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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Reproducing Religious Aesthetics through Sharia Control: Dress Practices in Aceh, Indonesia

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Abstract: This study examines how sharia control in Aceh reproduces religious aesthetics through dress practices and social responses in public space. Previous studies have largely framed sharia control as moral regulation, repression, or resistance, leaving limited attention to how such practices shape visible forms of religiosity in social life. Using an interpretive qualitative approach, this study analyzes publicly available visual materials, online news reports, and social media responses related to dress regulation in Aceh, Indonesia. Data were collected through systematic documentation of Islamic dress standards, media representations of sharia enforcement in public space, and public comments on social media. The data were analyzed through visual analysis and thematic coding to identify how dress standards are represented, enforced, and socially interpreted. The findings show that religious aesthetics are reproduced through visual representations, regulatory practices, and social responses that reiterate norms in public space. The study argues that sharia control stabilizes religious aesthetics through visibility and repetition.

Keywords: Religious Aesthetics, Sharia Control, Dress Practices, Public Space, Social Responses.

Abstrak: *Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana pengendalian syariah di Aceh mereproduksi estetika agama melalui praktik berpakaian dan respons sosial di ruang publik. Studi sebelumnya sebagian besar membingkai kontrol syariah sebagai regulasi moral, penindasan, atau perlawanan, meninggalkan perhatian terbatas pada bagaimana praktik tersebut membentuk bentuk religiusitas yang terlihat dalam kehidupan sosial. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif interpretatif, penelitian ini menganalisis materi visual yang tersedia untuk umum, laporan berita online, dan tanggapan media sosial terkait regulasi pakaian di Aceh, Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui dokumentasi sistematis standar pakaian Islam, representasi media tentang penegakan syariah di ruang publik, dan komentar publik di media sosial. Data dianalisis melalui analisis visual dan pengkodean tematik untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana standar berpakaian diwakili, ditegakkan, dan ditafsirkan secara sosial. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa estetika keagamaan direproduksi melalui representasi visual, praktik regulasi, dan respons sosial yang menegaskan kembali norma-norma di ruang publik. Studi ini berpendapat bahwa kontrol syariah menstabilkan estetika agama melalui visibilitas dan pengulangan.*

Kata kunci: *Estetika Religius, Kontrol Syariah, Praktik Busana, Ruang Publik, Respons Sosial Kunci.*

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1. Introduction

Sharia control in Aceh, an Indonesian province that formally implements Islamic law in public governance, positions dress practices as a social mechanism that reproduces religious aesthetics while normalizing the appearance of bodies in public space. This occurs because dress standards are not only codified in formal regulations but are also enacted through enforcement practices that regulate how bodies should appear and be collectively evaluated in social life. Qanun No. 11 of 2002 establishes the obligation to wear Islamic dress, while its implementation positions the body as an object of regulation that can be seen and judged within social space (Yusmalinda et al., 2023). Enforcement is carried out by the Wilayatul Hisbah (WH), the sharia enforcement authority, through patrols and raids in public space, turning streets into arenas where these standards are repeatedly reproduced and displayed (Ansor, 2015; Fadlia et al., 2023). These practices generate diverse social responses, ranging from compliance to everyday negotiation (Maulina et al., 2023). In practice, dress becomes a medium through which religious aesthetics are displayed and affirmed in public space.

Various studies have examined sharia control in Aceh within the frameworks of politics, law, and the sociology of religion, particularly as an instrument for disciplining bodies in public space. Some studies emphasize the dimension of structural repression through law and state policy (Abdul Kadir et al., 2022; Qodir et al., 2022; Suriati, 2018; Yusmalinda et al., 2023), while others highlight social responses in the form of resistance, identity negotiation, and everyday practice (Ansor, 2015; Maulina et al., 2023; Roviana, 2022; Swastini et al., 2025). Other studies move within broader normative-theological, discursive, or cultural domains (Afifah, 2019; Fahmi, 2012; Hakim, 2023; Murtopo, 2017; Pirmasari, 2021). However, these approaches tend to position dress control primarily as oppression, resistance, or compliance, and therefore have not sufficiently explained how enforcement practices in public space, together with the social responses that accompany them, work to reproduce standards that come to be recognized as religious aesthetics. This limitation indicates that the aesthetic dimension of these practices has not yet been directly addressed.

