women	Total	Men's share of labour force	Women's share of labour force
<b>Agriculture</b>	396.688	371.610	768.298	51,6%	48,4%
<b>Industry</b>	30.195	19.303	49.498	61,0%	39,0%
<b>Traffic</b>	13.766	116	13.882	99,2%	0,8%
<b>Trade</b>	25.991	10.574	36.565	71,1%	28,9%
<b>Liberal professions</b>	4.639	603	5.242	88,5%	11,5%
<b>Government services</b>	10.862	92	10.954	99,2%	0,8%
<b>Other</b>	491.082	404.224	895.306	54,9%	45,1%
<b>Total</b>	973.223	806.522	1.779.745	54,7%	45,3%

Table 7. Number of men and women per profession, West Sumatra, 1930 (Adapted from *Departement van Economische Zaken*, 1936, p. 126)

So, how did the economy of West Sumatra develop after the 1930s? Figure 6 shows the GDP per capita growth between 1970 and 2020 in Indonesia, by lack of regional GDP data in parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It becomes clear from this figure that Indonesia's economic growth became significant especially after the 2000s. However, it is stated that the quality of the economic growth is still quite low, since its effect on society is barely noticeable – for every 1 percent of economic growth, only 250 thousand new workers are absorbed (Supartoyo et al., 2013).



Figure 6. GDP per capita Indonesia in US\$, 1970-2020 (from Macrotrends, n.d.)

E. van Overeem argued in the *NRC Handelsblad* (1976) that the Western developing projects disadvantaged women, in maintaining the idea of traditional gender roles. He stated that the gap between men and women had even increased, which in turn diminished emancipation. Within Minangkabau, this was also an issue: women's work fell within the domestic sphere, where no real societal prestige could be derived from. Although land and other properties were inherited by women, the sons and the brothers supervised the family property, and they were the only ones eligible for

functions within the administrative, political and religious domain. It thus becomes clear that in the 1980s, despite an adequate economic growth, women's economic position was disadvantaged by Western development projects and cultural, traditional gender roles.

Table 8 shows the GDP growth per capita in West Sumatra from 2017 to 2019: it shows a significant growth. Between 2017 and 2019, the GDP per capita has grown with 12,7%. This economic growth is also shown in Figure 6. Table 9 shows the minimum wages per month in West Sumatra, also from 2017 to 2019.

	<b>GRDP per capita at current market prices</b>
<b>2017</b>	40.194
<b>2018</b>	42.841
<b>2019</b>	45.288

*Table 8. Regional GDP per capita at current market prices (in thousand rupiahs), West Sumatra, 2015-2019 (adapted from BPS, 2020).*

	<b>Minimum wage</b>
<b>2017</b>	1.949.285
<b>2018</b>	2.119.067
<b>2019</b>	2.289.220

*Table 9. Provincial minimum wage per month in rupiahs, West Sumatra, 2017-2019 (adapted from BPS, 2020).*

In the 2000s, the Minangkabau society was, within Indonesia, known as a society of entrepreneurs. This was mainly based on their involvement in trade, which was carried out within and beyond the Minangkabau region. Especially for the people living in rural areas, the local marketplaces and trade formed the basis of economic activities of the Minangkabau. An understanding of Minangkabau culture could thus not be separated from the principle of market economy (Effendi, 1999). After the 2000s, the position of Minangkabau women on the market improved. Supposedly, the matrilineal inheritance system stimulates economic independence for Minangkabau women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Their important role in decision making regarding family matters, as well as their management of customary property are relevant to their role in economic activities. A research carried out in Sikaladi, a Minangkabau village, shows how women were pushed into economic independence because of the monetary crisis of 1997. This monetary crisis is also visible in Figure 6. Before this crisis, the occupations for women were constituted by norms and customs, which meant that women were bound to the domestic sphere. Men were demanded to earn money for the family in the public sphere. With the economic crisis of 1997, Sikaladi women were largely needed to support the family income. They also increasingly began to leave to agricultural sector and got into trade, so the crisis paved the way for them to engage with new financial opportunities (Hanani & Wahyuni, 2013).

### 3.4 Conclusion

It can be concluded that religion has definitely had an influence on gender inequality in West Sumatra throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has become clear that in the 1930s, Islam generally influenced gender inequality by undermining the powerful position of women in the matrilineal society. However, the different views within Islam regarding the position of women gives a nuanced perspective on this influence of Islam. With regards to the relationship between Islam and the development of the position of women in West Sumatra over time, after the 1930s, it can be concluded that there is a continuous struggle for power between religion and *adat*. On the one hand, the long history of the matriarchal society of Minangkabau suggests a powerful role for women. On the other hand, Islamic ideology is not in line with the idea of women having such power, and with that they resent the patriarchy. Furthermore, power is only a relative concept. Although the idea of a matrilineal society suggests a powerful position for women, men are still heads of the family and heads of the village, whereas

women are confined to their homes. Some texts or articles nuance this differently, leading to different possible interpretations of the position of women throughout history. Islam thus has certainly influenced the position of women throughout West Sumatran history, but it is also necessary to mention that the position of Minangkabau women is not per se as strong as the existence of the matrilineal society would suggest. This process of struggle between Islam and *adat* persisted throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the matrilineal inheritance system stayed intact. In that sense, women's position had not changed, still having the right to own their property. So, what has exactly been the influence of Western views on the position of women in West Sumatra, if the matrilineal system has not changed because of it? It can be concluded that the western, colonial patriarchal views have influenced how women were perceived. Within the postcolonial context, women have increasingly been ascribed the primary role of wives and mothers, confined to the domestic area, by both the Indonesian government and Western development economists. In that sense, Western thought had thus negatively influenced how women perceived at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that institutions surrounding inheritance and marriage in Minangkabau correlate with the position of women. The institutions – in the case of Minangkabau, the *adat*-system and Islamic sharia – have a say in what women can and cannot do, and what they can and cannot have. They tell a lot about what the role of men and women should be in Minangkabau society. Since both the *adat*-system and Islamic sharia are essential elements of Minangkabau culture, the position of women – and of men – is influenced by these institutions. That leads to the following point: religion and the institutional environment are in Minangkabau very much intertwined with each other, since both Islam and the traditional *adat*-system are essential elements of Minangkabau culture. This means that the development of institutions is influenced by religion, and thus the position of women is influenced by religion – which has also been argued in 4.1. The core of the marriage and inheritance institutions seems to have stayed the same throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. So, regarding the influence of the development of these institutions it can be concluded that the position of women was relatively gender equal in the 1930s as well as in the 2000s. Despite some differing rules, with some favouring men, and others women, women had significant inheritance rights in the 1930s as well as the 2000s, which have them also a more powerful position in marriage institutions. The last point is that there are regional differences within Minangkabau with regards to marriage institutions, which means there are also regional differences with regards to gender equality. There is no room to further explore these regional differences within regions in this research, but it is an interesting area for future research.

Lastly, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, West Sumatra's economy did relatively well. In the 1930s, women worked primarily in agriculture, which could be related to the land being inherited through matriliney. The overall difference between working men and working women is relatively small. However, in general, men still had a more important position in the public sphere, earning money for his family, whereas the women primarily belonged to the domestic sphere. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this was reinforced by Western development programmes. After the monetary crisis of 1997, West Sumatra's economy started to grow significantly, and women's position improved. They gained more working opportunities and started to play a more important role in supporting the family's income. The crisis and the economic growth after that thus stimulated gender equality.

## Chapter 4. West Java

West Java is just like West Sumatra an Islamic region (Van Dijk, 2014). Before Islam came to West Java in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, it was Hinduist, like Bali. The arrival of Islam only shortly preceded Dutch occupation (Newland, 2000). West Java has the highest population number of all provinces in Indonesia – overpopulation is a big challenge. The main source of livelihoods are agriculture and industrial production (Titaley et al., 2010). Tourism is also a growing sector nowadays, its contribution to the GDP increasing each year (Hakim et al., 2021). This chapter will further discuss how Islam and western influence, inheritance rights and marriage institutions, and economic structure have affected the development of the position of West Javanese women between the 1930s and the 2000s.

### 4.1 Religion and western influence

As mentioned above, West Java used to be Hindu, just like Bali – but marriages and trade brought Islam to Java around the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Algemeen Handelsblad, 1929). Whereas East Java still had some Hindu influences around the 1930s, West Java was far more Islamic, with many fanatic followers of Islam (Brouwer, 1927). Contrary to West Sumatra, which is also Islamic, West Java does not have a matrilineal inheritance system. The influence of religion on the position of women is thus different in West Java than in West Sumatra. To analyse the position of women in West Java from the 1930s on in relation to Islam, the same kind of sources as in 4.1 have been studied: the Memoires from Dutch officials ruling in the Dutch East Indies (which are retrieved from the Inventaris van de Memories van Overgave, 1852-1962, which can be found in the Nationaal Archief, Den Haag) and several newspapers from the 1930s and on, which can be found at Delpher. The same disclaimer goes for this paragraph: the patriarchal views that ruled in the Netherlands at the time, also seep through in the newspaper articles. Being aware of this perspective with which the articles have been written, strengthens the analysis. Furthermore, this paragraph contains quite a few Dutch newspapers. They are still considered a valid source, since they have been written during the time that the Dutch East Indies were still occupied by the Netherlands; and since various newspapers contain evidence that was collected in the region itself, or there had been correspondence with people living in the Dutch East Indies. Furthermore, this outsider perspective offers a broader view of the general position of women during the 1930s. The newspaper articles and the Memoires are used primarily for the 1930s; for the period after that, secondary literature is used, since there are no relevant primary sources available between the 1950s and 2000s.

#### Islam strengthening the position of women?

Since the end of the fifteenth century, Islamization of Java has brought about a social transformation. Islam has certainly played a role in identity formation of Javanese women throughout history. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, Islam was seen as a hampering force, rather than a liberating one. However, from the early twentieth century on, Javanese women – both nobles and common women – started to gain a better understanding of Islamic knowledge, and they started to become active subjects in learning, criticising and implementing divine Islamic messages. Islam has thus helped Javanese women to liberate themselves from the constraints of Javanese *adat*, which portrayed women as powerless and subordinate to men, and supported child marriages. These developments have led to Islam now providing “a strong religious foundation for Javanese Muslim women to be local political leaders” (Dewi, 2012, p. 132).

In the 1930s, there are only a few examples where Islam does not necessarily weaken the position of women. *De Locomotief* (1926) shows that both men and women attended the congress of the Sarikat Islam in West Java. The *Algemeen handelsblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (1924) writes about another congress of the Sarikat Islam and also shows that both men and women were present. The article writes about how within Islam, the men have a duty to support their wives, and protection of widows and

orphaned women is thought of highly among Muslims. So, there were some variations in the perspectives on the influence of Islam on the position of women; from the Western, Christian point of view it has mostly been negative, as will become clear in the next section.

In the 2000s, it can be seen that Muslim women in Java have used Islam as a form of resistance against the patriarchy. Western countries perceive Islam as restrictive of women's empowerment, but Javanese Muslim women have shown that this perspective is not right. It is argued that the aspects that have limited women's empowerment, are patriarchal cultural traditions, Dutch colonialism, the state and religious powers. Javanese Muslim women have been trying to resist against these limiting factors by using Islamic materials to advocate for women's empowerment. A number of authors have challenged the traditional patriarchal understanding of women's subordinate role within Islam. With a new analysis of the interpretation of the Quran, they have come to the conclusion that women's rights are fundamental to Islam. It is even argued that misinterpretations of Islam are used to control women. The contributions to literature on Islamic feminism and Indonesia are still growing to this day (Siddiqui-Dennis, 2021).

### Islam weakening the position of women?

Many of the newspaper articles from the 1930s state that Islam has had a negative influence on the position of women. The two most prominent examples of this are the often-occurring child marriages in West Java in the 1930s, and the continuation of polygamy – these will be further explored below. Especially the occurrence of child marriage is interesting with regards to studies of gender inequality, considering spousal age gap is often used as an indicator for female agency and thus the position of women (Carmichael, 2011).

