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Power-Dependence Relations for Policy Formulation Gender Responsive Budgeting Case in West Sumatera Indonesia

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Abstract: While gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) aims to empower women, its execution often overlooks complex cultural landscapes. Addressing a critical research gap, this study moves beyond standard structural GRB assessments by examining its implementation within West Sumatra's matrilineal society a unique context where women hold customary legitimacy but lack formal political influence. The novelty of this research lies in integrating policy network analysis with indigenous cultural paradigms to expose the exact disjuncture between symbolic gender authority and actual bureaucratic power. Through document analysis, interviews, and participatory observation, the study maps regional planning actors, revealing a narrow, hierarchical network. Power remains heavily concentrated among male bureaucrats and local parliaments, while women's organizations and civil society languish at the margins. This empirically confirms the "matrilineal paradox": customary female custodianship over lineage does not translate into formal political control, rendering local GRB merely administrative rather than transformative. The study makes a key theoretical contribution to feminist institutionalism and policy network theory by demonstrating how entrenched socio-cultural paradoxes can neutralize progressive fiscal policies. Ultimately, advancing GRB requires expanding policy networks to substantively integrate women's and customary institutions, transforming budgeting from a performative task into genuine empowerment.

Keywords: access resources and gender, gender responsive budgeting, matrilineal, policy network analysis, women's empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is a strategic fiscal policy designed to weave a gender perspective into development planning, operating on the premise that public budgets are not neutral but reflect existing power dynamics (Martínez Guzmán, 2024; Oppi & Galizzi, 2024; Canestrini, P., Galizzi, G., & Siboni, 2025). While GRB is mandatory for local governments in Indonesia to ensure budget accountability, its execution is frequently reduced to a mere administrative compliance exercise rather than a catalyst for genuine policy transformation (Fatimah, Haryanto, & Retnandari, 2024; Sondakh et al., 2025).

This administrative stagnation reveals a stark factual problem in West Sumatra, a region defined by a unique "matrilineal paradox" (Rosa et al., 2026; Sari & Havifi, 2022). In this culture, women hold significant symbolic authority and act as custodians of ancestral property and lineage (Games & Sari, 2023). However, this customary legitimacy completely fails to translate into formal political representation, as masculine structures continue to heavily dominate the local bureaucracy and political arena (Rosa et al., 2026; Marjuki, 2025; Fernando & Mandala, 2025). Consequently, female parliamentary participation in the region falls below the national average. This demonstrates that current GRB implementation stops at bureaucratic ticketing, such as drafting Gender Budget Statements (GBS), and fails to alter the underlying power relations or promote equal political representation.

West Sumatra presents a unique contradiction where women hold high social legitimacy and control over ancestral property due to the matrilineal system (Rosa et al., 2026; Games & Sari, 2023). However, this cultural authority does not penetrate formal governance; local bureaucracy and politics remain heavily male-dominated. Despite the presence of GRB policies, female participation in the West Sumatra parliament remains below the national average as of 2024 (Rizky, 2025; Sari & Havifi, 2022). This proves that existing budgeting mechanisms have not successfully promoted equal political representation. National data shows that only about 38% of ministries and agencies have adopted GRB tagging, with an achievement rate of only 40.5% in 2024 (Bilqista & Setijanigrum, 2025). In West Sumatra specifically, research on how these budgets actually affect women's access to services or economic opportunities is virtually nonexistent.

There is a pressing need to move beyond evaluating GRB purely through the lens of normative compliance and document preparation (Downes & Nicol, 2020; Sharp & Broomhill, 2013). Currently, comprehensive research investigating how GRB tangibly affects women's daily lives—specifically regarding their access to public services, economic opportunities, and political participation—is exceptionally rare. Without assessing these real-world impacts, it is impossible to guarantee that GRB functions as a true tool for women's empowerment rather than remaining an empty administrative symbol (Khalifa & Scarparo, 2021).