In this context, this study aims to analyze how sharia control in Aceh operates in reproducing religious aesthetics in public space through enforcement practices and social responses. This focus is taken because the regulation of dress does not function merely as a legal or moral instrument, but also as a mechanism that determines how bodies are seen, evaluated, and recognized in social life. Dress standards, in this sense, do not appear as passive rules, but as forms of visual regulation that are continuously enacted through the interaction between formal regulation, enforcement practices in the field, and social responses that emerge in everyday life. Public space is therefore positioned as the primary arena in which this process unfolds openly, allowing these standards not only to be applied, but also to be reinforced through repeated practice and social acceptance. This approach places aesthetics as part of how control operates in social life.

Starting from the question of how sharia control in Aceh reproduces religious aesthetics in public space through enforcement practices and social responses, this article argues that such control functions not only as an instrument of public order, but also as a mechanism that displays and affirms dress standards upon bodies in public life. Through regulation and enforcement practices such as patrols and raids, dress standards appear as norms that can be directly seen and recognized by society. Under these conditions, the body is not merely an object of regulation, but also a medium that carries and displays religious values in visible form. The social responses that accompany these practices, whether in the form of compliance or everyday adjustment, play a role in maintaining the validity of these standards. The normalization of bodily appearance, in this sense, results from the repeated relationship between enforcement practices and social responses in public space.

2. Literature review

This literature review positions religious aesthetics, dress practices, and sharia enforcement as interrelated social practices that shape and reproduce norms of piety in everyday life. Religious aesthetics are understood as embodied practices lived through sensory experience and social routines, in which the body and clothing become central media for displaying piety. In this context, dress standards function as mechanisms of moral regulation that govern appearance while also serving as a means of evaluating and classifying bodies within a particular normative framework. Sharia enforcement strengthens this process through a combination of formal regulation and social surveillance, allowing norms of modesty to appear, become visible, and be repeatedly enacted in public space. Overall, this review shows that embodied practices and dress regulation are intertwined with power relations, processes of moral evaluation, and the dynamics of negotiation in everyday social life.

2.1. Religious Aesthetics

Religious aesthetics are not merely symbolic expressions or visual representations of belief, but embodied practices lived in everyday social life. Within lived religion, religious experience is formed through bodily participation in routines, interactions, and daily practices that shape how religion is practiced and socially recognized (Ammerman, 2021, pp. 145–150). Sensory experience and materiality become central media through which bodies and everyday rhythms form piety (McGuire, 2016), while dress requires bodily adjustment to norms of modesty as aesthetic labor (Lewis & Aune, 2023). These embodied practices include posture and facial expression (Lackenby, 2022; Wynn, 2018), as well as ritual objects, songs, and celebrations that build emotional attachment and moral ontology (Bruland, 2013; Ezzy, 2016). Thus, religious aesthetics are lived, embodied, and visible practices through which bodies, clothing, and routines affirm piety.

Although approaching religious aesthetics as embodied practice broadens the understanding of how religion is lived in everyday life, this embodiment is never entirely neutral; it is intertwined with power relations and the formation of social norms. In many cases, religious aesthetics operate as an “affective ideology” that regulates how emotions, bodies, and appearances are evaluated within moral frameworks (Zembylas, 2023). Practices of bodily management and dress not only reflect piety but also produce standards that discipline bodies and distribute aesthetic and emotional labor unevenly, especially among women (Lewis & Aune, 2023). Yet embodied practice may also become a site of negotiation and resistance against biopolitical normalization (Knibbe, 2020). Intensified bodily discipline can also generate social tension, stigma, or alienation (Lackenby, 2022). Thus, religious aesthetics both enrich and regulate social life.

2.2. Dress Standards as a Mechanism of Moral Regulation

Across social and institutional contexts, dress functions as an instrument of moral regulation that governs and disciplines bodies in social life. Such regulation is enacted not only by religious institutions, but also by secular authorities and cultural norms that define standards of modesty in public space (Tajuddin, 2018). Historically, this can be seen in sumptuary laws among Ashkenazi Jewish communities, which controlled women’s bodily expression to preserve moral order (Aust, 2019). In contemporary contexts, similar regulation appears in university dress codes targeting women’s bodies through categories of improper dress (Dairo, 2023), as well as in Islamic educational institutions that shape compliance and religious identity (Rosida, 2019). It also operates through everyday social surveillance, including spatial mobility and professional settings (Aune et al., 2023; Wagner, 2017). Dress therefore directs how bodies are displayed and evaluated.