In West Java, there were no binding rules regarding child marriages in the 1930s; Islamic law only restricted marriages of in which the girl was not yet nine years old. However, there were various instances of pre-marriages, which were arranged when the girl was five to seven years old. The 'intellectuals', both European and West Javanese people with higher-than-average education, wanted the government to step in, but Islamic parties actively resisted the state's interference. The Sarikat Islam, an Islamic party active in West Java in the 1930s, saw governmental interference as a violation of individual rights. There was thus little to no resistance against child marriages, while, when West Java was not yet colonised, women had organised campaigns against child marriages. In the first half of 1927, there had already been 854 child marriages – and this number is not even complete (Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant, 1927). The *Algemeen Handelsblad* (1928) writes that in West Java in 1930, there were on average 2000 to 3000 child marriages a year, on 1,86 million girls (Departement van Landbouw, Nijverheid en Handel, 1933). Furthermore, J.S. de Kanter, who was a governor during the 1930s in Bantam, one of the residences in West Java, also wrote about child marriages in his *Memorie van Overgave*. He confirmed that the number of child marriages was generally quite high in Javanese districts. There were a lot more young girls already married than boys of their age; many girls married adult men. The parents arranged marriages for their girls because of economic and moral motives: they wanted money from the wedding guests, a son-in-law who could work for them, and they wanted to prevent children from taking the wrong path. However, arranged marriages like these only lasted for a short period of time – there were many divorced children in Bantam. J.S. de Kanter also wrote that when there were any suggestions in discussions or debates for adding marriage conditions, it always brought on turmoil amongst religious groups (NA Den Haag, 1934). So, Islamic groups resisted governmental interference in child marriages, and thus hampered improvement in the position of women.

Besides the child marriages, polygamous marriages, which have their roots in Islam (De Nederlander, 1920), were also recurring phenomena during the 1930s in Java. For women, this was problematic,



because whereas the men could easily cast aside their wives whenever they wanted, it was nearly impossible for a woman to divorce her husband. This led to a lot of divorces: in West Java, of 95 out of 100 women had divorced and then remarried (Algemeen Handelsblad, 1928; Leeuwarder nieuwsblad, 1925). The divorce rights of men were thus not equal to those of women.

Abovementioned articles thus have shown how Islam has had a negative influence on the position of women in the 1930s. However, these articles have been written from a Western, mostly Christian perspective – this becomes even more clear from an article from *De Standaard* (1927), in which a Dutch Missionary Conference is discussed. During the conference, the attendees explored what the best ways would be to bring the West Javanese Muslims into contact with the gospel. Needless to say, the Christian perspective on Islam was not a positive one.

The position of women in Indonesia was said to be much higher than in any other Islamic countries in the 1950s, and the relations between the sexes much freer. However, the Muhammadiyah still did not allow women to enter the male field. Ayishah, the wing for women, could act and strive for their own goals, but they had to remain in their own field. Women were not allowed to mix with men – in that sense, the Muhammadiyah was stricter than Indonesia's common public opinion. Outside of the Westernized cities, the women could mix less freely with men than they did before Indonesia became independent (Palmier, 1954).

In the 1980s, the women in Java had in general a remarkable amount of independence: many Javanese women were heads of their own household, they could inherit and own land, and they could earn a living without depending on their husbands. However, while this might have been true for Central and East Java, this was not the case for West Java. While the women there had property rights and they contributed to production, this was only recognized as secondary. Furthermore, most women did not usually receive all they were entitled to in a divorce. Also, men often got a larger share of the inheritance – they were entitled to twice the share of their sisters. Moreover, women's work was gender specific: the domestic tasks and handicrafts were thought secondary to men's work. The income the women did earn went mostly to expenses for their children, since they could not rely on their husbands' income for this. The distribution of their pooled income was, according to the women, not fair. Furthermore, widowed or divorced women who were still of childbearing age remarried quite quickly, considering the existing stigma surrounding women who stay single for certain lengths of time. All these aspects of the position of women in West Java in the 1980s are argued to be caused by Islamic patriarchal thought – which was much more prevalent in West Java than in the rest of Java – and the inherent laws (Mather, 1983).

In the 2000s, there were some differences in the views on gender roles within Islam. Both men and women were viewed as equal in worth before Allah; but this did not always work through in gender roles in practice. Whereas some Muslims saw a husband and wife as a team where the wife could be brighter than her husband, and independently earn money for her family, other Muslims believed that women could not become leaders, and that they should be subordinate to their husbands. A wife could only give input, she was not allowed to tell her husband what to do – while the other way around, the husband could tell his wife what to do. He only had to recognize that she was not a servant. Thus, while men and women were said to be equal before Allah, they were not equal before each other. Although the government has attempted to make modifications to the way Islamic marriage was determined in legal form – by trying to make it more difficult for men to enter into a polygamous relationship – Islamic law was still the main code that defines the structures of marriage. It is argued that there was – and still is – a danger in Muslim who want to return to an 'original' Islam and an 'authentic' culture, which is a response to the colonial attempt to undermine Islam and indigenous culture. This results, in Indonesia, in a clash between the traditionalists, who want to go back to the original Islam of the

Middle East, and the modernists, who see the benefits of state-driven modernity, including equal gender relationships. It is argued that religion is central to the way West Javanese Muslims construe the world, which means that Islam plays a central role in the perspective of Muslims on gender relationships. It depends on the line of thinking within Islam what the perspective on the position of women is (Newland, 2000).

### Western influence and the position of women

Western thinking has had a significant influence on the position of women and Islam. On the one hand, this influence has strengthened the position of women. This becomes clear from the following collected evidence. The *Leeuwarder Nieuwsblad* (1925) presents this clearly in letters from the Dutch East Indies which are included in the newspaper. The letters were about the conflict regarding the contact between boys and girls in West Java. According to Islamic tradition, older girls should not or barely be seen by the boys. However, Western thought has influenced this way of thinking, which could be clearly seen at schools. The number of boys was still larger than the number of girls, but it was clear that the Western point of view gained more ground. Because of education and contact with European students, the eyes of West Javanese girls were opened for the weak position of women in their society, with all the child marriages and the meagre conditions of married women. This is also confirmed by an article from the *Algemeen Handelsblad* (1928), which writes about women who increasingly strived for an improvement in their position, which, in the higher circles, was caused by the increasing contact between Javanese girls and European girls. Because of these contacts, the girls learned to test and compare Eastern and Western views of life. More and more women's movements were established – which is confirmed by J.H. Willemse (NA Den Haag, 1931), governor of Batavia, who wrote in his Memoire that the established women's movement in Batavia tried to serve women's interests as much as possible in the social domains. This women's movement coexisted with the Muhammadiyah, the Islamic movement, which was also active in Batavia in the 1930s in the social domain. Furthermore, next to the influence of Western thinking, it is clear that education also affected how women viewed their position. This becomes clear from the earlier cited articles. In the *Algemeen Handelsblad* (1928), it was described how the Javanese girls' eyes were opened for the position of women in their society because they go to school and meet there with European girls. The *Leeuwarder Nieuwsblad* (1925) already showed that the intellectuals wanted stricter rules surrounding child marriages, which is also confirmed by F.G. Putman-Cramer (NA Den Haag, 1932), who was a governor in Bantam. He wrote in his Memorie van Overgave that among the intellectuals, the ideas were changing with regards to marriage morals. He wrote that the idea of emancipation was getting increasingly stronger among women. The new ideas about a woman and her place in society and her role in marriage were getting rooted in women's minds, which clashed with the practice of polygamy. F.G. Putman-Cramer also stated that the general age limit for marriage was lower among uneducated Indonesian families than among educated families. It can thus be concluded that Western thinking and education has influenced Islam and the position of women, by inspiring the girls and women in West Java to strive for better conditions. So, the 1930s were a time in which women were starting to see the state of their position in Indonesian society, and that they wanted that to change.

In the 1950s, some of the Western-educated people turned away from their belief and plunged into the Western values, but others combined Islam with the Western thinking. Inside the Westernized cities, the women mixed freely with men. The position of women in Indonesia was said to be much higher than in any other Islamic countries, and the relations between the sexes were much freer (Palmier, 1954).

On the other hand, there is also some evidence suggesting that Western influence has weakened the position of women. Whereas Islam is often blamed for the weak position of women, Javanese Muslim

women believe that their powers have been limited by patriarchal cultural traditions and Dutch colonialism, amongst others. Javanese cultural traditions have placed women in the role of first and foremost being a supporter of their husbands. Furthermore, Dutch colonialism projected a morality – derived from Western Christianity – that constructed the idea of the Indonesian housewife, which became the ideal womanhood. That idea created stigmas against working-class women (Siddiqui-Dennis, 2021).

Moreover, Suharto, who was president of Indonesia in the second half of the twentieth century, used the Western model of a nuclear family. He believed that there was a strong connection between the stability of the family unit and the stability of the state. And thus, “any deviations from ascribed gender roles were perceived as threats to the state” (Siddiqui-Dennis, 2021, p. 48). Suharto tasked conservative Muslims with carrying out his political goals, in which he tried to institutionalize an understanding of Islam with patriarchal ideas about gender relations. He increased the accessibility to Islamic materials in order to help him institutionalize Islam for his benefits. However, Muslim women started to use these materials in advocating for women's empowerment. Their protests and religious and social engagement eventually led to a shift in the Javanese socio-political environment (Siddiqui-Dennis, 2021). Islam does thus not necessarily have to be the cause for gender equality – in the contrary, Javanese Muslim women actually use Islam to reinforce their case of women's empowerment.

#### 4.2 Institutional environment

Now that the influence of religion on the development of the position of women in West Java between 1930 and 2000 has been discussed, this paragraph will explore the impact of institutions. First, the development of inheritance rights in West Java will be discussed, and after that, the development of marriage institutions. The evidence has been collected from the Pandects of *adat* law – and as in paragraph 3.2, one needs to take into account that these laws and institutions have been studied from a Dutch, colonial and critical perspective.

##### Inheritance rights and the development of the position of women

The Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut of Amsterdam (1920) has laid down the inheritance system according to *adat* law in West Java, which was in place in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There were several different rules for when the man, the head of the family, would pass away. In most cases, the widow would get only a part of the property – mostly one third – and her children or other close relatives would receive the rest of it. In Banten, the widow sometimes also got to keep the house: this was the case if it belonged to her family, her husband had not paid the dowry, or the house had been obtained during the marriage. However, if the house had been gifted by her husband's family, her ownership of it would expire once her children came of age. In most cases, if the house belonged to the husband's family, the children would receive the house. The widow then would stay with her children, until they came of age; then, she would return to her parents' house. In some places, the widow would receive the house unconditionally, for example because her children already were of age. If there were no children, the house would be taken by heirs or by those who gifted the house. Furthermore, if the widow remarried, she had to give the house to the children of her first marriage, often to one of the daughters. The widow was also allowed to keep the house, if her children would allow it. Moreover, in the Priangan Residency it was often the case that the house and related goods were inherited by the widow, while the sawah's are divided among the children. The daughters then only received half of what the sons received; a half male portion, so to speak. If the daughters indeed inherited any sawah's, these grounds were often rented out or given to one of their brothers so that they could manage the fields. All these laws were a combination of *adat* law and Islamic law. Where the West Javanese people did not adhere to Islamic law, the shares of men and women were equal. In some cases, a woman's share was even bigger, because she could not take care of the fields as good as men could.

As already explained above, Islamic law was – and still is – intertwined with *adat* law in most cases, although it is technically different regarding certain aspects. For example, according to the Quran, the widow gets only a quarter of the inheritance, and the rest is bestowed upon close blood relatives. If she has children, she gets only one eighth of the share. In some cases, the widow has to share with the parents and siblings of her late husband. However, these laws were not known in all of West Java. In a lot of villages, the people only knew that according to Islamic law, sons should receive twice as much as daughters (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1920).

So, Islamic law and *adat* law were intertwined in West Java in the 1930s. Although the widows were not left completely penniless, they only received a part of the inheritance and had to share it with other close relatives. The daughters did not get as much as the sons. The position of women was thus not equal to that of men. The question that follows is, how did this develop after the 1930s?

In the 1960s and 1970s, West Java was still strongly Islamic, which meant Islamic law still was important with regards to inheritance rights. Widows still got at least one eighth part of the inheritance, while they did not always get something according to *adat* law. *Adat* law thus treated sons and daughters equally, but widows were overlooked. Furthermore, the two-to-one principle, where sons get twice as much as daughters, was also still in place. This was different than in East and Central Java, where there was more gender equity with regards to inheritance (Lev, 1972).

Sons receiving twice as much as daughters with regards to inheritance according to Islamic law was still the case at the end of the 1970s in West Java. Where customary law dominated over Islamic law, sons and daughters received the same and were thus treated equally (Yusuf, 1979).

Around the 2000s, land inheritance in Kemang Village, West Java, was based on customary law, which is based on values of gender equity. Parents treated their sons and daughters both as children, which meant they also treated them equitable regarding ownership of properties. Half of the land of this West Javanese village belonged in joint ownership both to the husband and the wife. The other half belonged to either solely the man (28.4%) or solely to the woman (21.0%). Within a marriage, there was a fairness regarding the land as well. Marriage did not automatically bring ownership rights to the other partner, so if a woman brought land into the marriage, she would retain ownership of it. Furthermore, more women than men were the owners of the household's land: 43% were women, whereas 38% were men (Mugniesyah & Mizuno, 2007). In Cirompang, another village in West Java, parents also treated their sons and daughters equally with regard to land inheritance. In practice, women did not always get the same amount of land as men. It has to be noted however, that the land tenure system was and is a complex one, combining customary law, religious law and state law. While they overlap in some places, they contradict in other places, creating complex tenure problems. Despite this complicated system, there was a significant degree of equality in Cirompang, West Java (Anggraini, 2015).