This research breaks away from standard bureaucratic evaluations of GRB, offering fresh perspectives on two fronts. In the empirical novelty context, rather than just tracking budget tagging or administrative milestones, this study maps the concrete policy network configuration in West Sumatra. It empirically identifies which specific state and non-state actors occupy central positions in the GRB network and examines how they directly influence policy direction and resource distribution. In the theoretical novelty context, the study introduces a unique theoretical framework by analyzing power-dependence relations through the lens of the "matrilineal paradox". It investigates the friction between a matrilineal kinship system that grants women symbolic legitimacy and a patriarchal bureaucracy that controls the formal political sphere, providing new insights into how these competing power structures impact policy effectiveness.

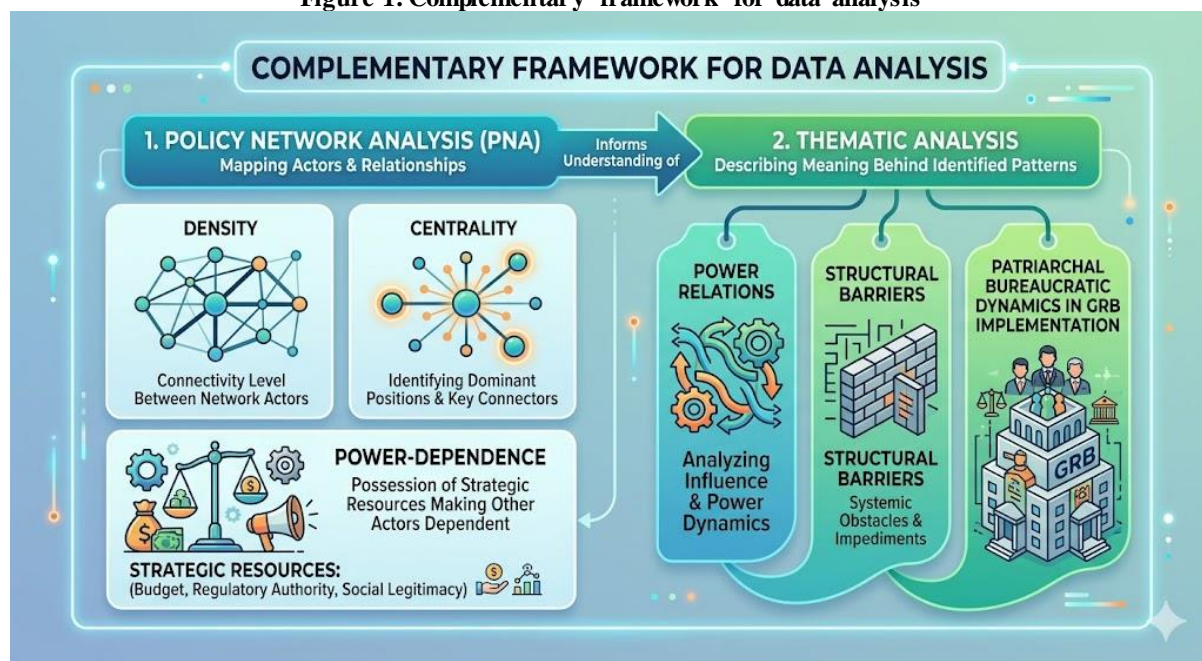
Based on this background, this study was designed to answer three main questions. First, how is the policy network configuration formed in the implementation of GRB in West Sumatra, including the patterns of relationships between state and non-state actors involved in it? Second, which actors hold central positions in the GRB policy network, and how do they influence policy direction and resource distribution? Third, how do the power-dependence relations between actors in the network affect the effectiveness of the GRB as an instrument for women's empowerment, particularly when placed in the context of the paradox between the matrilineal kinship system that gives symbolic legitimacy to women and the patriarchal bureaucracy that continues to dominate the formal political field.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative case study design centered in West Sumatra Province, specifically targeting the provincial administrative hub in Padang and selected Nagari (traditional villages) to capture the intersection of formal governance and matrilineal customs. This design is chosen to dissect the "matrilineal paradox"—the friction between symbolic female customary authority and the male-dominated bureaucratic reality of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB).