Dress regulation as a moral mechanism that governs bodies in social space is never neutral. It is tied to processes of evaluation that determine how piety is visually displayed and

recognized. Studies show that standards of modesty attached to dress function not only as behavioral rules, but also as frameworks that classify bodies as proper or deviant within religious orders (Pirmasari, 2021; Tajuddin, 2018). In this context, dress becomes a medium through which moral values are made visible, positioning the body as a surface of normative order in social life (Shin, 2024). Approaches that view regulation merely as discipline often overlook everyday practices, where individuals actively adjust, interpret, and inhabit these standards through varied dress choices (Bucar, 2016; Hass & Lutek, 2019). Thus, dress shapes how piety is produced, displayed, and negotiated in social space.

2.3. Sharia Enforcement as a Mechanism for Reproducing Social Norms

Sharia-based enforcement operates through the convergence of formal legal regulation, bureaucratization, and social surveillance in governing bodies in public space. In Aceh, the implementation of Qanun Jinayat through institutions such as Wilayatul Hisbah directs bodily appearance, including dress standards and mobility, making norms of modesty visible and collectively monitored (Pirmasari, 2021). Similar practices appear in Malaysia's khalwat law, which regulates bodily proximity in urban public space (Nawratek & Mehan, 2020), and in Egypt's bureaucratized hisba, which enables state and citizen intervention against morally deviant behavior (Ezzat, 2020). Enforcement is also strengthened through visual symbols, moral discourse, informal shame, gossip, and social surveillance (Beidollahkhani, 2026; Eger, 2021; Wijntuin & Koster, 2019), including public shaming as collective norm affirmation (Billingham & Parr, 2020). In this sense, sharia enforcement does not merely apply moral rules, but repeatedly stages them in public space, allowing standards of modesty to become visible, recognizable, and socially reproduced through everyday forms of surveillance and correction.

Norm enforcement in sharia contexts is never entirely neutral. It is tied to evaluative processes that determine how piety is visually recognized and differentiated in public space. Studies show that such mechanisms often produce classifications that narrow the range of appearances considered legitimate, so that bodies are read through categories stabilized within a collective moral order (Hasbi et al., 2025; Pirmasari, 2021). Under these conditions, the body is not only an object of regulation, but also a medium that displays the boundary between what is considered proper and deviant. At the same time, approaches that view enforcement as fully stable often overlook everyday practices, where these standards are continually adjusted through social interaction (Nawratek & Mehan, 2020; Wijntuin & Koster, 2019). In this framework, norm enforcement does more than preserve moral order. It also produces and negotiates the bodily legibility through which piety is recognized in social life.

3. Method

This study is grounded to understand how religious control within the context of public governance operates as a practice that shapes how bodies are displayed and evaluated in public space. This phenomenon was selected because dress regulation in Aceh shows that religious norms are not only articulated through formal regulation but also enacted through enforcement practices and social interaction in everyday life. Rather than placing this practice within a normative framework, this study positions it as an object of analysis to trace how bodily visibility is regulated, read, and negotiated in social life. In a broader context, this approach opens a way to understand how religion operates through visual and embodied dimensions in public space. To examine these dynamics, this study employs an interpretive qualitative approach focused on the analysis of enforcement practices, visual representations, and social responses.

The data in this study were obtained from publicly available materials, consisting of visual representations and social responses circulating in digital spaces, particularly through online news reports and content distributed on platforms such as TikTok. Data collection was conducted from January to March 2026 through systematic searches using keywords related to dress enforcement practices in Aceh, such as "razia busana Aceh" (dress enforcement raids in Aceh)

and other related terms. This process generated a set of visual and textual materials, which were then selected in stages based on their relevance to the focus of the study. The visual materials include images of dress standards published by official institutions and documentation of enforcement practices in public space, such as patrols and raids reported in online media or represented in digital content. In addition, this study uses public responses in the form of comments and opinions in digital spaces as part of the social dynamics surrounding these practices. The data were selected purposively by considering their direct relevance to enforcement practices, the visibility of dress standards, and the presence of social responses that allow an analysis of how these norms are accepted or negotiated in everyday life.