### Marriage institutions and the development of the position of women

The Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut of Amsterdam (1924) has laid out the marriage institutions in West Java that were in place in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some institutions suggest that there was a relative equality regarding the position of a man and a woman within a marriage, whereas others seem to deny women any agency. These institutions will be explored below.

Once a man and woman were married, the man went to live with his wife's parents. He could then perform labour duties for his parents in law for barely any money. This was often the case with child marriages, when parents with a daughter wanted a son-in-law as cheap labourer. When a man and a woman married, the woman got a different name. However, this did not necessarily have to be her husband's name, which was the case in Middle- and East Java. Furthermore, the man managed the

properties within the marriage. However, he could not just sell the things his wife had brought into the marriage; he first had to get her and her parents' permission. He could also not just sell the things he had brought into the marriage himself; he first had to discuss this with his wife and his own parents (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1924).

The common man often only had one wife, whereas regents often had two to four wives, and several concubines as well. The village heads followed the example of the regents and also often had several wives and concubines. The concubines did not have a good life. They had to work for their 'husbands' and were barely any better than the slaves. Their lives were made even more miserable by the wives of the regent or village head, out of jealousy most likely, according to the evidence collected from the Pandects of *adat* law. Furthermore, as already described in 4.1, it was quite easy for a man to divorce his wife. This often happened in the 1930s for the most negligible reasons: a man could send away his wife for not cooking the rice long enough, or making bad-tasting coffee. However, for a woman it was almost impossible to divorce her husband. Nevertheless, this did differ within West Java. In the surroundings of Batavia, formal divorce did not exist, which means it happened several times that a couple that had separated because of a fight, got together again after they reconciled (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1924).

Islamic institutions surrounding marriage did differ a bit from *adat* law in West Java. In the 1930s, a Muslim man and woman married under conditions, which concerned the man providing for his wife. He needed to provide for her in housing, household money and clothes. If he did not provide for his wife for a certain time, it was possible for the woman to go to the regent and accuse her husband of not taking care of her according to the marriage conditions. If the regent attended the woman's husband on this and he still did not provide for her, then the marriage could be dissolved. However, while these conditions existed, the case was in practice that men often divorced their wives, while they were relatively powerless. While the man could divorce for no reason, the woman had to argue for her case on a legal basis (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1924). So in the 1930s, some marriage institutions provided circumstances benefitting the position of women, like the duty of the husband to provide for his wife, while others oppressed female empowerment, like the difficulty to request divorce for women. How did this develop after the 1930s?

In the 1950s, the Indonesian government was reluctant to promulgate a uniform marriage law. This was because of the religious and cultural diversities in Indonesia, and because of "the traditional Indonesian tendency not to drive a controversial issue to a head by insisting on rigid or partisan formulations" (Van der Kroef, 1957, p. 126). This meant that legal certainty regarding marriage institutions receded for the Indonesian woman. So, what did this mean for West Java in the 1950s? The number of divorces was very high: of the total number of marriages, up to 66% divorced. A research in Indonesia in the 1970s showed that of the interviewed males and females, 40% had had a marriage that had ended in divorced (Hirschman & Teerawichitchainan, 2003). In case of divorce, the woman retained control over all the property that she had received during her marriage, or that she had inherited. Furthermore, instances of polygamy occurred more in West Java than anywhere else in Indonesia. Specific numbers are unclear, but it is certainly a widespread phenomenon. In some villages in West Java, it was not even needed to report a marriage to the village authorities. This social disorganization led to marital instability. Young women were forced to marry by their parents and traditional norms, while they themselves would for example rather get more education (Van der Kroef, 1957).

In January 1974, the government then finally promulgated a uniform marriage law in Indonesia. Most of the articles seem to support gender equality, but there are also a few that have a patriarchal undertone. This will be elaborated upon below. In order to marry, both the man and the woman have

to agree. The man has to be at least nineteen years, whereas the woman only has to be sixteen years. The marriage is based on the belief in Allah. In principle, a male person is only allowed to have one wife – however, if his current wife permits it and he has valid reasons to want more wives (if, for example, his wife is unable to perform her duties as wife), he can submit a request to the Court of Law. Both husband and wife may request to dissolve the marriage – in other words, to divorce. Moreover, the responsibilities and rights of a wife and her husband regarding the life of the household and social intercourse in society, are equivalent to each other. The wife is the mother of the household, and her husband is the head of the family. The husband has the responsibility to protect his wife and provide for her, and the wife has the responsibility to take care of the household (The Marriage Law of the Republic of Indonesia, 1974). In 1975, the law did not have that much effect yet, which points at the complex problem of legal-system-building in countries with pluralistic systems (Katz & Katz, 1975). Nevertheless, the Marriage Law shows that although men and women seemed to be more equal in rights in 1974, and the following years, than in the 1930s in West Java, the Law still carries some patriarchal undertones. A man is still allowed to have more wives – and not the other way around – and the wife has to take care of the household, which stigmatizes working mothers.

Censuses of 1971, 1980 and 1990 show an upward trend in marriage age in Indonesia, among males and females and in both urban and rural areas, which could partly be explained by the introduction of the Marriage Law (Blackburn, 2004). Between 1970 and 2017, the average marriage age in Indonesia increased from 19.3 to 22.4 (Utomo et al., 2022). However, West Java is a notable exception to this: this province continued to show high occurrences of early marriage, with exact numbers unfortunately unknown. The high occurrence of early marriage could be explained by the high prevalence of Islam in West Java, and the fanatic attitude of Muslims, which makes following Islamic law more important than obeying state law. Furthermore, the high incidence of early marriage in West Java could also be explained by cultural attitudes; girls marrying at an early age was so normalized, that it was considered abnormal if they were still single at a later age (Blackburn, 2004). Indeed, in the 2000s, it was still common for women to get married young in West Java (Situmorang, 2007). Moreover, the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also showed high rates of polygamy and divorce in West Java. This slowly started to decline in Indonesia at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Blackburn, 2004).

### 4.3 Economic structure

In 1930, the per capita GDP in West Java was 83 (in guilder), which is significantly lower than in West Sumatra. Table 10 shows the nominal wages per sector in West Java, which were, needless to say, also remarkably lower than in West Sumatra (Bosma & Van Leeuwen, 2022). This implies that West Javanese people were relatively poor – is this then also reflected in the position of women?

Sector	Nominal wages
Agriculture	37,2
Industry	60,2
Services	38,7

Table 10. Nominal wages in guilder cents per day, West Java, 1930 (from Bosma & Van Leeuwen, 2022)

The data in table 11, which are derived from the Census from 1930, show the number of men and women that were active in the most important sectors in 1930. Just like in West Sumatra, agriculture was the sector in which most of the labour force was active. In almost all sectors, the working women were obviously a minority in comparison to men. Indeed, overall, the difference between men and women is very large: 77,49% of the labour force consisted of men, which left the women's share in the labour force at 22,51%. This might be related to West Javanese Islamic culture in the 1930s, with the gender inequality thus also influencing women's economic position. However, within the industry, there were more women than men at work. The industry thus gave women possibilities for more

financial independence in the 1930s in West Java. Indeed, already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were thousands of West Javanese women who were active in weaving. Around 1900, there were various textile centres based in the region, and at this same time, both West Javanese men and women increasingly started to adopt the habit of wearing colourful, handwoven sarongs. This increased the demand, which in turn increased the growth of the industry (van Nederveen Meerkerk, 2019).

	Men	Women	Total	Men's share of labour force	Women's share of labour force
<b>Agriculture</b>	1.742.874	355.245	2.098.119	83,1%	16,9%
<b>Industry</b>	151.389	175.815	327.204	46,3%	53,7%
<b>Traffic</b>	67.531	1.245	68.776	98,2%	1,8%
<b>Trade</b>	128.520	34.441	162.961	78,9%	21,1%
<b>Liberal professions</b>	19.467	5.995	25.462	76,5%	23,5%
<b>Government services</b>	72.874	538	73.412	99,3%	0,7%
<b>Other</b>	316.958	153.003	469.961	67,4%	32,6%
<b>Total</b>	2.499.613	726.282	3.225.895	77,5%	22,5%

*Table 11. Number of men and women per profession, West Java, 1930 (Departement van Economische Zaken, 1936, p. 126)*

In the whole of Java, the married women that were recorded as part of the labour force was around 30% - which was most probably a gross underestimation, because women who worked at the family farm were often not registered. In contrast to this, only 6% of married Dutch women worked in wage labour (van Nederveen Meerkerk, 2019). So, how did the West Javanese economy and women's position in it, develop after the 1930s?

In the late 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, the government of that time wanted to spur Indonesia's economic growth by industrialization. Especially in the beginning of the 1970s, there was some success, with the share of the GDP of manufacturing increasing over the years and contributing to Indonesia's overall economic growth rate. However, this industrialization has not only changed the political and economic sphere, but it also reinforced the subordination of women. This is because the managers of the industrial capital entered into an alliance with Islamic patriarchs when investing in their villages, which was for example the case in Kelompok, so that they could establish a cheap and docile labour force. These Islamic patriarchs held on to the ideology that women of all ages were subordinate to men. The young girls that were recruited in the factories in Kelompok could easily be dominated by the industrial capitalists, who treated them according to Islamic ideologies. In this way, the process of industrialization, and thus economic growth, was connected with a decrease in women's power (Mather, 1983).

In the 1990s, the position of women was said to be better than the position of women in other parts of South-East Asia, which could be seen from for example indicators like sex-specific mortality rates and life expectancy at birth. Indonesian women played an important role in the economy – mostly in the informal sector, and their work was not always visible in the statistics. However, there was also an increase in female labour participation in the formal and documented sectors. A research into a development project in West Java, which was part of a savings- and credit programme, shows that much of women's income was spent on necessary daily household expenses. Men's contribution to the households, however, was not to be relied upon, according to interviewed women. Women thus had interest in their own economic activities: it contributed to their and their family's survival. Furthermore, it increased their self-confidence and power within the family. The research demonstrated that female micro-entrepreneurs, which were targeted with the project, should be taken seriously. There were also



some women who said that they did not want their husbands to get involved with the household more, since it was their responsibility, as wife and mother (Niehof, 1994). This shows that women's economic position is closely related to prevalent norms and habits in a society.

A study in West Java in the late 1990s shows how female factory workers played an important role in the industrialization process. Because of the rapid industrial development, tens of thousands of women were absorbed from their traditional lifestyles into the factory. It is argued that since women played such a vital role in their households, and since they were so important to their nation, industrial development in Indonesia would not be successful if they were not loyal to both household and nation. Nevertheless, these factory women were inhibited by the corrupt and repressive state. It is thus argued that in the late 1990s, the state, with its patriarchal values, was the most inhibitive phenomenon for women's empowerment (Hancock, 1998). Women's economic position is thus not only closely related to the prevalent norms but also to the state, holding those norms intact with their ideologies.

Table 12 below shows the GDP growth per capita in West Java from 2017 to 2019. The GDP per capita is a bit lower than in West Sumatra, but the growth is a bit larger: the GDP has grown 15,8% between 2017 and 2019. Table 13 shows the minimum wage in West Java from 2017 to 2019. The minimum wage is a lot lower than in West Sumatra.

Year	GRDP per capita at current market prices
2017	37.223
2018	40.306
2019	43.092

Table 12. Regional GDP per capita at current market prices (in thousand rupiahs), West Java, 2017-2019 (adapted from BPS, 2020)

	Minimum wage
2017	1.420.624
2018	1.544.361
2019	1.668.373

Table 13. Provincial minimum wage per month in rupiahs, West Java, 2017-2019 (adapted from BPS, 2020).

#### 4.4 Conclusion

It can be concluded that religion has had an influence on gender inequality in West Java throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1930s, Islam had mostly a negative influence on the position of women in West Java, which primarily becomes clear from Islamic resistance against the creation of limits within child marriage, their upholding of polygamy and the lack of adequate conditions for women in divorce. However, the selected evidence has been mostly written from a Western, Christian perspective, which influences the perspective on the position of women in Islam. Furthermore, Western values have influenced Islamic thought and the position of women, primarily via education. The 'intellectuals' thus had a different stance towards the position of women. The 1930s were a start of change, in which more and more women wanted to strive for a better position. After the 1930s, Islamic discourse continued to play a role in influencing the perspective of West Javanese Muslims on gender relationships. There have been some clashes between traditionalist and modernist Muslims. However, West Javanese women increasingly resisted against patriarchal thought, and they even used Islamic ideas to act this out. So, on the one hand, patriarchal ideas which are connected to Islam, diminish the empowerment of women. On the other hand, Islam is used to resist against those very patriarchal ideas, which suggests that interpretation of Islamic texts is crucial in one's stance on gender roles. To conclude; women's position in West Java in relation to Islam has improved between 1930s and 2000s, but the fact remains that there is yet much to be achieved with regards to gender inequality.