To ensure a comprehensive mapping of the policy network, this research utilizes a hybrid sampling approach. Initial participants are selected via purposive sampling to target formal power holders. Subsequently, snowball sampling is used to identify marginalized actors and grassroots activists often overlooked in formal hierarchies. The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with around 15 key actors, including local government officials (Regional Development Planning Agency, Regional Financial and Asset Management Agency, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Department), members of the Regional Representative Council, leaders of civil society organizations, women's activists, academics, and traditional leaders in the nagari. In addition, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted to explore the collective experiences of women at the community level. Secondary data was obtained from policy and planning documents, including the local government budget, the system for formulating regional work unit budget plans, the GBS, GRB evaluation reports, and relevant research reports and academic publications.

Figure 1. Complementary framework for data analysis



Data analysis was conducted using two complementary approaches (see Figure 1). First, mapping of actors and relationships using a policy network analysis framework. This analysis is focused on three main dimensions: (1) density, which is the level of connectivity between actors in the network; (2) centrality, which is the identification of actors who occupy dominant positions or act as key connectors; and (3) power-dependence, which is the extent to which actors have strategic resources (budget, regulatory authority, social legitimacy) that make other actors dependent on them. Second, thematic analysis was used to describe the meaning behind

the identified network patterns, particularly in relation to power relations, structural barriers, and patriarchal bureaucratic dynamics in the implementation of the GRB.

To ensure data validity, this study uses a triangulation strategy. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing information from interviews, FGDs, and documents. Method triangulation is used through a combination of network analysis and thematic analysis. In addition, member checks are carried out by confirming preliminary findings with several key informants to minimize interpretation bias.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Gender Responsive Budgeting Policy Network Configuration in West Sumatra

The implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in West Sumatra illustrates a complex interplay between formal structures and informal cultural norms. The implementation of GRB in West Sumatra cannot be separated from the policy network configuration that is formed through the interaction of various actors. The map of key actors in this network includes local government agencies such as the Regional Development Planning Agency, which plays a role in development planning, Regional Financial and Asset Management Agency as the regional financial manager, and the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency, which is the technical driver in promoting gender integration. In addition, the Regional House Representative acts as a legislative body that has the authority to discuss and approve the Regional Budget, including monitoring the extent to which gender-responsive principles are accommodated.

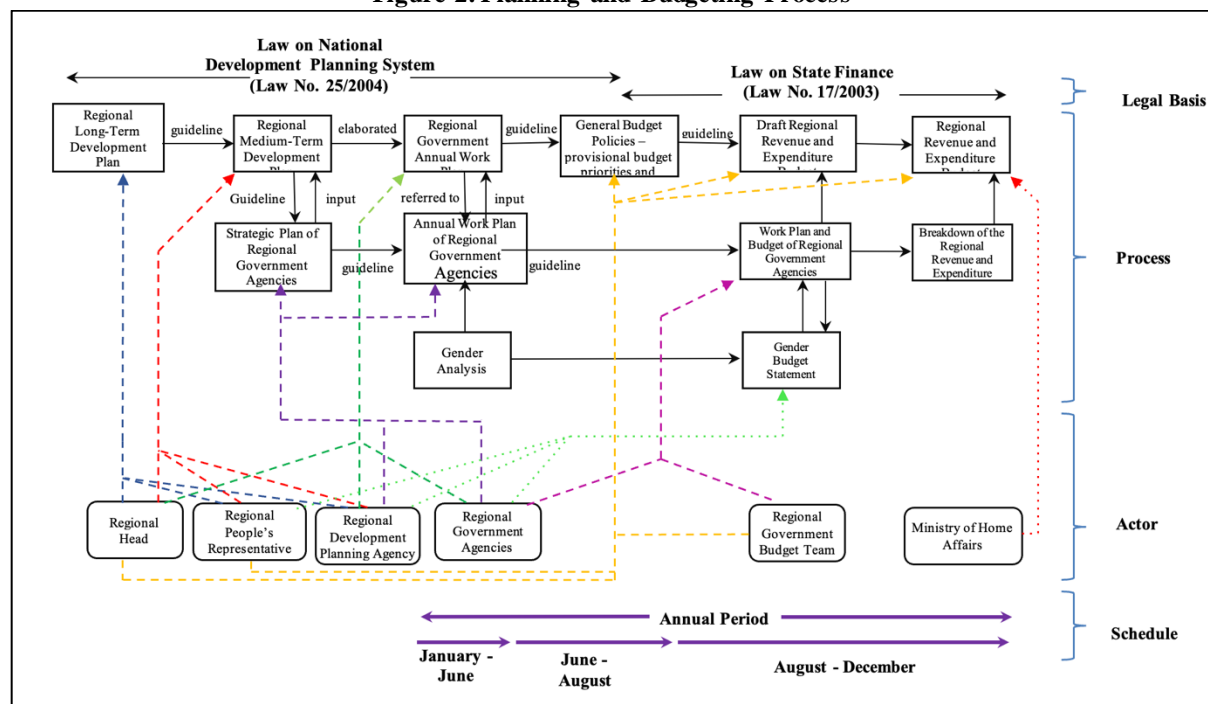
For GRB to be transformative, Fraser (1990) suggests that marginalized groups need "counter-publics" or stronger "civil society communities" that can challenge the dominant bureaucratic narrative. Therefore, outside the government structure, non-state actors also occupy important positions. Women's organizations play an advocacy and monitoring role to ensure that regional budgets truly take into account the interests of women and vulnerable groups. Customary institutions, although their role is more symbolic, still have moral and social influence in legitimizing policies, especially in the context of Minangkabau society, which adheres to a matrilineal kinship system. Meanwhile, development partners such as international donor agencies, NGOs, and academics contribute in the form of technical assistance, capacity building, and the provision of gender analysis tools.

