

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMINIST  
EPISTEMOLOGY IN ISLAMIC STUDIES  
IN INDONESIAN UNIVERSITY**  
**A Case Study of Akhwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of  
Darussalam Islamic Institute, Ciamis West Java**

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**Abstract**

*The main issue to be discussed in this study is the development of epistemology in feminist perspective in the academic realm. In Indonesia, gender bias still dominates Islamic study. Ahwal Syaikhshiyah study program or also known as Islamic Family law study program in Indonesia is closely related to internalization of gender equality values. The subjects in this study program are related to family and relations in the family according to Islamic Law. Therefore, the development of feminist epistemology in Ahwal Syaikhshiyah study program is inevitable in Indonesia. Some of the development is performed by Ahwal Syaikhshiyah study program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, Ciamis. The development of feminist epistemology starts from developing a curriculum designed with a feminist perspective, learning subjects with feminist perspective and implementation of research model with feminist perspective for lecturers and students. The result, students can respond to the development of feminist epistemology starting from a class lesson, critical analysis on issues based on misogynistic Islamic perspective which marginalizes, subordinates, and contains elements of violence against women. The analysis result of various problems of the relation between gender and Islam in the study of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah was studied in this research. The students who focused on the*

*study of relation in the family used feminist perspective as an analysis tool in undergraduate theses. However, for lecturers, feminist perspective wasn't used as perspective in research. The development of feminist epistemology can be a systematic way in creating a women-friendly academic atmosphere which supports gender equality and equity.*

*[Masalah pokok yang dibahas dalam kajian ini adalah pengembangan epistemologi berperspektif feminis dalam ranah akademis. Di Indonesia bias gender masih mendominasi kajian Islam. Program Studi Ahwal Syaikhhsiyah atau yang disebut dengan Program Studi Hukum Keluarga Islam, di Indonesia termasuk yang memiliki keerratan dengan internalisasi nilai-nilai kesetaraan gender. Sebab pada program studi ini mata kuliahnya terkait relasi-relasi dalam keluarga menurut hukum Islam. Oleh karena itu pengembangan epistemologi feminis pada program studi Ahwal Syaikhhsiyah menjadi keniscayaan di Institut Agama Islam Darussalam Ciamis. Pengembangan epistemologi feminis diawali dari pengembangan kurikulum yang dirancang dengan perspektif feminis, pembelajaran matakuliah dengan perspektif feminis, dan penerapan model penelitian dengan perspektif feminis bagi dosen dan mahasiswa. Hasilnya, untuk para mahasiswa dapat merespon pengembangan epistemologi feminis dari mulai pembelajaran di kelas, analisis kritis pada masalah-masalah yang didasari oleh perspektif Islam yang misoginis, memarjinalkan, mensubordinasi, dan mengandung unsur kekerasan terhadap perempuan. Hasil analisis terhadap berbagai masalah relasi gender dan Islam dalam kajian Ahwal Syaikhhsiyah dijadikan sebagai masalah yang dikaji dalam bentuk penelitian. Para mahasiswa yang memfokuskan pada kajian relasi dalam keluarga menjadikan perspektif feminis sebagai alat analisis dalam penelitian-penelitian dalam bentuk skripsi. Akan tetapi untuk para dosen, perspektif feminis cenderung belum menjadi perspektif dalam penelitian. Pengembangan epistemologi feminis dapat menjadi jalan secara sistematis dalam mewujudkan atmosfir akademik yang ramah perempuan dengan menjunjung kesetaraan dan keadilan gender.]*

**Keywords:** *Epistemology, Feminism, Gender, Akhwal Syaikhhsiyah*

## Introduction

Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute (IAID), Ciamis, is one of the study programs which study Islamic family law based on the development of epistemology with feminist perspective in Indonesia. It's a critical perspective aimed to change the academic atmosphere, which tends to be in favor of a certain gender, toward equality. Feminist perspective in the academic realm hasn't been taken seriously by Islamic universities. Patriarchal perspective still dominates the academic atmosphere of Islamic universities. The Islam study used as a basis for the study of Islamic family law in the Faculty of Syariah, especially Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program, still refers to established *fiqh* sources in Indonesian Islamic society. However, in *fiqh*, women are the object of men. Their position is domestic and in social context, their value is half of that of men and their power is below men's.<sup>1</sup>