Moreover, the institutional environment, influenced by Islam and West Javanese customs, also negatively impacted the position of women in West Java throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the beginning of the 1930s, the division of inheritance is not a gender equitable matter in West Java. Widows only get a small part of the inheritance, and sons get twice as much as daughters. This is because of the influence of Islam on inheritance institutions and cultural habits. Over time, this slowly improves. Customary law becomes more gender equitable, which thus improves the position of women. However, although widows are in a way protected by Islam – since they still get a small part of the inheritance – daughters still do not get the same amount as sons in inheritance matters. In the 2000s, areas that primarily adhere to customary law are more gender equal than areas that primarily adhere to Islam law. Thus, the change of *adat* law regarding its stance towards gender equality has positively influenced the position of women. Furthermore, although numbers are uncertain, it is clear that polygamy and divorce are widespread in West Java in the 1930s. This also shows gender inequality, especially since it is a lot harder for a woman to divorce her husband than vice versa. However, there were still some institutions in favour of women, like the marriage conditions of protection of and provision for the wife. Over time, overall marriage institutions in Indonesia improved, especially with the introduction of marriage law and new cultural habits. However, West Java remained an exception in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: there were still many incidences of early marriage, and high instances of polygamy and divorce. This is due to the continuing importance of Islamic law and slowly changing cultural habits. The continuing significance of Islam in the lives of West Javanese people and their own customs have thus negatively influenced the position of women regarding marriage institutions throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Lastly, the West Javanese economy performs worse than the West Sumatran economy throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The GDP per capita is a lot lower, both in the 1930s and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The share of working women was fairly low in the 1930s – except for the industry, where there were more women active than men. West Java's industrialization, which started around the 1960s and 1970s, put women to work, but it only reinforced patriarchal ideas and the subordination of women. The importance of women's position in the West Javanese economy increased in the 1980s and 1990s, since they played such an important role in providing for the household. However, they were still repressed by the patriarchal state. These changes in the economic structure thus have led on the one hand to better financial opportunities for women, with which their financial dependency on male family members decreased. On the other hand, these changes reinforced patriarchal ideologies and sometimes even subordination of women. The changes to the economic structure thus had both negative and positive consequences for the position of women. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it becomes clear that the West Javanese economy is growing steadily, but the minimum wage is still a lot lower than in West Sumatra. It is possible that due to this lower level of economic development, West Java is taking longer than the other regions to develop into a more gender equal region. This will be further explored in Chapter 7.

## Chapter 5. Bali

In contrast to West Java and West Sumatra, Bali is primarily a Hinduist region. Throughout the ages, religion has become very much intertwined with cultural habits and daily lives of the Balinese people. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Balinese culture and thus religion have been strongly influenced by Western thought and rising tourism (Astara et al., 2018). The economy of Bali is indeed primarily based on tourism. International tourist trips already started in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While in 2003, the number of tourists to Bali was almost one million. This number had grown to over four million just over a decade later. Bali's economy thus continues to thrive on the tourism sector (Antara & Sumarniasih, 2017). The rest of this chapter will explore how religion and western influence, inheritance rights and marriage institutions, and economic structures have affected the development of the position of women in Bali between the 1930s and the 2000s.

### 5.1 Religion and western influence

As mentioned above, the dominant religion in Bali is Hinduism. It seems probable that within a different religion, the perspective on women and thus the position of women is different. The first question that will be explored is thus: what is traditionally the position of women in Hinduism? Specifically, there will be a focus on India, since that is originally a Hindu country.

Various ancient Hindu scriptures show respect for women. A woman is even seen as a goddess, who is to be worshipped. In the ancient times, women's position conformed to how women were viewed in Hinduism: they were equal to men and enjoyed freedom in all domains of life (Pathak, 2019). However, the idea of women being dependent on and serving of their husbands is also deeply rooted in society. Several Hindu characters, who also stem from ancient scripts, were known for their devotion to and service of their husbands. The view was that because male heirs are essential for the inheritance and the continuance of the lineage, women only serve as a means through which these matters can be achieved (Mukherjee, 1983). Ancient Hindu scriptures thus on the one hand seemed to support gender equality and a strong position for women, but on the other hand the idea of women being subservient also had an important place in the scriptures.

Over time new texts emerged that redefined the concept of an ideal women, and it eventually led to practices where women were seen as subservient to men. There thus came a dissonance between religious beliefs and the practices, which has strengthened over time. In India, where Hinduism is also the dominant religion, the dissonance between religious beliefs and practices becomes clear from the rise in the number of crimes against women, like domestic violence or dowry deaths (Pathak, 2019). The idea of women who were dependent on their husbands was kept alive by media and national leaders, which resulted in a process where the ideal wife eventually became the same as being the ideal woman. Despite legislation in India that recognised women's independence, the image of women serving their husbands and being dependent on them is still relevant today (Mukherjee, 1983).

The fact that Hinduism has been the dominant religion in India for so long, can be attributed to the stability of the Hindu family. It attends "to the physical, psychological, social, and religious aspects of the individual throughout the life cycle" (Young, 1994, p. 77). The Hindu woman plays an important role in supporting the Hindu family. Her traditional behaviour, especially her loyalty to her husband and her role as mother, makes the family a core institution of Hindu religion. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Indian Hindu women already started to fight for their rights, for equality between men and women within family life, and to have literacy, better education and good jobs (Young, 1994). So, although the ancient Hindu religion viewed women as a goddess that was to be worshipped, over time the image of the dependent woman, confined to the domestic life, became central in Hinduism. Over the past century, women in India have tried to change that image, fighting for more equality. The rest of this section will

investigate how women's position has developed in relation to Hinduism in Bali between 1930 and 2000. To analyse the position of women in Bali from the 1930s on in relation to Hinduism, the same kind of sources as in 3.1 and 4.1 have been studied: the Memoires from Dutch officials ruling in the Dutch East Indies (which are retrieved from the Inventaris van de Memoires van Overgave, 1852-1962, which can be found in the Nationaal Archief) and several newspapers from the 1930s and on, which can be found at Delpher. From the evidence it becomes clear that the patriarchal views that ruled in the Netherlands at the time, also seep through in the newspaper articles. Being aware of this perspective with which the articles have been written, strengthens the analysis. Furthermore, this paragraph contains, just like 4.1, quite a few Dutch newspapers. They are still considered a valid source, since they have been written during the time that the Dutch East Indies was still occupied by the Netherlands; and since various newspapers contain evidence that was collected in the region itself, or there had been correspondence with people living in the Dutch East Indies. Furthermore, this outsider perspective offers a broader view of the general position of women during the 1930s. The newspaper articles and the Memoires are used primarily for the 1930s; for the period after that, secondary literature is used, since there are no relevant primary sources available between the 1950s and 2000s.

Before going further into the arguments concerning the influence of Hinduism and Western thought on the position of women, it will be discussed what Hinduism looked like in the 1930s in Bali, which was clearly described in the Memoire by G.A.W.C. de Haze, the Governor of Bali and Lombok in 1937 (NA Den Haag, 1937). The Balinese form of Hinduism consisted of the old animistic Balinese folk religion and many Hindu-Javanese doctrines, which had intertwined with each other. Important in Balinese Hinduism was the worshipping of ancestors, the belief in evil spirits that can cause sickness and disaster, and the emergence of natural phenomena caused by the wrath of the gods. L.J.J. Caron (NA Den Haag, 1929) mentioned in his Memorie that he did not fear that the Balinese population would convert to Islam, because the Balinese people were so Hindu-religious. He even described the population as one which was culturally on a high level, with very strong religious needs. Finally, H. Beeuwkes (NA Den Haag, 1932) wrote in his Memorie that there was a tendency of dissatisfaction with the status quo concerning the rituals and knowledge of texts within Hinduism. People increasingly wanted to have the possibility to get to know the sacred texts, and to not leave everything up to the priests. So, it is in this setting that the position of women within Hinduism will be discussed.

### Hinduism strengthening the position of women?

There are a few examples from the collected evidence that suggest that Hinduism strengthened the position of women in the 1930s. Firstly, wives of priests could also become a priest themselves. A priest was regarded highly in Hinduist Bali. If a wife of a priest wanted to become a priest herself, she had to follow the same training as her husband. Then, she could replace him when he would be absent, or she could follow him up after his death (Douwes Jr., 1935). The possibility for women to become priests in the 1930s suggests a perspective of women being independent and capable. However, this argument needs to be nuanced by the fact that only wives of priests could become a priest.

Secondly, women were allowed to work. The *Nieuwe Venlosche Courant* (1939) contains a report of a journalist visiting Bali. He saw women working on the rice fields and selling fruits and cooked rice in the streets. This suggests that women were in a position where they can work, which gave them the possibility to not be dependent on their husbands. Interestingly enough, the journalist also wrote that the Balinese men were lazy: they were drinking coffee and hanging out in the streets. A Dutch speaking Javanese journalist talked to, even claimed that no self-respecting Balinese man worked – he should leave that to the women. This seems to weaken the previous argument – but the fact remains that the Balinese picture of women was not necessarily of them being confined to the domestic area.

Thirdly, women have had an equal position to men, or perhaps an even more important position, in religious practices. *De Indische Courant* describes a sacrificial feast for the goddess of rice. J.H. François (1931) wrote that women were the ones carrying the sacrifices on their heads, while men only stood there and looked, doing nothing. Furthermore, during prayer time, men, women and children all sat together in the same room (Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad, 1934). Men and women were thus not separated from each other with these religious practices.

So, how did this develop after the 1930s? Does Hinduism increasingly strengthen women's position over time? In the 1950s, it was as easy for a Brahmana man to become a priest as for a woman. This thus has changed with respect to the 1930s – then, only the wives of priests could become a priest themselves. Furthermore, women could marry someone from every caste – they did not necessarily have to marry upwards or within their caste. This is also related to the fact that the Balinese caste system is not as strict and all-encompassing in comparison to the Indian caste system – it is relatively mild and limited (Coast, 1951).

In the 1980s, the gender relations were remarkably egalitarian. This was because, for example, kinship ties passed through both men and women: ties through men did not dominate the ties through women. This will further be explored in the next paragraph on the institutional environment. Furthermore, married men and women still both played a role in the temple affairs (Waterson, 1982).

In the 2000s, Balinese women were empowered especially by their religious identity (Morrison et al., 2020; Suyadnya, 2009). Nevertheless, the Hindu-Islamic foundation – with 13,37% of the Balinese being Muslim – together with the patrilineal caste system, still somewhat limited women's agency. The national system did not protect female inheritance or mutual division of assets. However, the rights that Balinese women did have, lay in *adat* and cultural and religious practices. Women had high mobility in public spaces, because their contribution to the public religious rituals was essential. Contemporary Balinese women thus had a remarkable high level of social mobility because Bali is Hinduist (Morrison et al., 2020).

### Hinduism weakening the position of women?

The first thing that needs to be stated is that the Western, Christian, perspective on Balinese Hinduism was not a positive one, which seeps through in the newspaper articles and the Governor's Memoires. This becomes clear from for example *De Tijd* (1926), where the author states that the Christian civilisation was way above the Hindu civilisation. This opinion is clearly present in most of the evidence, which needs to be taken into account when drawing the conclusion. The rest of this section shows the collected evidence, containing various arguments that suggest that Hinduism weakened the position of women in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Firstly, in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was custom to burn a widow alive, right after her husband had died. It was seen as the most noble-minded deed a woman could do if she lets herself be burned alive after the death of her husband. This burning happened either voluntarily, or the widow was forced with violence. This custom was said to originate from the Hindu idea that a woman is nothing more than the servant of her husband, without any personal rights. After his death, she would thus not have the right to live anymore. The Dutch government brought an end to this, which initially not everyone was happy about, except for the women and the Brahmana, the highest caste. Various articles state that the government thus played a part in improving the position of women (Dagblad van Noord-Brabant, 1926; De koerier, 1927; Douwes Jr., 1935). The burning of widows is, needless to say, a profound example of violence against women.

Secondly, Bali also had various occurrences of prostitution, slavery, neglect of women (De koerier, 1927) and child marriages in the 1930s. These marriages were arranged by the parents when their children were two or three years old. If the boy happened to die early, the girl was already a widow at a very young age. These young widows were despised and put at the margin of society (Dagblad van Noord-Brabant, 1926). These incidences undermining the position of women originated from a combination of Hindu religion and Balinese culture. As *De Indische Courant* (1924) states, Hinduism and Balinese culture have formed an unbreachable entity. It was and is thus almost impossible to discern where the one ends and the other one begins.