According to Rhodes (1997), policy networks are defined by the interdependence of actors who must exchange resources—such as money, expertise, and legitimacy—to achieve goals. Relationships between actors in the GRB policy network occur through both formal and informal mechanisms. Formal relationships are formed through the regional planning and budgeting cycle, for example in the preparation of the GBS, the Development Planning Consultation, and the discussion of the Regional Budget Draft in the Regional House Representative. Meanwhile, informal relationships are reflected in lobbying, advocacy, and non-formal communication processes, which often have a greater influence on policy direction. In practice, the intensity and quality of these relationships between actors are not always balanced; bureaucratic actors tend to be more dominant in formal processes, while women's organizations and customary institutions are often marginalized, with more limited influence.

This configuration shows that the GRB policy network in West Sumatra is still influenced by asymmetrical power relations. Lowndes (2020) suggest that political institutions are not gender-neutral; they are "gendered" through both formal rules and informal "rules in use." Despite efforts to expand participation, the dominance of bureaucratic and legislative actors indicates that the inclusion of women and civil society groups still needs to be strengthened so that GRB functions as a transformative instrument, not merely an administrative one. Moreover, Marsh and Smith (2000) argue that network outcomes are shaped by structural inequalities.

This is evident as bureaucratic and legislative actors dominate formal cycles, often relegating women’s organizations to the periphery.

Figure 2. Planning and Budgeting Process



GBS and gender analysis are important factors in ensuring that gender perspectives are incorporated into the regional budget drafting process. However, their position is relatively subordinate, as they depend on the commitment of dominant actors such as regional heads, the Regional Development Planning Agency, the Regional Government Budget Tea, and the Regional Houses Representative.

The results of mapping the GRB policy network based on regional planning and budgeting processes reveal a complex configuration of actors, with interactions taking place through formal documents and informal coordination mechanisms.

The GRB policy network in West Sumatra is characterized by a high level of connectivity between actors, especially among bureaucratic actors such as Regional Development Planning Agency, Regional Government Budget Tea, Regional Financial and Asset Management Agency, and Regional Agency. This connectivity is evident in the formal flow of planning documents (regional medium-term development plan, strategic planning of Regional Agency, job planning of Regional Agency to budgeting). However, the density of the network is uneven: the involvement of non-bureaucratic actors, such as women's organizations and customary institutions, is much more limited. This makes the network tend to be closed, with technocratic dominance in processing gender analysis and GBS.

The actor holding the most central position in the network is Regional Development Planning Agency, as this institution serves as the main hub connecting regional development planning and the budgeting process. Regional Government Budget Team also has high centrality because it acts as the final filter before the Regional Budget Design is submitted to the Regional House Representative. At the legislative level, the Regional House Representative has significant influence in determining whether GBS and gender analysis are actually translated into budget allocations. Conversely, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency, which substantively oversees gender issues, is in a peripheral position with low centrality, limiting its influence to the technical stage of document preparation.