Data collection was carried out through the searching and documentation of visual materials and public responses available online, which were then organized as units of analysis. This approach is consistent with previous studies that use digital data to examine representation and social dynamics in public space (Fernando et al., 2023; Maulana & Hendri, 2025). Data analysis was conducted interpretively by combining visual and thematic readings of the collected materials. Visual representations were analyzed to examine how dress standards are displayed and presented in enforcement practices, while public responses were examined through thematic coding to identify patterns of support and criticism toward these practices. The analytical process was carried out in stages through data organization, the development of initial categories, and the identification of major themes that enabled interpretation of how enforcement practices and social responses intersect in shaping how bodies are displayed and recognized in public space.

4. Result

4.1. Visual Standards of Islamic Dress in Social Control

Islamic dress standards within sharia control in Aceh are not only present as normative rules, but are also communicated through visual representations that show how bodies are expected to appear in public space, as shown in Figures 1 and 2 below. These representations distinguish between forms of dress considered appropriate and inappropriate according to religious principles through the depiction of specific bodily attributes, such as the length of dress, the shape of clothing, and the degree of looseness. In this context, dress standards appear as a structured visual format that can be directly recognized, presenting religious aesthetics as something formulated and established through representational devices produced by formal institutions. This presentation shows that the formation of religious aesthetics takes place through an institutional process of visual codification, which then becomes a reference for evaluating bodily appearance in public space. In this context, religious aesthetics operate as visual standards that are formally constructed and circulated as references in social life.



Figure 1. *Dress Standards according to the Dinas Syariat Islam Aceh (1)*



Figure 2. *Dress Standards according to the Dinas Syariat Islam Aceh (2)*

Source: Internet (Jojoharjo, 2022)

As shown in Figures 1 and 2, these dress standards are presented through posters placed in Masjid Raya Baiturrahman, Banda Aceh, as part of the regulation of visitors entering this

religious space. The posters present a clear distinction between forms of dress considered appropriate and inappropriate according to religious principles, formulated through specific categories such as the obligation to cover the body, the prohibition of tight dress, and provisions concerning women's appearance in public space. In Figure 1, these standards are referred to the principles of the Qur'an and Hadith as a basis of legitimacy, while Figure 2 extends them through more specific and operational details of violations. This presentation shows that dress regulation functions not only as a normative guideline, but also as a social mechanism that directs how individuals must adjust themselves before entering and participating in religious space. In this sense, dress standards operate as part of the management of public space, linking religious norms to the control of bodies in everyday life.

The presence of dress standards in a structured form and placed in public space shows that such regulation is not only normative but also functions as a mechanism that conditions how bodies appear and are recognized in social life (Wagner, 2017). Through clear and easily understood classifications, these standards allow individuals to adjust themselves to prevailing expectations before entering religious spaces or broader public spaces. In practice, this condition encourages the formation of uniform bodily appearances that are repeatedly displayed in everyday life, making the boundary between what is considered appropriate and inappropriate increasingly stable and collectively recognizable (Shin, 2024). In this sense, dress standards not only regulate individual behavior, but also contribute to reproducing religious aesthetics as visible norms that are continuously reinforced through repetition in public space.

4.2. Dress Enforcement Raids as Enforcement Practices in Public Space

The enforcement of Islamic dress standards within sharia control in Aceh takes place through patrols and raids conducted by the Wilayatul Hisbah (WH), as shown in Figures 3, 4, and 5. These figures show the involvement of authorities in monitoring, stopping, and taking action against individuals in public space who are considered not to comply with prevailing dress regulations. Available online reports indicate that at least 107 individuals were recorded in selected dress enforcement raids in 2025, including 60 violations in Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar in May 2025, 16 violations in Peureulak, Aceh Timur, in May 2025, and 31 violations in Aceh Besar in September 2025 (Alfata, 2025; Farha, 2025; Firdiyanti, 2025). These figures show that enforcement operates not only as a legal mechanism, but also as a publicly visible social practice through which dress standards are enacted, inspected, and actualized in monitored public space.