Thirdly, Hindu Bali knows a caste system of four casts: Brahmana, Kshatryia, Viasya and Sudra. The three highest castes formed 7% of the population in the 1930s. Male Brahmana, who thus belonged to the highest caste, the caste of the priests, were allowed to marry a girl from their own caste or from a caste below them. However, a female Brahmana could only marry a male Brahmana, or else she risked becoming casteless. The Balinese believed that with caste interference, the gods would become angry, and they would cause the harvest to fail and people to get sick. Brahmana women were thus disadvantaged with respect to Brahmana men. Furthermore, there is evidence that polygamy was widespread in Bali in the 1930s. Although numbers are uncertain, it is mentioned various times, in for example the article from the *Algemeen Handelsblad* (1938), and, as will later become clear, in the Pandetcs of *adat* law concerning marriage institutions and customs in Bali. However, this occurred mostly among the rich and prominent families; 'normal' men did not take a second wife because of economic reasons (Algemeen Handelsblad, 1938).

Fourthly, it is said that within the strong family ties that Balinese Hindu is known for, the men had a dominant position; the woman were subordinate to them. It is even stated that the fate of women was barely enviable, before the Dutch government started to interfere with Balinese matters (Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, 1932).

Lastly, the educational development of Balinese girls was not equal to that of boys. G.A.W.C. de Haze (NA Den Haag, 1937) argued in his *Memorie* for setting up domestic schools for Balinese girls on a large scale. He believed that Balinese people should learn more about hygiene – which implies a conceited attitude from the Dutch towards the colonised – and stated that girls should be the ones receiving hygiene and household education. This again shows the patriarchal thought of the Netherlands in the 1930s, and the believe that girls and women are responsible for and confined to household chores. However, the Governor's point remains: Balinese girls fell behind on Balinese boys with regards to educational development – the gap was apparently so big that some intellectual Balinese men remain unmarried.

### Western influence and the position of women

Next to Hinduism, Western thought has also been an important influencing factor on the position of women in Bali. In the 1930s, various newspaper articles argued that the Dutch government had played an important role in improving the conditions and the position of Balinese women. Their main argument was that they had put an end to the practice of widow burning (Dagblad van Noord-Brabant, 1926; De koerier, 1927; Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, 1932). That is, needless to say, a practice of violence against women, so in that regard the Dutch government indeed had caused an improvement in women's position.

Moreover, the Dutch government wanted to improve the position of women even more by continuing the purification process and converting the Balinese people to Christianity. Various newspaper articles talked about the missionary work Dutch Christians wanted to organise in Bali (Dagblad van Noord-Brabant, 1926; De koerier, 1927). However, the government did not support any propaganda of other



religions than Hinduism, since the unbreachable entity that is the Balinese Hindu culture would be endangered by the preaching of other religions (De Indische Courant, 1924). G.A.W.C. de Haze (1937) even stated that any Christian propaganda was forbidden, even if it stemmed from Balinese Christians.

In the 1950s, the influence of the West in Indonesia became visible in Bali in several things. For example, it was argued that women must be taught to not demonstrate their primitiveness and cover their breasts. Western clothing must be worn, since it is not only cheaper but also more modern. Men must be taught to stop with the cockfighting and their excessive gambling (Coast, 1951). The western influence was thus focused on behaviours of both men and women.

In the 2000s, it is clear that globalization had westernized Bali. Women's view of gender equality and emancipation had been influenced by the Western view, meaning they were increasingly taking up their economic roles, next to their domestic and spiritual roles. Balinese women believed that the Western values that had been brought by globalization could be domesticated. However, if these values clashed too much with religious and custom values, they would have the tendency to resist them (Suyadnya, 2009).

## 5.2 Institutional environment

This paragraph will explore the influence of the development of inheritance rights, and marriage institutions and customs on the position of women in Bali between 1930 and 2000.

### Inheritance rights and the development of the position of women

The evidence on inheritance rights in the 1930s in Bali, which is gathered from the Pandects of *adat* law (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1920) is somewhat more limited than the available evidence on West Sumatra and West Java. The relevant information on inheritance rights that has been found will be discussed below. As in 3.2 and 4.2, it needs to be taken into account that the *adat* laws have been studied with a Dutch, colonial and critical eye, which is not an objective perspective.

Within a marriage in the three highest castes, the law discerned the things the husband and the wife brought into the marriage, and the things they acquired during the marriage. The things that the woman had brought into the marriage, were inherited by her husband and her own children. The things the man had brought into the marriage, and the things the couple had acquired during the marriage, were inherited by his lawful children. This implies that both sons and daughters inherited the same amount. However, there were also some laws stating that sons inherited twice as much as daughters. The evidence is thus unclear regarding equal inheritance among children. Furthermore, if a man left multiple widows behind, who belonged to different castes, the assets went to the children of the widow who belonged to the highest caste. If a widow remarried, or if one of her daughters would marry, their share would be divided among the other heirs. If a man did not have any children, his possessions would be inherited by the children of his brothers and sisters. The widow(s) could live of the money and the possessions as long as she was – or they were – alive. A widow thus could not inherit, but only use what she needed to sustain herself. Moreover, if a man from the lowest caste would pass away, the widow and her daughters would become slaves to the ruler of the area they lived in (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1920). Although the evidence is limited, and in some cases unclear, it can be concluded that inheritance rights did not have a positive influence on the position of women. So how did this develop after the 1930s in Bali?

The evidence on the inheritance system in Bali in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is very limited. However, it seems that the patrilineal inheritance system continued to exist. In the 1980s, the inheritance system was still indeed patrilineal, but supposedly sons and daughters inherited an equal amount. Furthermore, it is stated that Balinese society was not dominated by the institutions of



kinship. For example, there were many village associations concerned with temple affairs, farming and irrigations, to which both married men and women belonged. The kinship institutions did thus not have such a significant impact on gender relations. Ties could pass through both men and women. Children belonged as much to the father's family as they did to the mother's family (Waterson, 1982). However, others state that inheritance was still not equal in the 1980s, and that married women were still very much dependent on their husbands, being prevented from achieving their own property (Jaywardena, 1980).

In the beginning of the 2000s, daughters received only half of the share the sons received, and the daughters only received it if they had not married yet. If they did marry, their share was divided among the other heirs. This is supposedly due to the strong patriarchal culture, which puts men in a higher position of power. The new decree of 2010 provides opportunities for girls to become an heir and thus get put in an equal position with their brothers. However, this is said to be difficult to implement, since it clashes with customary law in many Balinese villages. Nevertheless, there is some room for women to resist within a legal framework, seeing as the constitution guarantees every citizen the right of equal treatment (Dyatmikawati, 2016; Asih & Citra, 2021).

Although evidence is somewhat unclear, most evidence seems to demonstrate that the patrilineal inheritance system persisted throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and that gender inequality thus also persisted. Women's power was limited in the sense that they could not obtain any property on their own through inheritance. After the 2000s, possibilities increased within the legal domain for girls and women to gain an amount equal to that of men within the inheritance system, as a result of new government laws.

### Marriage institutions and the development of the position of women

The Pandects of *adat* law have laid down the various institutions and customs surrounding marriage in Bali in the 1930s. According to the traditions, the soon-to-be-groom had to elope with his future bride a night before the wedding. If they slept together, the wedding could be declared valid. This elopement was a kind of kidnapping where the bride-to-be waited on an agreed-upon place and went with her future husband voluntarily. Whether she went with him voluntarily or by force, could be checked by whether she had some spare clothes with her or not. If she already had a set of spare clothes with her, it was her decision to go with him. Otherwise, a boy who 'kidnapped' a girl against her will, would be punished. In earlier times, the culprit would even be killed by the family of the girl. With the Brahmana, there was no such elopement – the wedding was agreed upon beforehand by the couple and their parents (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1924). The mean marriage age for girls was around twelve years old, and for boys this was fifteen to sixteen years old. If the girl had not yet come of age when she was taken from her home by her suitor, meaning her teeth were not yet polished – a Balinese custom that demonstrated the transition from youth to adulthood – and she had not started menstruating yet, she had to go back to her parents (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1926). Although some marriages were arranged by the parents, this form of elopement suggests that men and women were in an equal position with marriage matters. Furthermore, there sometimes was a form of dowry that the groom-to-be had to pay to his future father-in-law. A father then 'sold' his daughter for a high price to his future son-in-law. However, in practice, the actual sum of money was relatively low and sometimes the payment was delayed so often that eventually the man did not have to pay any sort of price for his wife in the end (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1924). The practice of having any form of dowry, or the idea that a girl had to be purchased, suggests a limit in female empowerment, in which a girl was reduced to an object that had to be paid for.

After a man and woman had married, they mostly lived with or close to the family of the man – only if the man did not have enough money to pay the dowry, they went to live with the woman's family so

he could perform labour duties for his father-in-law. Once a woman was fully 'bought', she stayed the inalienable property of her husband, who could treat her like he wanted to. If a man no longer wanted his wife, he could cast her aside or sell her. If the woman fled her home, her husband could bring her back forcibly. The only reason a wife could leave the marriage home was in case of abuse and extreme neglect. Because the woman was a sort of object that the man had to pay for so he could own her, gave her very few rights. According to Balinese *adat*, the closest male family member had power over a woman; the men were thus part of the privileged party within a gender relationship. They exercised control over their wives and could even take a second or third wife if they wanted to. Most of the Balinese rulers had thirty to fifty wives and next to them, numerous concubines. However, in practice, Balinese women were independent and emancipated. In a marriage, they were sometimes even quite powerful, in the sense that they had control over the money, and they worked to contribute to the domestic cash. In harvest time, the women even went with their husbands to the field. However, despite a woman's hard work and her care for the children, she still had to do the domestic work – her husband did not interfere with that. Furthermore, if she came home with empty hands, her husband would become angry with her (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1926). Women's empowerment thus was limited by abovementioned marriage institutions and customs. Although they appeared to not always let these institutions dictate their lives, the customs still seemed to have a significant influence on how women were perceived. So how did this develop after the 1930s?

In the 1950s, as already stated in the previous section, there was a new law passed that permitted marriage between men and woman of all castes: the Brahmanas, Satryas, Wesyas and the Sudras (Coast, 1951). This thus has improved the position of women, since they could now marry down – which was not possible in the 1930s. However, a new law does not always automatically lead to changes in cultural norms and customs.

In the 1970s and the 1980s, divorce was rare in Bali. Interviewees stated that in Balinese, there is a strong disapproval towards divorce. So, although the *adat* law in the 1930s seemed to suggest that men could easily divorce their wives, this was not something that often happened. It is stated that even the new Marriage Law, which has been discussed in the previous chapter, did not have much effect on the divorce rate in Bali. Furthermore, polygamy was still widely practiced by the Balinese royalty, but it was not common among the general population. That thus had not changed since the 1930s. Moreover, the new Marriage Law recognizes the customary practice of elopement in Bali, allowing newly wedded couples to register after they had married, instead of ten days before, which is required for non-Balinese couples. With regards to marriage age, it is stated that already before the law, it was the Balinese practice to only marry after financial independence was achieved. This contradicts the evidence presented in the previous section, where newspaper articles suggested that child marriages were widespread. However, the Marriage Law did recognize Balinese customary law, meaning it was possible for a couple to marry sooner, if the girl had menstruated at least once and if the boy's voice had changed. The Indonesian government has thus issued special regulations for Bali, recognizing Hindu customary law, keeping the traditional practices alive (Katz & Katz, 1978).

In the 2000s, marriage was a central institution in Balinese lives, particularly since the patrilineal inheritance system and the caste system dictated Balinese Hindu identities. Women are seen as part of a continuing circulation of patriline, since caste is inherited through the patriline. Women thus serve to continue the male inheritance and caste, their main task being to procreate. This way, women are supervised by the patriarchal regime of Bali. Inheritance rights are in this case thus very much intertwined with marriage institutions – inheritance in favour of women was quite rare, especially in rural villages. For widows, this was especially difficult, because if she did not have a son, male relatives from her husband's family would supersede her property rights, meaning she was left with no

inheritance. However, there were some cases where divorced women retained their rights to property that was purchased during a marriage. But in most cases of divorce, women are not protected by the national law, because *adat* law takes precedence. There were various cases of women whose social status and security disappeared after a divorce, which was caused by their husbands having affairs and taking new wives. It has thus become clear that in the 2000s, women still had to struggle with negotiating their role in a patriarchal society (Bagus, 2010). So, the law that had been passed in the 1950s, seemed to not have that much effect on inter-caste marriages. In the 2000s, it was still important in Balinese culture to maintain one's caste identity through the patriline.

### 5.3 Economic structure

Data on the GDP per capita in 1930 for only Bali is limited, but for Bali, Lombok and Timor together, the GDP per capita was 105 (in guilder). This was approximately equal to the GDP per capita in West Sumatra, and a lot higher than the GDP per capita in West Java. The same goes for the nominal wages, which are shown in Table 15 – they were higher than in West Java, but, interestingly enough, quite a bit lower than in West Sumatra. The Balinese people, together with the population in other regions, were thus not as poor as in West Java (Bosma & Van Leeuwen, 2022).