The relationship between actors shows an unequal dependence on resources. The Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency and women's organizations depend on the political support of the regional head and the authority of Regional Development Planning Agency and Regional Government Budget Team to ensure that the results of gender analysis are included in the budget document. Customary institutions have cultural legitimacy, but they do not have fiscal or regulatory resources, so their bargaining power is low in the formal arena. Conversely, the Regional House Representative holds legal authority in the ratification of the Regional Budget, making it an actor with high bargaining power, which often causes other actors to adjust their strategies to obtain legislative support.

The GRB policy network in West Sumatra still shows a hierarchical pattern dominated by the bureaucracy and legislature, while substantive gender actors remain marginalized. This explains why GRB tends to be administrative in nature, without significantly affecting power relations or the distribution of development benefits for women.

Table 1. Relationship between GRB Allocation and Position in the Policy Network

Agency Category	Regional Agency	GRB Allocation	Position in the Network (Centrality)	Power-dependence
with large allocations	Department of Education, Department of Health	High	A central actor, a key node in GRB integration due to the broad scale of public services	Relatively independent, but still dependent on the direction of the Regional Head and the approval of Regional House Representative
with moderate allocation	Regional Development Planning Agency, Regional Financial and Asset Management Agency	Moderate	Liaison actor, playing a strategic role in the synchronization of planning and budgeting	Possesses technical and fiscal authority, serving as a reference for other Regional Agency in preparing GBS
with small allocations	Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency, Department of Social Affairs	Low	Peripheral actors, strong technical capacity on gender issues but marginal position in budget allocation	Highly dependent on political and fiscal support from Regional Development Planning Agency, Regional Government Budget Team, and Regional House Representative to promote the gender agenda

Source: obtained from primary data

The amount of GRB allocations at the Regional Agency level can be interpreted as an indicator of the position and influence of actors in the policy network. Regional Agencies with large GRB allocations, such as the Education Office or Health Office, tend to have high centrality for two reasons. First, their public service functions are large in scale, making the argument for gender responsiveness more relevant and politically supported. Second, the size of the allocation indicates their access to fiscal resources as well as their ability to influence regional development priorities. Within the network, this type of Regional Agency acts as a key node that determines whether a gender perspective is actually translated into strategic programs.

According to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), organizational behavior is defined by the need to acquire resources, creating a "power-dependence" relationship. Conversely, Regional Agency with small ARG allocations, such as Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency or other technical institutions that are actually the driving force behind gender issues, present a paradox. Although normatively they play a leading role, their position in the network is more peripheral, with strong dependence on Regional Development Planning Agency, Regional Government Budget Team, and Regional House Representative. This underlines a

pattern of power dependence, whereby substantial gender actors do not have sufficient fiscal resources and must therefore rely on dominant actors to channel their agenda.

In terms of density, the connections between actors appear to be quite dense in major sectors such as education and health because they involve many programs, indicators, and cross-Regional Agency coordination mechanisms. Zhang et al. (2025) emphasizes that influence is determined by an actor's position within a network structure. However, in other sectors, the connections tend to be loose, showing that gender mainstreaming has not been integrated throughout the bureaucracy.

The distribution of GRB allocations reveals an asymmetrical network structure: actors with a technical gender mandate (Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency, women's organizations) have a substantive role but limited resources, while actors with large budgets (education, health, infrastructure) have considerable influence but often treat gender perspectives as mere compliance. This configuration explains why GRB in West Sumatra is still more administrative than transformative because the dominant position in the network is determined by the size of the fiscal allocation, not by gender expertise.

The results of network analysis show that the configuration of ARG policies in West Sumatra is dominated by bureaucratic actors with significant fiscal and regulatory capacity. Regional Development Planning Agency occupies a central position due to its role as the main link in the development planning cycle and the preparation of the regional budget. Through its authority to prepare regional medium-term development plan documents, Regional Agency strategic plans, and integrate the GBS into regional planning, Regional Development Planning Agency has become a strategic node that determines the direction of gender integration. This reflects institutional theorists Meyer and Rowan (1977) in Harrison et al. (2015) that discuss "decoupling", where an organization adopts a policy (like GRB) for legitimacy but separates it from actual operational logic.