Several Islamic universities that try to apply feminist perspective in developing Islamic study are considered a mistake in the development of epistemology. A critique for Univeritas Islam Negeri (UIN) Yogyakarta and various Islamic universities in Indonesia claims that the usage of historical criticism method on misogynistic al-Qur'an verses is considered imitation of idea brought by modernist Muslim Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and western orientalis. This method is also considered taking the analogy of Christian scientists who perform validity test on biblical texts and discover misogynistic texts. Using historical criticism analogy for the Bible to study al-Qur'an texts is considered unaccountable. The interpretation of al-Quran using historical criticism based on gender is unknown in Islamic intellectual literatures. This method is viewed as inapplicable on verses that contain absolute truth (*qat'iyyat*) and clear

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<sup>1</sup> Masdar F. Masudi, *Perempuan di antara Lembaran Kitab Kuning*, in Mansour Fakhri (et.al), *Membincang Feminisme: Diskursus Gender Perspektif Islam* (Surabaya: Risalah Gusti Surabaya, 2000), p. 167-180.

content, thus producing legal products which defy Islam.<sup>2</sup>

Islamic study using feminist approach with gender as the analysis tool is viewed as liberalization in religion. Equality is viewed as a relativistic idea, which is the root of secularization, which has ruined the purity of Islamic *syariat* from al-Qur'an and hadis. The view of equality is seen as not universal, only suitable for Western society, inapplicable to the Islamic world. Therefore, Islamic society doesn't need feminist solutions to solve the problems of gender equality and equity in women.<sup>3</sup> Feminism is viewed as an enemy of Islam, which endangers the structure of Islamic society, which already has holy book sources. The group against feminism academically builds arguments based on conservative logics, which carries jargons of purity of Islam. The opposition against the development of feminism in Islamic study approach is caused by the paradigm used in the academic atmosphere development process, which is still dominated by a view which privileges men.

*First*, academic atmosphere dominated by patriarchal ideology is caused by several factors, including Islamic study in universities dominated by theological perspective. Theological perspective provides normative justification in placing women as inferior to men. It's because sacred religious texts from al-Qur'an, hadis, and theologians' thinking (in interpretation, *fiqh*, and faith) are viewed as covering the time. The time must bows to sacred texts. It means that the domination of normative Islamic study,<sup>4</sup> which implicates the descriptions of Islamic sciences (e.g. interpretation, *fiqh*, tasawuf, and *fiqh* proposal) uses the perspective of a

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<sup>2</sup> Henri Shalahuddin & Mohd. Fauzi Bin Hamat, "Analisis Kritis terhadap Metode Kritik Sejarah Berbasis Gender: Sejarah Berbasis Gender dalam Studi Islam di UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta Indonesia," in *Jurnal At-Ta'dib*, Vol. 10. No. 2, Desember 2015) p. 424-425.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Aqil Azizy, "Liberalisasi Kurikulum Pendidikan: Studi Kritis Buku-Buku Pelajaran Sekolah," in *Jurnal At-Ta'dib*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Desember 2014, p. 240-242.

<sup>4</sup> Wardani, "Agenda Pengembangan Studi Islam di Perguruan Tinggi: Mempertimbangkan Berbagai Tawaran Model Integrasi Ilmu," in *Khazanah, Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Desember 2015, p. 255-281.

believer. Values of faith become the basis of study, impacting the result of subjective thinking by denying progresses and demands of time, not using the perspective of a scientist, who understands and studies Islam consistent with scientific conditions. Therefore, theological-textualism perspective denies critical historical approach, so that religion consciously or unconsciously it placed in a position incompatible with the time. Religion is in a place of social violence, which forces the time to follows sacred texts from sources of religious doctrine.

*Second*, the basic factor is long cultural academic history in Islamic study, which still refers to literatures from the Middle Ages (7<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century). It was a time where many parts of the world didn't know gender equality and equity. Sources of Islamic literatures in these centuries put women in domestic space and under complete control of men. Women were objects of exploitation by men. They lived under men's grip. However, lecturers still strongly upholds Islamic teachings from the classical literatures. The courage to make critical study on Islamic literatures has no place in Islamic universities. Therefore, gender discourse in the academic real started to grow in Indonesia in 1980s and started to touch religious issues in 1990s. Islamic feminism started in 1990s. This feminism particularly grows in predominantly Muslim countries, e.g. Arab, Egypt, Morocco, Malaysia, and Indonesia.<sup>5</sup>

*Third*, is strengthening conservative ideology. Strengthening movements to protect the purity of religion implicates mono interpretation of the diversity of Islamic perspective. The trend of women's strengthening roles in science, social, politic, and culture, isn't directly proportional to strengthening scientific point of view, which uses equality perspective. The time is viewed to have to bow to sacred texts. However, every text in the world has its own context and history. There should be dialogue between text and time to create integration, which supports each other to create civilization which respects change

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<sup>5</sup> Andik Wahyun Muqoyyidin, *Wacana Kesetaraan Gender...*, p. 492.

and human rights to achieve progress.