Sector	Nominal wages
Agriculture	43,1
Industry	67,0
Services	44,4

Table 15. Nominal wages in guilder cents per day; in Bali, Lombok and Timor, 1930 (from Bosma & Van Leeuwen, 2022)

The data compiled in Table 16, derived from the Census in 1930, gives an overview of the working men and women per sector. A lot of sectors show that there were a lot more working men than women – except for the industry, in which there were more than twice as much women as there were men, and trade, in which there were even thrice as much working women as men. This seems to correlate with the earlier mentioned independence and emancipation of Balinese women (Koninklijk Koloniaal Instituut, 1926) and the fact that there were a lot of women seen selling food in the streets (Nieuwe Venlosche Courant, 1939). However, overall, the difference between the number of working men and women was quite significant. Men's share of the labour force came down to 80,66%, whereas the working women only formed 19,34% of the labour force: this is even lower than in West Java. This contradicts earlier collected evidence from the Pandects of *adat* law on the independency and emancipation of Balinese women.

	Men	Women	Total	Men's share of labour force (in %)	Women's share of labour force (in %)
Agriculture	377.336	42.505	419.841	89,9%	10,1%
Industry	7.009	17.118	24.127	29,1%	70,9%
Traffic	4.830	102	4.932	97,9%	2,1%
Trade	8.421	24.782	33.203	25,4%	74,6%
Liberal professions	2.041	310	2.351	86,8%	13,2%
Government services	7.878	171	8.049	97,9%	2,1%
Other	27.618	19.337	46.955	58,8%	41,2%
Total	435.133	104.325	539.458	80,7%	19,3%

Table 16. Number of men and women per profession, Bali & Lombok, 1930 (Departement van Economische Zaken, 1936, p. 127)

In the 1950s and 1960s, some serious economic changes occurred. Bali had to deal with poverty, spiralling inflation and hunger. The great expectations for economic development that were generated by the National Revolution, could scarcely be met at the start of the 1950s: there were serious crop failures, shortages of basic necessities that had to be imported – like rice and clothes – and a lack of confidence in the Republic's paper currency. These factors all contributed to spiralling inflation. In the 1960s, the inflation reached extreme proportions. There was a massive movement of internal refugees, which contributed to social and economic issues in the towns, like unemployment and rising crime rates. These economic changes eventually led to political polarization; it thus had consequences for various socio-political domains (Robinson, 1992).

In the 1980s, Bali dealt with problems many other developing countries also had to deal with, like overpopulation. The problem that economic development planners faced in Bali especially was how to induce economic change without destroying important aspects of Balinese culture: so, in their perspective, economic growth could not go hand in hand with non-western cultures. However, it is argued that local craftsmen in the 1980s could make good use of economic opportunities on their own, without dismantling their own culture in the process (Lansing, 1978).

In the 1990s and 2000s, Bali contributed to Indonesia's GDP mainly through the tourism sector. This created many opportunities for both men and women, but it is argued that there were gender differences in access to tourism employment. In the formal sector, women had to have superior qualifications and were often paid less than men who had similar positions. Next to gaining access to employment opportunities, women were still expected to carry out their traditional roles as wife and mother, and to perform their activities in religious rituals (Cukier & Wall, 1995). Tourism development also led to other issues: it affected local cultures and damaged the agricultural sector. However, it is also shown that tourism contributed to empowerment of local communities. It is argued that that empowerment will eventually lead to sustainable possibilities for tourism development (Sutawa, 2012).

Table 17 below gives an overview of the GDP per capita in Bali between 2017 and 2019. In comparison with West Sumatra and West Java, it is significantly higher: especially the GDP per capita. Its growth is only a bit faster than West Java's: between 2017 and 2019, it grew by 16,1%. Table 18 shows the minimum wage per month in Bali from 2017 to 2019. Just like the GDP per capita, the minimum wage in Bali is higher than in both West Sumatra and West Java.

Year	GRDP per capita at current market prices
<b>2017</b>	50.167
<b>2018</b>	54.470
<b>2019</b>	58.243

Table 17. Regional GDP at current market prices (in thousand rupiahs), Bali, 2017-2019 (adapted from BPS, 2020)

	Minimum wage
<b>2017</b>	1.956.727
<b>2018</b>	2.127.157
<b>2019</b>	2.297.969

Table 18. Provincial minimum wage per month in rupiahs, Bali, 2017-2019 (adapted from BPS, 2020)

## 5.4 Conclusion

It can be concluded that religion and Western influence have affected gender equality in Bali throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1930s, it has become clear that Hinduism had a rather negative influence on the position of women in Bali. The practice of widow-burning, which had only just stopped, the neglect of women, child marriages, the inequality within the caste system and the dominance of the male ties show that Balinese Hindu women were disadvantaged with respect to men. This variety

of arguments weighs stronger than the few examples of positive influence of Hinduism in the 1930s. However, this changed after the 1930s. Over time, women got a stronger position in religious practices and that position gave them higher social mobility. Together with the positive Western influence – which brought values of gender equality and emancipation – women got increasingly empowered. Bali has stayed a very religious island throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but with the changing values in Hinduism, which were affected by Western thought, women's position has gradually improved.

Furthermore, the institutional environment, influenced by patriarchal thought, has negatively affected the position of Balinese women throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The patrilineal inheritance system and caste system are very much intertwined with each other and, as has become clear, they have had a significant impact on the position of Balinese women between 1930 and 2000. Although evidence of inheritance rights was sometimes a bit unclear – with some sources stating that sons and daughters were treated equally, and others claiming that daughters only got half of the sons' shares – it mostly seemed the case that inheritance rights negatively impacted the position of women. Especially widows were disadvantaged, all throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century; in some cases, they could sustain themselves with a part of the inheritance, but they could not claim it as their own. Only after the 2000s, some new laws were established which increased the opportunities for women to claim their inheritance. Moreover, with regards to marriage institutions, most customs in the 1930s seemed to have a negative impact on the position of women, especially the payment of the groom to his father-in-law and the treatment of the woman after the couple had married. In practice however, the women seemed to still have a strong position in the marriage – e.g. they controlled the cash and worked to contribute to the household – which suggests that marriage institutions did not have a real significant impact on women's empowerment. The new Marriage Law that was established in the 1970s, did not have much impact in Bali, since the Indonesian government chose to respect Balinese customary laws. Neither polygamy nor divorce seemed to be widespread at the time. It has become clear that in the 2000s, women's position is strongly impacted by the patriarchal regime that dictates marriage institutions, accompanied with the patriline and the caste system.

Lastly, Bali's economic structure has seen various changes throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1930, the economy did relatively well – not as good as West Sumatra, but much better than in West Java. Women's share of the labour force was very low, even lower than in West Java. However, in the industry and trade sector, there were more women active than men. The sexual division of labour did not seem to hamper economic development in the 1930s. In the 1950s and 1960s, Bali faced some economic crises, but towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Bali's tourism sector had grown and contributed a lot to economic growth, creating more employment opportunities. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, both the GDP per capita and the minimum wage are higher than in West Sumatra and West Java, implying that Bali's economy is performing the best. This improvement in Bali's economy and the increase in employment opportunities, might have also had a positive influence on gender equality. This will be further explored in Chapter 7.

## Chapter 6. Differences and similarities

The previous chapters have explored the way religion, the institutional environment and the economic structure have influenced the development of gender inequality throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali. In this chapter, a comparison will be made between the three regions, so that it can be established what the differences and similarities are with regards to how the three aspects have affected the development of gender inequality. The last paragraph will then conclude by discussing which of these three factors has had the largest impact on gender inequality. In Appendix A, the evidence from the newspapers, memoirs and secondary literature has been organized and summarized; and it is shortly discussed which of those found factors has had the biggest impact on the development of gender equality. The more elaborate argumentation can be found in Chapters 6 and 7, but the table in Appendix A is a comprehensive and schematic overview of the research that has been done, and thus forms a valuable addition to this thesis.

### 6.1 Religion and western influence

In both West Sumatra and West Java, Islam has been the most prevalent religion throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and in both regions, it continued to play an important role in people's daily lives. From the evidence collected from the memoirs, newspapers and secondary literature, it has become clear that Islam has limited women's empowerment both in West Sumatra and West Java; examples are the occurrences of polygamy, child marriages and the perspective that women should be confined to the domestic tasks. However, women's position has been much more powerful in Minangkabau than in West Java, which has been largely related to the Minangkabau's matrilineal inheritance system. The continuous conflict between *adat* and Islamic ideology in West Sumatra has resulted in a process of acculturation, in which both Islam and *adat* have been changed. In this process, the influence of Islam on the position of women in West Sumatra seems to have been weakened. The patriarchal ideas of Islam thus seem to have been a stronger influence in West Java than in West Sumatra. In West Sumatra, Islamic discourse had to fit in with the longer-standing matriarchy. Slowly, Minangkabau *adat* and Islamic ideas became intertwined, making it hard to establish where one ends and the other one begins. Islam thus has had differential influences in West Sumatra and West Java, relating to the regions' own cultures and traditions.

In Bali, Hinduism has been the most prevalent religion throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is a religion containing differing views of women within Hinduism. On the one hand, women are presented in ancient texts as goddesses who need to be respected. On the other hand, there are several characters in ancient texts who are known for their devotion to and dependency on their husbands. Both views are thus embedded in the religion, but the last view has been kept more alive, by patriarchal rulers amongst others. This has led to limits in women's empowerment in the 1930s – examples are child marriages, neglect of women and inequality within the caste system. However, in religious practices, women often played an important role. Later on in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this gave them higher social mobility. The position of Bali Hindu women gradually improved.

So, with regards to religion, Islam has had the most negative influence on the position of women in West Java. The position of West Sumatran women was relatively stable throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, only in some aspects limited by Islam. Hinduism seemed to have a negative influence on the position of women in Bali in the 1930s, but throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the religion increasingly had positive effects on female empowerment.

Besides religion, influence from western ideologies and ideas also affected gender inequality throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1930s, western views have had the most influence on the position of women in West Java. Through education, girls and women got into contact with European girls,

which made them reflect on their own position in society. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, western influence was also prevalent in Bali, seeing as values like emancipation and gender equality got increasingly important. However, in all the three regions, western ideas also have had a negative influence on the position of women between 1930 and 2000. Through western development programmes, and the state who borrowed western patriarchal views to further its own plans, the image of women as mothers and wives who were confined to domestic tasks, was reinforced.

## 6.2 Institutions

With regards to the inheritance system, West Sumatra is, needless to say, the most gender equal. The matrilineal system gives women even more power than men in the sense that women inherit the house and the lands. Both in West Java and in Bali, there is a patrilineal inheritance system. In West Java, widows only get a share of the inheritance, and daughters only receive half of what the sons receive – this is according to Islamic law, and it has not changed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to customary law however, sons and daughters are treated equally in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – so in that sense, the position of women has improved in West Java. In Bali, opportunities for women concerning inheritance matters only improved after the 2000s. Both West Java and Bali thus seem to be at the same level regarding the relation between inheritance rights and gender inequality.

Regarding the development of marriage institutions, West Sumatra also has been the most gender equal region between 1930 and 2000. This can be connected to the matrilineal inheritance system, since marriage involves matters of inheritance. Nevertheless, there are also certain marriage institutions showing that the men are the head of the family, and that the women are confined to domestic tasks. These last views have also been dominant in West Java throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century; women were seen as subordinate to men, and they barely had any rights. It changed a bit with the Marriage Law of 1974, which includes various articles with a focus on gender equality, but women were still first and foremost seen as household caretakers, and men were still allowed to have multiple wives. So, although marriage institutions developed towards a positive direction in West Java, they were still considerably less gender equal than in West Sumatra. In Bali, the patrilineal inheritance system has determined marriage institutions throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1930s, the elopement customs were quite gender equal, but the marriage institutions gave women barely any rights. However, it is argued that in practice, Balinese women were quite emancipated, which means that the marriage institutions may not have been fully determining women's lives. Although evidence is limited, it seems that in the 2000s, marriage was still centred around the patriarchal inheritance system, limiting female empowerment. Nevertheless, it can also be concluded that Bali was more gender equal than West Java regarding the effect of marriage institutions.