In addition, the Regional House Representative has a high degree of centrality in the network. This legislative position allows the Regional House Representative to be the final decision maker in the discussion and ratification of the Regional Budget Design into the Regional Budget. Although the GBS has been prepared by the agency, budget allocation decisions still depend on the political preferences of factions and commissions in the Regional House Representative. Thus, the legislative commitment to gender equality is crucial to the effectiveness of the GRB, even though this issue is often reduced to being part of broader political budget negotiations.

In terms of budget allocation, the pattern of centrality is even more apparent. Large sectoral Regional Agency such as the Education Agency and Health Agency receive a relatively high share of GRB allocation, in line with the scale of their public services. This places these two Regional Agency in a central position, not only because of their service functions, but also because of the large amount of fiscal resources they manage. Conversely, Regional Agency that substantively oversee gender issues, such as the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency, only receive a small allocation. This condition places the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency in a peripheral position even though it is normatively the driving force behind the implementation of GRB. In other words, a central position in the network is determined more by the size of the budget allocation than by expertise in gender issues.

Outside of bureaucratic and legislative actors, civil society organizations (CSOs) and customary institutions are also involved, albeit with much lower centrality. CSOs, especially women's organizations, play a role in advocacy and monitoring, and are sometimes involved in public consultation forums such as planning forum. However, their position in the network is more like supporting actors than decision makers. Meanwhile, customary institutions have cultural legitimacy in Minangkabau society, but their role in budget politics tends to be

symbolic. The moral legitimacy of customary institutions cannot necessarily be translated into direct influence in formal budgeting mechanisms.

Thus, the pattern of centrality in the GRB network in West Sumatra shows a hierarchical structure: bureaucratic actors (Regional Development Planning Agency, Education Office, Health Office) and legislative actors occupy the center of the network, while gender-substantive actors (Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency, women's organizations, customary institutions) are in peripheral positions. This structure explains why the integration of a gender perspective in budget policy still tends to be administrative, because actors with a gender mandate and capacity do not occupy the main nodes in the policy network.

Table 2. Actors, GRB Allocation, and Position in the Network

Actor/ Regional Agency	GRB allocation (relative)	Position within the Network	Strategic Role
Department of Education	Major	Central	Managing broad public services, determining gender integration in the education sector
Health Department	Major	Central	Managing significant health budgets, potentially expanding access to gender-responsive services
Regional Development Planning Agency	Moderate	Centralized-link	Integrating GBS into regional planning, coordination between Regional Agencies
Regional Financial and Asset Management Agency / Regional Government Budget Team	Moderate	Central	Fiscal technical controller, main filter before the Regional Budget Design goes to the Regional House Representative
Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency	Minor	Peripheral	Motorizes gender issues, but depends on central actors due to minimal allocation
Regional House Representative	Indirectly (legislative authority, not executive)	Political Center	Final decision-maker in the discussion and approval of the Regional Budget Design
Women's organizations (CSOs)	Not recorded in the regional budget	Peripheral–advocacy	Advocacy, oversight, participation in the development planning consultation forum, limited informal influence
Customary institution	Not recorded in the regional budget	Symbolic–peripheral	Providing cultural legitimacy, but not directly affecting the regional budget

Source: obtained from primary data

The position of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency on the periphery of the GRB policy network shows its limitations in influencing the allocation and implementation of gender-responsive budgets. As an actor that is less connected to decision-making centers such as Regional Development Planning Agency, Regional House Representative, or technical Regional Agency, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency faces challenges in ensuring that GRB programs are strategically integrated into the Regional Budget. This isolation also limits the capacity of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency to facilitate cross-sectoral coordination, putting the GRB program at risk of being implemented partially or overlapping. In addition, its peripheral position makes Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency more vulnerable to changes in political priorities or leadership changes, which could potentially reduce the sustainability of the program. To

overcome these limitations, the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency needs to build strategic relationships with central actors, strengthen its database and evidence as important sources of information, and utilize symbolic networks or civil society to expand its influence indirectly. With these steps, despite its peripheral position, the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency can increase the effectiveness of the GRB and ensure that gender-responsive programs are more tangible in the field.