Figure 3. *Uniform standards enforcement patrol by Wilayatul Hisbah (WH) in Aceh, Indonesia (Merdeka.com)*



Figure 4. *Reporting obligations in dress code enforcement operations in Aceh, Indonesia (modusaceh.co)*



Figure 5. *Officers provide sarongs and construction to individuals caught in raids (detiknews.com)*

Source: Online News

As shown in Figures 3, 4, and 5, these enforcement practices take place through a series of actions involving direct interaction between authorities and individuals in public space. In Figure 3, Wilayatul Hisbah (WH) officers stop road users who are considered not to meet dress standards, showing that surveillance is carried out within everyday mobility. Figure 4 shows the process of recording individuals caught in the raid, in which they are asked to provide information as part of the public order procedure. Meanwhile, Figure 5 shows a further stage in the form of providing sarongs and moral guidance to individuals considered to have violated the regulation, indicating an immediate effort to adjust appearance to prevailing standards. This sequence of actions shows that enforcement does not stop at identifying violations, but includes a gradual process of intervention, from stopping and recording individuals to adjusting their appearance on site.

This sequence of practices shows that the enforcement of dress standards functions not only as a corrective action against violations, but also as a mechanism that presents norms in a form that can be directly witnessed in public space (Pirmasari, 2021). Through the processes of stopping, recording, and adjusting appearance, dress standards are presented as operational norms that can be immediately applied in situations (Rahmadani & Wahyudi, 2024). In this context, enforcement helps clarify the boundary between what is considered appropriate and inappropriate through actions that are direct, open, and carried out before the public (Zarbighalehhammami, 2025). Moreover, the interaction between authorities and individuals in this process shows that norms are not only communicated through written rules but also enacted through practices involving direct surveillance and guidance (Rahmadani & Wahyudi, 2024). Accordingly, enforcement practices do not merely regulate individuals caught in raids but also display how norms operate in public space as something that can be seen, recognized, and understood through actions carried out in the field.

4.3. Social Responses and the Reproduction of Religious Aesthetics

Social responses to the enforcement of dress standards in Aceh appear in various forms recorded through public comments in digital spaces, particularly on social media platforms such as TikTok, as presented in Table 1. The data show diverse public views toward dress raids conducted by authorities, ranging from support for stricter enforcement and criticism of these practices to positions that place dress within the framework of personal choice. Some responses emphasize the need to expand surveillance, both over public space and the distribution of dress, while others direct attention to actors, such as business owners or public figures. At the same time, several responses indicate acceptance of enforcement practices as part of the experience of visiting or interacting in Aceh, Indonesia. This diversity of responses shows that enforcement practices do not only produce actions in the field but also generate social discourse that develops within digital public space.

Table 1. Public response to fashion raids in Aceh

Category	Quotations
Critical	*"Memang sudah sangat meresahkan melihat pakaian Muslimah saat ini. Celana ketat sangat merusak pandangan, apalagi pakaian olahraga masa kini. Terlebih lagi, di Kabupaten Aceh Barat saya perhatikan bahwa pakaian wanita kini sudah sangat bebas."* It is indeed deeply troubling to see the way Muslim women dress today. Tight trousers are highly disturbing to the public view, especially contemporary sportswear. Moreover, in West Aceh Regency, I have noticed that women's clothing has become increasingly unrestricted (caritau, 2025)
Support	*Razialah bukan hanya di jalan saja, Pak. Di toko pun perlu juga, Pak, agar tidak ada yang menjual dan tidak ada pula yang bisa membeli.*