## 6.3 Economic structures

In the 1930s, West Sumatra's economy performed better than West Java's and Bali's. In West Sumatra, almost half of the women were at work. In general, the view still was that men had a more dominant place in the public sphere. This view was reinforced throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Western development programmes, but after the monetary crisis of 1997, women got an increasingly important place in the economy. So, although West Sumatra's economic structure did not have a strongly negative impact on gender equality in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the economic development after the monetary crisis truly improved women's position in the economic domain. West Java's economy performed the worst out of the three regions between 1930 and 2000. In the 1930s, the people were even relatively poor. The industrialization that started around the 1960s and 1970s provided women with more financial opportunities, but it also reinforced the sexual division of labour and patriarchal ideologies. So, the changes in the economic structure both positively and negatively affected the development of gender equality in West Java. Bali did relatively well already in the 1930s, but its economy has grown the most,



and it is performing the best in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, out of the three regions. While the female labour force participation was the lowest in the 1930s, it is the highest in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So this growth in economic development in Bali seemed to have a positive effect on gender equality. The overall correlation between the level of economic growth and the level of gender equality will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

#### 6.4 The different factors and their influence

From the earlier paragraphs it has become clear that all the three factors have had a significant influence on the development of gender equality in the three regions, each in their own way. So, which of these three factors has then had the biggest impact on the development of gender inequality, and why? The answer is not one-sided; it seems to differ per region. In West Sumatra, the matrilineal inheritance system has had the most influence on gender equality. It gave women a powerful position, not only through the inheritance of the house and the fields, but also within their marriages and even in job opportunities, seeing as almost half of the women worked in agriculture in the 1930s. In the continuous struggle for power between *adat* and Islamic ideology, *adat* seems to have influenced Islam in such a way that its negative influence on the position of women has been reduced. For West Sumatra, the most important factor for the development of gender equality has thus been a combination of culture, seeing as the Minangkabau has been a matriarchal society for a long time, and institutions, since the specifics of the matriarchy are established in *adat* law. This combination of factors thus has diminished the influence of religion, seeing as Islam does not have such a negative influence on women's empowerment in West Sumatra as in West Java. This leads to the conclusion for West Java, where, out of the three researched aspects, religion has had the biggest impact on gender inequality. The idea of women being subordinate to men in Islam, has seeped through in aspects of the daily life. In West Java, it has for example affected women's role in marriage – e.g. the existence of polygamous marriages and child marriages – as well as their inheritance rights and their treatment in the workplace. Institutions, primarily the religious ones, thus have also played a large role in West Java in influencing gender inequality. Furthermore, in Bali religion also seems to have had the biggest impact on gender inequality out of the three factors. Whereas it was largely a factor limiting women's empowerment in the 1930s, it promoted gender equality later on in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The large role women played in religious practices gave them higher social mobility and thus more opportunities to take up empowering positions in the public sphere. To conclude, in West Sumatra institutions have had the biggest impact on the development of gender equality, and in West Java and Bali religion has had the most influence.

## Chapter 7. Discussion and conclusion

In the previous chapter, the differences and similarities between the development of the different researched aspects in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali have been summarized, and it has been explored how those aspects and their development have affected the development of gender inequality in the three regions. In this final chapter, these differences will be linked to the concept of power and to the findings of Chapter 2. The research question will then be answered as well: to what extent have religion, institutional environment and economic structures affected the development of gender inequality in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali from 1930 to 2000? Furthermore, the indirect relation between the aspects and the development of gender equality will be briefly discussed: what do the mechanisms look like, which elements of the researched aspects lead to gender inequality? Lastly, the knowledge gaps and recommendations for future research will be discussed.

### 7.1 Power

The development of gender inequality and to what extent it has been influenced by religion, the institutional environment and economic structures, has been discussed on the basis of the concept of power; to what extent has women's empowerment been limited or stimulated by these aspects, and what position did women have in the power balance of gender relationships? To what extent have women had the ability to get what they want, and to what extent has men's will been imposed on them? Could the women resist? Chapters 3 to 5 have made clear that the concept of power is crucial when discussing gender relationships. Power has played an important role in religion: women's power was strengthened, for example through the main role Bali women played in Hindu rituals, but it has also been weakened, like through the existence of child marriages and polygamy, which occurred in all the three regions. Furthermore, power has played an important role in inheritance rights and marriage institutions. Inheritance institutions could give women power, as is the case with the matriarchy in West Sumatra, but it could also keep the unequal power balance intact, like in West Java and Bali with the patrilineal inheritance system. The right to inheritance and ownership could give women more decision-making power, a better bargaining position within gender relationships and thus a stronger voice. Marriage institutions could strengthen women's position, like in West Sumatra, where the existence of the matriarchy has made women more powerful in matters of marriage. However, they could also weaken women's position, which was, for example, visible in the difficulty for women to divorce their husbands as opposed to the ease with which men could cast their wives aside. Moreover, power has also played a role in economic structures – somewhat less prominent than in the other aspects, but it has been there nonetheless. Women's power increased if they had more opportunities to work – which was, for example, the case in West Sumatra's agricultural sector in 1930, on the labour market in general after the monetary crisis of 1997, and with the industrialization in West Java in the 1960s and 1970s. Additionally, power in economic structures is closely related to prevalent norms and values in a society. For example, in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, men had a more dominant position in the public sphere, whereas women were primarily household caretakers – this was the case in all three research regions, in West Java and Bali somewhat more than in West Sumatra. This led to women being dependent on their husbands financially, which consequently weakened their economic position. It can be concluded that power has played, and still plays, a central role in gender relationships and the researched aspects affecting those gender relationships.

### 7.2 Relation between quantitative and qualitative results

So how do the results presented in Chapter 2 connect to the qualitative findings in Chapter 3 to 5? It has become clear that when taking sex ratio, literacy rates and labour participation as indicators for the development of gender equality, that West Sumatra has stayed relatively stable throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century – it was relatively gender equal in the 1930s already; that West Java is the region with rather

consistently high gender inequality – both in the 1930s and throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and that while Bali was quite gender unequal in the 1930s, it has developed to similar levels of gender equality as in West Sumatra. Does this indeed connect to the results presented in Chapter 3 to 5?

For West Sumatra, the quantitative and qualitative results seem to correlate. Islam has been an important religious factor throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but it has not limited women's power that much since Islamic ideology has gotten so intertwined with West Sumatran *adat* law, which promotes female empowerment through the matriarchy. The same goes for the inheritance and marriage institutions – they have gotten intertwined with *adat* law, which altogether did not have a negative influence on the position of women. Lastly, for the development of the economic structure, the results are similar: West Sumatra's economy was already performing well in the 1930s, and it still is in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This development is stable, just like the development of gender equality. However, what is striking is that the female labour participation has not grown a lot since the 1930s. It has 'only' gone from 42,70% in 1930 to 54,81% in 2018. The fact that it was already quite gender equal in the 1930s, suggests a growth to at least similar levels of gender equality as in developed countries – but that seems not to be the case, when taking labour participation as indicator. The numbers of female labour participation as measured in 2018 are significantly lower in West Sumatra than in Bali, which can be considered as a more developed region.

For West Java, the quantitative and qualitative findings also generate similar results. Islam has definitely had a more limiting influence on women's power here than in West Sumatra, which is visible in the widespread child marriages and polygamous marriages, the view of women as subordinate and various restrictions of women's rights. The relatively high level of gender inequality is also shown in the lack of women's inheritance rights – the rights of widows and daughters regarding inheritance were not equal to those of men in most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with some developments towards more equality in the 1980s and 1990s. In marriage institutions, women were seen as subordinate to men for a long time and divorce was a rather unequal matter. Lastly, West Java also has the lowest economic performance of the three regions between 1930 and 2000. In this case, the relatively low level of economic development correlates with the relatively low level of gender equality – which relates to the theory, mentioned in 1.4, that the lower the economic development of a country, the lower its gender equality is.

For Bali, the quantitative results show somewhat less similarities with the qualitative results than in the other regions. Hinduism does seem to have changed positively regarding its influence on the position of women – whereas in the 1930s it seemed to be one of the causes for gender inequality, in the 2000s, this was not the case anymore. Hinduism became one of the factors contributing to more gender equality, since it gave Balinese women higher social mobility through its religious practices. However, the qualitative results from the 1930s suggest that a lot of women were at work – but female labour participation rates were low in Bali, even the lowest out of the three regions. This thus does not show a correlation. Moreover, both the inheritance rights and marriage institutions seem to have developed a little throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but there have been no drastic changes. Real opportunities for women to improve their position started to arise only after the 2000s. The large development in gender equality is thus not particularly visible in the development of institutions. Furthermore, regarding economic structure, Bali has developed a lot throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which correlates with the quantitative results, and it also can be connected to the improved position of women within Hinduism. However, Bali's female literacy rates were still relatively low in 2018, at 82,53%: much lower than in the other regions. This indicator shows a large development over time, but Bali does not come out as the most gender equal region per se. That is striking, since literacy rates are an important indicator of a country's development and gender equality. So, overall, the quantitative

and qualitative results point towards similar patterns – except for some striking differences for Bali – demonstrating that West Sumatra’s gender equality levels were quite high in the 1930s and they have stayed relatively stable throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century; that West Java has had rather consistent and relatively high levels of gender inequality; and that Bali has developed the most regarding gender equality between the 1930s and the 2000s.

### 7.3 Influence of researched aspects on the development of gender equality

Now that the correlation between the quantitative and qualitative results has been established, the question that follows is: what can be concluded regarding the researched aspects – religion, the institutional environment and economic structure – and their influence on the development of gender inequality in the three regions?

Firstly, religious practices and ideologies definitely have been limiting women’s empowerment in all the three regions throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Examples are the practices of polygamy, child marriages, the perspective that women are subordinate to men, neglect of women and inequalities in case of a divorce. Some of the examples with a negative influence on gender equality also possibly originate from cultural practices, like polygamous marriages. Since religion and culture have become so intertwined, it is sometimes hard to say which idea or practice originates from which religious element or cultural tradition. Furthermore, the evidence has shown that Islam has had a more negative influence on the empowerment of women than Hinduism. Both religions had elements that diminished women’s empowerment in the 1930s, but later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Hindu religious practices gave women more social mobility, which eventually led to greater gender equality. Moreover, despite the negative influence of religion on gender equality, the evidence has also shown that religion can promote women’s empowerment. This is illustrated by the fact that in the 2000s, Islamic texts were used to promote women’s empowerment, by female scholars arguing that the patriarchal understanding of women’s role originates from a misinterpretation in Islam, and that women’s rights are even fundamental to Islam. It is also illustrated by the fact that women and men are viewed as equal in worth within Islam. Examples from Hinduism are that in ancient Hindu texts, a woman was seen as a goddess who had to be respected; and that women’s role in Hinduist religious practices gave them higher social mobility. So, certain religious practices and ideologies have had a negative influence on the position of women, but some religious elements also have the possibility to promote women’s empowerment.

Secondly, the institutional environment has definitely been important in empowering or limiting women through the law and through customs – empowering in West Sumatra, and limiting in West Java and Bali. Nevertheless, institutions are primarily a product of culture and religion, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali. Islamic ideology has formed the basis for inheritance rights and marriage institutions in West Java, and in West Sumatra institutions are mainly determined by the matriarchy that has been part of the Minangkabau culture for centuries. So, to fully understand the influence of institutions on the development of gender equality, these cultural and religious influences need to be studied. Moreover, since the patriarchal ideas, which have become inherent to religion and culture, work through these – and other – institutions, it can be a good place to start the improvement of the position of women and promote gender equality.

Thirdly, the differences between the economy of West Sumatra, West Java and Bali, and the differences in their gender equality levels, point to a correlation between the level of economic development and the level of gender equality. The results seem to imply that the better an economy is developed, the more gender equal a country is – it can thus at least be argued that there is a correlation between the level of economic development and the level of gender equality. However, more evidence is needed, along with a more detailed analysis of the economic structure and changes to it, to support this theory,

and to judge the size of its effects on the level of gender equality. What can be concluded with regards to the development of economic structure and its influence on gender equality, is that the better developed an economy is, the more opportunities there are for women to enter the workforce, which can lead to women increasing their financial independence. However, as the results also have shown, patriarchal values present in the workplace can reinforce subordination of women and thus increase gender inequality. The study of the relation between economic development and gender equality thus always needs to include an understanding of cultural norms and values. Furthermore, since there is a correlation between the level of gender inequality and the level of economic development, gender inequality can also have consequences for economic growth. For example, it is a possibility that the relatively low level of gender equality in West Java has hampered its economic growth. This relation has not been studied in this research, but remains important to include.