Power-Dependence Relations

From the perspective of power-dependence theory, power in the regional planning and budgeting process is formed through the dependence of actors on resources controlled by other parties (Emerson, 1962). In this context, regional heads, regional house representative, and the Ministry of Home Affairs occupy dominant positions because they control strategic resources in the form of budgetary authority, regulatory access, and political legitimacy. Regional heads act as policy initiators who control key planning documents and coordinate technocratic instruments such as Regional Planning Agency, Regional Government Budget Team, and Regional Agency. The main interest of regional heads is to maintain consistency with their political promises made during the campaign and to maintain electoral legitimacy through politically popular programs. The Regional House Representative, on the other hand, is oriented towards the political agenda of the party and the distribution of resources for the benefit of constituents, so that its position in budgeting is often transactional and compromising. The relationship between the two is one of mutual dependence: regional heads need legislative authorization, while regional representative councils need executive initiatives to operationalize public programs. The Ministry of Home Affairs holds a more dominant hierarchical position because it has regulatory and evaluative authority, with an interest in maintaining national consistency and regional fiscal stability, so that regional actors depend on central government directives without any reciprocal relationship (Law No. 17/2003; Law No. 25/2004).

Pfeffer and Salancik (2015) argue that organizations must interact with their environment to survive, but this interaction creates "external control." Organizations that lack direct access to "crucial resources" will inevitably become subordinate to those that do. Meanwhile, technocratic actors such as Regional Development Planning Agency, Regional Government Budget Team, and Regional Agency are in subordinate positions. Regional Development Planning Agency focuses on technocratic interests in the form of consistency in medium-term planning and cross-sectoral synchronization, while Regional Government Budget Team emphasizes fiscal balance and procedural regularity. Regional Agency is more oriented towards sectoral interests, namely fighting for budget allocations for their respective priority programs. However, despite their technical capacity, they are highly dependent on the political direction of the Regional Head and the decisions of the Regional House Representative. This is in line with resource dependence theory, which asserts that organizations without direct access to crucial resources, in this case the budget and political legitimacy, will depend on the actors who control those resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2015).

A more marginal position is shown by Gender Analysis (Gender Budget Statement/GBS) which, despite having normative legitimacy through national regulations (Minister of Home Affairs regulations No. 67/2011), its existence in the Regional Budget is determined entirely by the political will of the Regional Head and Regional House Representative. The low level of knowledge and technical capacity of regional actors regarding gender-responsive budgeting exacerbates the position of the GBS, so that gender equality issues are often viewed as mere administrative formalities rather than substantive instruments for social justice. Civil society only has social legitimacy through participatory forums such as the Development Planning

Consultation Forum, but its aspirations are often not prioritized because they clash with the political agenda of the regional head and Regional House Representative.

Thus, the configuration of power-dependence relations in the regional planning and budgeting cycle reveals the dominance of political actors who control access to fiscal and regulatory resources. The political-executive agenda (public satisfaction and electoral legitimacy), legislative interests (constituents and patronage distribution), and central interests (fiscal stability and regulatory consistency) are far more decisive than technocratic input or social aspirations. The high dependence of technocratic actors, the weak position of civil society, and the low capacity for gender budgeting explain why technical issues and the social justice agenda are often marginalized in the political arena of budgeting.