	The raids should not only be carried out on the streets, Sir. They should also be conducted in shops, so that such clothing is neither sold nor purchased (Cut, 2025)
Support	*Pak Polisi WH (Wilayatul Hisbah), tolong perhatikan juga para selebgram Aceh yang berpakaian tidak sopan, tidak menutup kepala, dan mewarnai rambut.* To the WH Police officers (Wilayatul Hisbah), please also pay attention to Acehnese social media influencers who dress immodestly, do not cover their heads, and dye their hair (tokopakwen, 2024)
Critical	*Kalau berbicara tentang pakaian, yang salah itu adalah mengapa ada yang menjualnya. Namun, menurut keyakinan saya, itu adalah hak privasi mereka.* When it comes to clothing, the problem lies in why such clothes are being sold in the first place. However, according to my belief, this remains their private right (Ariffahmi, 2026)
Critical	*Zaman sudah modern. Yang bisa memberantas ini hanyalah pemerintah setempat dan para ulama. Buatlah peraturan yang benar-benar tegas kepada rakyatnya.* Times have become modern. The only ones who can eradicate this are the local government and the ulama. They should establish truly strict regulations for the people (jasakawan, 2026)
Support	*Jadi teringat ketika saya ke Aceh, saya ditegur karena memakai celana pendek. Namun, saya ditegur dengan baik-baik karena saya memang tidak tahu. Saya pun mengikutinya saja.* I remember when I went to Aceh and was reprimanded for wearing shorts. However, I was advised politely because I genuinely did not know. So, I simply followed the rule (Demsonsihombing, 2025)
Support	*Alhamdulillah, akhirnya yang ditunggu-tunggu selama ini pun tiba.* Praise be to God, what we have long been waiting for has finally arrived (Putri, 2023)
Critical	*Bagus itu. Sebab kaum laki-laki pun sudah kerap memakai celana pendek, entah model apa yang mereka kenakan.* That is good. Men, too, have often been wearing shorts lately, whatever kind of style they are following (Raudah, 2023)

Sources: Social Media (TikTok)

As shown in Table 1, public responses to dress raids in Aceh reveal a range of positions that can be distinguished into categories of criticism and support. In the critical category, several comments do not necessarily reject enforcement but criticize dress practices that are perceived as increasingly loose, improper, or inconsistent with norms of modesty. Some comments also frame dress as a matter of personal choice and individual rights, while others draw comparisons with men's dress practices that are considered equally problematic. Meanwhile, in the category of support, responses express approval of the raids and encourage the expansion of surveillance into broader domains, such as dress shops and public figures on social media. Support is also expressed through acceptance of being reprimanded and satisfaction with the implementation of enforcement. Overall, these data show that social responses are not singular but are formed through diverse positions that reflect how society interprets, supports, questions, and extends enforcement practices in public space.

The diversity of these responses shows that the enforcement of dress standards does not simply produce direct compliance or rejection but also generates social involvement that expands how norms are understood and discussed (Ndlovu et al., 2025; Rianto, 2021). Support

does not only appear as acceptance of raids, but also as an encouragement to extend surveillance into other domains, such as the distribution of dress and representation on social media (Ladyanna, 2024; Uddin, 2019). At the same time, critical responses do not always lead to rejection of the norm, but also present forms of evaluation that remain within the same moral framework, such as concerns about changing dress practices or comparisons with other groups. Under these conditions, social responses function as a space in which norms are not only applied, but also rearticulated through public interaction (Humaidi et al., 2022). The reproduction of religious aesthetics therefore takes place not only through regulation and enforcement practices, but also through public responses that help clarify, reinforce, and repeat the boundaries of bodily appearance in public space.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study show that sharia control in Aceh operates through the interrelation of visual representations, enforcement practices, and social responses in reproducing religious aesthetics in public space. This occurs because dress standards are not only established as normative rules, but are also communicated, enacted, and openly discussed, allowing these norms to appear as something visible and collectively recognizable. Visual representations in the form of dress standard posters produced by the Dinas Syariat Islam Aceh display clear classifications of bodies considered appropriate and inappropriate, while raids conducted by the Wilayatul Hisbah (WH) show how these standards are operated through direct interaction in public space, from stopping individuals to adjusting their appearance on site. At the same time, diverse social responses, whether in the form of support or criticism, show that these norms are not only applied, but also articulated and expanded within public discourse. The reproduction of religious aesthetics in this context therefore does not occur solely through regulation, but through the intertwined relationship between the visibility of standards, enforcement practices, and social involvement that repeatedly takes place in public space.

The interrelation between visual representations, enforcement practices, and social responses shows that sharia control operates through a mechanism that places visibility at the center of bodily regulation in public space (Pirmasari, 2021). This condition allows norms to appear not only as rules to be obeyed, but also as standards that can be recognized, anticipated, and adjusted to by individuals in everyday life. The presentation of dress standards in structured visual forms conditions bodies to be read through predetermined categories (Shin, 2024), while dress raids present these norms through actions that can be directly witnessed. In this situation, public space functions as an arena where standards are not only applied but also performed through interactions between authorities and individuals. At the same time, public involvement through social responses, whether supportive or critical, extends the circulation of norms by bringing them into ongoing discourse (Rianto, 2021). Sharia control therefore does not depend solely on formal regulation, but works through the combination of visibility, surveillance, and social participation, which together allow these norms to persist and be repeatedly enacted in public life.