Besides these three aspects, there are also other aspects which could have played a role in influencing the development of gender equality, as has become clear from the memoirs, newspaper articles and secondary literature. An aspect is, for example, the government, which has played a role in reproducing the idea of women as primarily wives and mothers, as has been shown in paragraph 3.1. Relating to this, politics and the institution that is the state might have also impacted the development of gender equality. Furthermore, local culture, including its norms, values and traditions, is another important aspect that has played a role in influencing the position of women. The matriarchy in West Sumatra is part of the Minangkabau culture and has impacted women's empowerment greatly. It has been touched upon in this thesis, since religion has become intertwined with culture in various places, but it has not been studied as a primary aspect. This research has considered important factors, but it must be acknowledged that there are other factors that have also played a role in impacting the development of gender equality. To conclude, religious practices and ideologies have had a negative influence on female empowerment, but certain religious elements have also been stimulating more gender equality, especially at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, inheritance rights and marriage institutions have been empowering for women in West Sumatra, but disempowering for women in West Java and Bali. Since these institutions have been influenced by religion and culture, it is important to study these aspects to fully understand their influence on gender equality. Lastly, economic development can lead to greater gender equality, but that can be undermined by patriarchal values in the workplace.

#### 7.4 Indirect relation between the researched aspects and gender equality

The link between religion, the institutional environment and economic structure, and the development of gender equality has now been discussed. However, what has not yet been explored, is the question regarding the mechanisms that play a role within this process. Which elements of the aspects lead to more gender inequality, and which stimulate more gender equality? It has only implicitly been touched upon throughout this research; therefore, this section will briefly discuss what the possible mechanisms could be for the different researched aspects.

Within religion, there are several elements that could have played a role. One important possible element is the adherence to Sharia, the Islamic law, and other regulations as presented in the Quran. To what extent do the people obey these regulations, and are the regulations all seen as equally important? Can it be that the West Javanese people are in a way more obedient than West Sumatran people? This also relates to another element: what exactly is there in the Quran and the law that leads to more gender inequality? What are the ideas and the regulations exactly, that say what women can and cannot do? An example that has come forward in this thesis is the perspective that women are seen as subordinate, which leads to men treating them that way, which leads to more gender inequality. Within the institutional environment, the mechanisms are more straightforward. Inheritance rights can increase gender equality by giving women the right to inherit, which is the case

in West Sumatra. Inheritance rights can also decrease gender equality, which is for example the case in West Java, where the law says that sons inherit twice as much as daughters. However, these institutions also have to be put in a broader perspective. When has a certain law been made and by who? In what way have cultural habits and traditions, like the elopement process in Bali, come about? These processes of the formation of institutions are complex, but remain important to consider, as they give more insight in the mechanisms that play a role in the development of gender inequality. Lastly, within an economic structure there are various possible mechanisms that could be at play in relation to the development of gender equality. One of the elements is, for example, which of the sectors contributes the biggest share to the GDP, and how does that develop over time? For example, in the 1930s, agriculture was the biggest sector for all three regions – how has that developed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and how has that affected female labour participation? Furthermore, West Javanese women were in the 1930s most active in the industry; how has that sector developed over time, and how has that affected female labour participation? It seems that more female labour participation leads to more financial independence for women, which leads to more gender equality – which is also a mechanism implicit in the relation between economic structure and gender equality. Additionally, economic crises also seem to influence gender equality: women are pushed on the labour market in order to sustain their families and in that way, they can contribute to economic growth. This example of economic crises further illustrates the correlation between economic development and gender equality, and how that can work both ways. To conclude, there are various indirect and direct mechanisms at play within the relation between the researched aspects and the development of gender equality, of which only a few have been uncovered in this thesis.

### 7.5 Knowledge gaps and recommendations for future research

The broad scope of this research has allowed for a rather comprehensive overview of the development of gender equality in West Sumatra, West Java and Bali, and how it has been influenced by possible important factors. However, there are various limitations. Due to the broad scope, the research is not as thorough as it could have been. The development of gender equality could have been studied more in depth – with for example more indicators – as well as changes in the role of religion throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and changes in the economic structure regarding the growth and shrinking of different sectors. The correlation between the level of economic development and the level of gender equality could have been studied more closely as well, namely the other way around: how, and to what extent, does gender inequality influence economic growth? A more thorough study could have contributed to a more complete overview of the development of gender equality and the related influencing factors, which would have led to a better substantiated conclusion. This also relates to the mechanisms that have been discussed in 7.4. It is yet not fully understood how these mechanisms work exactly, so they are an interesting subject to study more closely for future research, since they give more insight in and understanding of the relation between the researched aspects and the development of gender equality. Furthermore, the research has focused on regional differences, but West Sumatra, West Java and Bali still are big regions: within these regions, there are plenty of regional differences to be found. These have not been studied due to time constraints, but they would certainly be interesting to consider for future research. This then would contribute to a better study of how regional differences in levels of gender equality can deviate from the aggregate. Furthermore, due to time constraints and a lack of microdata processing skills – which were needed to process Indonesia census data between 1970 and 2000 – the quantitative data is not as extensive as originally desired. Data from after the 1930s and before the 2000s are missing, which leads to an incomplete overview of the development of gender inequality. It would be interesting to explore what kind of results a more detailed analysis of the censuses, combined with a more in-depth research of the within-regional differences, would generate. Additionally, the understanding of the development of gender equality is based on the choice

for the indicators: sex ratio, literacy rates and labour participation. Other indicators, such as education, income or female representation in politics, could perhaps have given a different outcome regarding the development of gender equality. Lastly, the primary sources that have been studied, are all written from a Dutch, Christian and colonial perspective. In newspaper articles as well as the memoirs, this perspective translates to a negative view of Islam and Hinduism, a criticizing eye towards cultural traditions and sometimes even a superior attitude of the Dutch towards the Indonesians. Religious practices as well as local habits are frowned upon in the sources, and often even described negatively. This has limited an objective understanding of women's position in the 1930s and how it has been influenced by the researched aspects. For example, Islam was viewed as the 'wrong' religion, which led to the writers highlighting the negative aspects of Islam, such as how it has limited women's empowerment. Moreover, what is lacking is an Indonesian perspective on the state of gender inequality throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century – what do Indonesian women think about their position in society? Some newspaper articles include a citation here and there, but that is not enough for a true view of Indonesian women's perspectives. For future research, it would thus be interesting to see if there are any Indonesian sources written about gender inequality and its relation to religion, the institutional environment and economic structure in the 1930s, and if the information found in them deviates from the evidence found in Dutch newspapers and memoirs.



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## Appendix

### Appendix A. Summary of the evidence and size of the effects

	Positive influence on gender equality	Negative influence on gender equality	Effect with biggest impact
<b>West Sumatra</b>	Religion and western influence (3.1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ According to Islam, women have to be treated as equals</li> <li>→ Women playing a role in Islamic religious practices</li> <li>→ Acculturation between Islam and <i>adat</i>: Islam influenced</li> </ul>	Religion and western influence (3.1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Changes to <i>adat</i> because of Islam not in favour of matriarchy</li> <li>→ Polygamy</li> <li>→ No female membership of local council</li> <li>→ Masculine, Islamic interpretation of <i>adat</i> text</li> <li>→ Women primarily defined as wives and mothers</li> </ul>	Conflict and acculturation between <i>adat</i> and Islam have had the greatest impact on gender equality, considering the importance of the matriarchy and the relatively powerful position of women.
	Institutional environment (3.2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Matrilineal inheritance system gives women power</li> <li>→ Husband has few rights in marriage in contrast to wife</li> <li>→ Woman has upper hand in marriage proposals</li> <li>→ Men in family have little to say</li> </ul>	Institutional environment (3.2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Wife as servant of husband in marriage</li> <li>→ Men can have multiple wives</li> </ul>	The existence of matrilineal inheritance system has had the biggest impact on women's position, considering it also influenced marriage institutions.
	Economic structure (3.3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Relatively high level of economic development</li> <li>→ High female labour force participation in 1930s</li> <li>→ Monetary crisis of 1997 pushed women towards economic independence</li> </ul>	Economic structure (3.3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Men more important place in public sphere</li> <li>→ Western developing projects maintaining traditional gender roles</li> </ul>	The relatively high level of economic development has had the most effect as it correlates with the relatively high level of gender equality. The high level of female labour participation in the 1930s also correlates with the high level of gender equality.
<b>West Java</b>	Religion and western influence (4.1):	Religion and western influence (4.1):	Patriarchal ideas within Islamic ideology have had the most influence in

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Both women and men present at Islamic congress in 1930s</li> <li>➔ Education with Western girls inspired West Javanese women to strive for better positions in 1930s</li> <li>➔ In 1950s, Westernized Muslims let women mix freely with men</li> <li>➔ In 2000s, Islam used in resistance against patriarchy</li> <li>➔ Men and women viewed as equal in worth before Allah</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ No binding rules regarding child marriages in 1930s because of Islamic parties</li> <li>➔ Polygamy</li> <li>➔ Women not allowed to mix with men within Islamic party in 1950s</li> <li>➔ Inequal position for women with regards to divorce, property rights and income because of Islamic thought</li> <li>➔ Women seen as subordinate to men within Islam</li> <li>➔ Women's empowerment limited by Dutch colonialism and patriarchal cultural traditions</li> </ul>	<p>limiting women's empowerment, which is visible in strict rules, the lack of women's rights and the male perspective on women.</p>
	<p>Institutional environment (4.2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ <i>Adat</i> started to treat sons and daughters equally regarding inheritance</li> <li>➔ Within a marriage, a husband had to provide for his wife</li> <li>➔ Uniform marriage law (1974) stimulating more gender equality</li> </ul>	<p>Institutional environment (4.2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Islamic law: widows only inherit part of property</li> <li>➔ Islamic law: sons inherit twice as much as daughters</li> <li>➔ Men can have multiple wives</li> <li>➔ A man could easily divorce his wife; was very hard for woman to divorce her husband</li> <li>➔ Uniform marriage law (1974) had patriarchal undertones</li> <li>➔ High occurrence of early marriage</li> </ul>	<p>Islamic law has had the biggest impact on gender equality, giving women few rights in both inheritance and marriage.</p>
	<p>Economic structure (4.3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Industrialization in 1960s and 1970s provided women with job opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Economic structure (4.3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Relatively low level of economic development throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century</li> </ul>	<p>Relatively low level of economic development correlates with relatively low level of gender equality; but there is not enough evidence to determine the size of this</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ More appreciation for women's position in economics with development programmes in 1990s</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Relatively low share of female labour participation in 1930s</li> <li>➔ Industrialization in 1960s and 1970s reinforced subordination of women</li> <li>➔ Factory women inhibited by state in 1990s</li> </ul>	effect. When women got to enter the labour market, they were still inhibited by Islamic ideologies.
<b>Bali</b>	<p>Religion and western influence (5.1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Ancient Hindu scriptures show respect for women</li> <li>➔ Wives of priests could become priest in 1930s</li> <li>➔ Women were allowed to work in 1930s</li> <li>➔ Women had important position in religious practices all throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century. They were empowered by religious identity</li> <li>➔ In 1980s, kinship ties passed through both men and women</li> <li>➔ Western influence: government stopped practice of widow burning in 1900s; women more emancipated because of Western views in 2000s</li> </ul>	<p>Religion and western influence (5.1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Hindu concept of ideal women redefined: women seen as subservient to men, confined to the domestic life</li> <li>➔ Practice of widow burning in beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century</li> <li>➔ Prostitution, slavery, neglect of women, polygamy and child marriages in 1930s</li> <li>➔ Inequalities with regards to marriage within caste system in 1930s</li> <li>➔ Hindu men had dominant position in 1930s</li> <li>➔ Educational development of girls not equal to that of boys in 1930s</li> </ul>	A process of development is visible: where Hinduism first limited women's empowerment in the beginning of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century, later on, it gave women new opportunities. The religious practices, and the role women got to play in it, has had the biggest impact on gender equality.
	<p>Institutional environment (5.2)</p>	<p>Institutional environment (5.2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Widows could not inherit in 1930s</li> </ul>	The patrilineal inheritance system has had the biggest effect on



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Only after 2000s, possibilities increased for women to gain more from the inheritance system</li> <li>➔ Elopment practices gender equal in 1930s</li> <li>➔ Women in practice emancipated within marriage in 1930s</li> <li>➔ In 1950s, marriage was permitted between men and women of all castes</li> <li>➔ In 1970s and 1980s, divorce was rare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Patrilineal inheritance existed throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century</li> <li>➔ Closest male family member had power over woman in 1930s</li> <li>Husband exercised control over wife</li> <li>➔ Patrilineal inheritance system determined marriage institutions in 2000s</li> </ul>	gender equality, influencing both women's inheritance rights and marriage institutions.
	<p>Economic structure (5.3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ In 1990s and 2000s, tourism sector created opportunities for men and women</li> <li>➔ In 21<sup>st</sup> century, relatively high level of economic development</li> </ul>	<p>Economic structure (5.3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Low female labour participation in 1930s</li> <li>➔ Poverty and development problems in 1950s to 1980s</li> <li>➔ Gender differences in tourism employment opportunities in 1990s and 2000s</li> </ul>	The growth in the level of economic development correlates with the growth in the level of gender equality. There is not enough evidence to determine the size of the effect.

Table 19. Summary of the evidence and a discussion of the size of the effects of the evidence on the level of gender equality