Table 3. Power–Dependence Relations, Political Agenda, and Gender Barriers

Actor	Main Resources	Political Agenda/Interests	Dependence on	Barriers to Gender Budgeting
Regional Head	Executive authority; control of regional medium-term development plan; electoral legitimacy	Fulfilling political promises; maintaining popularity; strengthening the support base	Regional Representative Council (approval of Regional Budget Draft); Ministry of Home Affairs (evaluation of Regional Budget)	Low political commitment to gender issues; greater priority given to populist programs
Regional House Representative	Budgetary, legislative, and oversight functions; political legitimacy of parties	Fighting for constituents; patronage distribution; party agenda	Regional Head (program initiative); Ministry of Home Affairs (central regulations)	Lack of knowledge about gender budgeting; tendency to view GBS as an administrative burden
Ministry of Home Affairs	Regulatory authority; evaluation of the regional budget; central legitimacy	Maintaining consistency in national regulations; regional fiscal stability	Not dependent on local actors	Focus on administrative compliance, not gender substance
Regional Development Planning Agency	Technocratic capacity in planning; cross-sector coordination	Synchronization of regional medium-term development plan; program efficiency	Regional Head (policy direction); Regional Representative Council (political approval)	Weak in political advocacy; limited integration of gender analysis
Regional Government Budget Team	Technical instruments for preparing the Regional Budget Draft; financial control	Maintaining fiscal balance; budget discipline	Regional Head (main authority); Regional Representative Council (approval)	Low understanding of GRB (gender responsive budgeting); focus more on numbers than substance
Regional Agency	Sectoral knowledge; program implementation	Fighting for sectoral programs; defending the budget	Regional Head & Regional Development Planning Agency (policy direction); Regional Representative Council (budget allocation)	Low technical capacity for gender analysis; resistance to viewing gender as an additional issue

Gender Budget Statement (GBS)	Normative instruments; regulatory legitimacy (Minister of Home Affairs regulations 67/2011)	Promoting budget justice; gender integration	Regional Head (political will); Regional Representative Council (budget approval); Regional Development Planning Agency (technocratic integration)	Marginal position; understood as a mere formality; limited executive capacity
Community/CSO	Social legitimacy; participation in the Development Planning Consultation Forum	Articulating public aspirations; advocating local issues	Regional Head & Regional Representative Council (responding to aspirations)	Participation is often symbolic; gender issues are underrepresented due to the dominance of budgetary politics.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of GRB in West Sumatra is currently restricted by a narrow network of actors and a political/bureaucratic environment dominated by men. Although the region’s matrilineal culture provides women with traditional legitimacy, this status remains largely symbolic and fails to translate into substantive political power. Because male-dominated institutions control decision-making, GRB functions primarily as an administrative "check-the-box" exercise rather than a mechanism for transforming power relations or empowering women.

This situation has several important policy implications. First, it is urgent to expand the network of actors, particularly by involving women's organizations, civil society communities, and customary institutions in a more substantive manner, rather than merely symbolic participation. Second, the implementation of gender budgeting must be encouraged so that it does not stop at merely fulfilling administrative aspects, but is directed towards transformative structural changes in the preparation and implementation of the budget. Third, regulatory reform and strengthening of technocratic capacity at the regional level are necessary so that the GRB truly functions as an instrument for women's empowerment, while also serving as a means to bridge the paradox between customary legitimacy and male political dominance in West Sumatra.

This research challenges the assumption that matrilineal cultural structures naturally lead to gender-equitable policy outcomes. It contributes to gender studies by illustrating how patriarchal "formal" politics can bypass "informal" customary female authority. In the context of policy networks, the findings suggest that the quality of the network (substantive vs. symbolic participation) is more critical for social transformation than the mere presence of a network.

Local authorities in West Sumatra should move GRB from the finance office’s administrative desk to the center of strategic planning to ensure it impacts actual resource distribution. There is a clear need for training local bureaucrats in technocratic gender analysis so they can identify and close gender gaps through the budget rather than just fulfilling reporting requirements. Governments should create formal, permanent seats for women’s customary leaders and NGOs in the regional development planning process.

As a single-location study focused on West Sumatra, the findings are deeply rooted in the unique Minangkabau matrilineal context and may not be directly generalizable to patrilineal regions. The reliance on a qualitative approach provides deep insight into "why" GRB is failing but lacks the statistical scale to measure the exact correlation between specific budget allocations and gender development indices.

Future studies should compare West Sumatra's GRB outcomes with provinces that follow patrilineal traditions to determine if customary systems offer any measurable advantage in gender policy implementation. Integrating quantitative modeling could help track the "administrative-to-transformative" shift by measuring the longitudinal impact of specific gender-budgeted programs on local poverty and education rates for women.

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