In relation to previous studies, this research offers a different emphasis from works that tend to understand sharia control within the framework of repression, compliance, or resistance to moral regulation. These approaches generally position dress regulation either as an instrument of discipline operating through law and bodily surveillance (Pirmasari, 2021; Qodir et al., 2022), or as an arena of identity negotiation in everyday life (Ansor, 2015; Maulina et al., 2023). Although these studies make important contributions to explaining power relations and social responses, they have not directly addressed how enforcement practices in public space contribute to shaping standards that are later recognized as religious aesthetics. This study extends these earlier readings by showing that enforcement does not merely maintain norms but also produces standards of bodily appearance that regulate how bodies should appear and be read in social life. Sharia control, therefore, can be understood not only as a mechanism of moral regulation,

but also as a practice that contributes to the formation and reproduction of religious aesthetics through visibility, repetition, and social involvement in public space.

Based on these findings, this study encourages a reading of religious control practices not merely as instruments of moral regulation, but as processes that operate through the regulation of bodily appearance and the reproduction of aesthetics in public space. This approach opens a way to understand that religious aesthetics do not appear only as symbolic expression or individual experience, but as the result of social practices involving regulation, enforcement, and public interaction at the same time. In a broader context, these findings indicate the importance of studying religion through embodied and visual dimensions that allow norms to be recognized and repeated in everyday life. In addition, the use of visual materials and digital social responses in this study shows that contemporary religious dynamics do not take place only in physical space, but also through the circulation of representations and discourse in digital space. This study therefore contributes to broadening approaches in religious studies by positioning aesthetics as part of how control operates in social life, while also opening possibilities for further analysis of how religious norms are produced, displayed, and negotiated across different social contexts.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study show that sharia control in Aceh operates as a mechanism that reproduces religious aesthetics through the regulation of bodily visibility in public space. This occurs because dress standards do not function only as normative rules, but are conditioned as forms that can be seen, recognized, and repeated in social life, thereby presenting religious aesthetics as something structured and stable. In this context, the regulation of bodily appearance is not only related to public order but also shapes how piety is displayed and collectively read. At the same time, religious aesthetics in everyday social life basically develop from the experiences and practices of religious subjects, which socially shape their tastes and expressions. These findings reveal a tension between aesthetics that grow from everyday practice and forms of aesthetics produced through regulatory mechanisms. Sharia control therefore not only regulates bodily appearance in public space but also contributes to shaping the boundaries of religious aesthetics that are collectively recognized.

This study offers a conceptual contribution by positioning religious control not merely as an instrument of moral regulation or an arena of social negotiation, but as a mechanism that shapes and stabilizes religious aesthetics in public space. This approach extends existing readings of aesthetics, which have often understood it as an expression of individual experience or everyday practice, by showing that aesthetics can also be produced through regulatory processes that condition how bodies should appear and be collectively recognized. Within this framework, the relationship between regulation, visibility, and social practice becomes important for understanding how norms are not only obeyed but also presented as forms that can be seen and repeated in public life. In addition, the use of visual materials and digital social responses in this study shows that contemporary dynamics do not occur only through direct experience, but also through the circulation of representations and discourse that expand the reach of norms. This study therefore contributes to the development of aesthetic inquiry in religious studies by positioning religiosity as part of a social practice that shapes and is shaped by the regulation of bodily appearance in public space, while also opening broader analytical possibilities in global contexts where aesthetics, religiosity, and public space are intertwined.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the data used in this research are entirely based on publicly available on online materials, especially visual representations and social responses in digital space, and therefore do not include the direct experiences of subjects who live through these practices in everyday life. Second, this study does not specifically examine the perspectives of institutional actors involved in the formulation or

implementation of control, so its reading of regulatory mechanisms focuses more on visible manifestations in public space. In addition, the study's focus on dress practices does not yet cover other dimensions of religious aesthetics. Future research may therefore develop a more in-depth approach through field observation or interviews, while also expanding the analysis to different social and cultural contexts. In this way, the study of aesthetics in religious practices can be further developed to understand how norms, bodies, and social experiences interact in shaping contemporary religious life.

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