The implication of the academic atmosphere and research programs was strengthening the position of men, which is superior to women. Understanding of reality of problem, research methodology, and developed values don't lead to the creation of women-friendly social condition in the society. Therefore, there is a gender bias in the academic atmosphere in Islamic universities. This study focuses on the experience of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute (IAID), Ciamis, starting from gender discourse, research process, and results of research in feminist perspective.

### **The Root of the Development of Feminist Epistemology in Islamic Study**

Muslim feminists believe that gender equality was the mission of Rasulullah Saw. Theologically, verses of al-Qur'an and hadist are viewed to strongly protect against oppression of women. Therefore, gender is a part of Islamic study based on the believe that Islam is a religion that pays serious attention to liberate women, who are the oppressed, since it was spread by Prophet Muhammad. (Requires data of daurah *fiqh* of women). However, it's undeniable that academically, gender enter Islamic religion together with the development of feminist movement in the West.

The development of feminist epistemology in the academic world starts from the political movements of women activists who widely criticized social sciences in the 1970s. Women activists provided research alternative using feminist model. In 1980s social sciences also criticized social sciences which had androcentric bias. Old theories and methodologies in social sciences were considered ineffective in expressing and describing women's experiences.<sup>6</sup> Researches produced by scientists tended to strengthen men's domination over women. The academic world

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<sup>6</sup> Rebecca Campbell and Sharon M. Wasco, "Feminist Approaches to Social Science: Epistemological and Methodological Tenets," in *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 28, No. 6, 2000, p. 787.

in its early generation put men in scientific construct as a superior gender to women, thus systematically developed gender biased epistemology.

Feminist movement enters the academic real with struggles to create scientific construct based on elimination of women's oppression. Scientific construct based on values of equality will have systematic social impact of creating gender equality and equity academically. It achieves research purpose using feminist perspective by expressing and identifying oppressions against women and empowering women. Listening to voices and fates of women lead to research, which creates equality that respects equity between men and women.<sup>7</sup>

Gender discourse started in Indonesia in the 80s, but entered religious issues in the 90s. The definition of Islamic feminism started in 1990s. This feminism particularly grows in predominantly Muslim countries, e.g. Arab, Egypt, Morocco, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The uniqueness of Islamic feminism is its efforts to break down sources of problems in Islamic teachings and question the cause of male domination in interpretations of hadis and al-Qur'an. Through feminist perspective, various gender biased normative knowledge used as orientation of religious life, especially regarding gender relation, is broken down or reconstructed and returned to the spirit of Islam, which puts the ideology of liberating women in the framework of ideology of emancipating human dignity. In the Islamic world, scientists who fight for feminist perspective in the academic world also advocates for saving women. In the Muslim world, there are Riffat Hassan (Pakistan), Fatima Mernissi (Egypt), Nawal Sadawi (Egypt), Amina Wadud Muhsin (US), Zakiah Adam, and Zainah Anwar (Malaysia). In Indonesia, some of the scientists and activists are: Siti Chamamah Soeratno, Wardah Hafidz, Lies Marcoes-Natsir, Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin, Zakiah Daradjat, Ratna Megawangi, Siti Musdah Mulia, Masdar F. Mas'udi, Budhy Munawar Rachman, and Nasaruddin Umar.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 789.

<sup>8</sup> Andik Wahyun Muqoyyidin, *Wacana Kesetaraan Gender...*, p. 492.

The spirit of making the academic world a battleground to create values of gender equality and equity is acknowledged by Islamic universities. This awareness is realized organizationally by establishing study centers, which affirm women, such as Gender Study Center (PSG), Women's study Center (PSW), Center of Women's Study (PSP), Center of Women's Study and Child Protection, etc. Organizations of women's study and advocacy are supported by scientific products, i.e. journals on women's study.

### **The Development of Feminist Epistemology in Ahwal Asyaikhsiyah Study Program**

Epistemology is an important part of the procedure in the production of science. Epistemology will determine the face of science that defends the weak or the opposite of it. Therefore, feminist epistemology is built on the interests of sciences dedicated to the values of humanity. In this context, feminist epistemology is a critical academic tradition. Theoretically, Habermas<sup>9</sup> explains that the epistemological justification for research is orientation toward human emancipation, even taking critical position rather than only theoretical. Therefore, critical perspective starts from critique of the present and then directed to potential improvement in the future. It involves emancipative interest with human potential as the center.

Feminist epistemology is an epistemology of social sciences to examine gender relation with power. The assumption is power produces science.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, in feminist point of view, science isn't value-free. It assumes that science is developed due to a creator's ideology and interest. Science developed with patriarchal values causes marginalization of women. So, in application feminist epistemology is similar with

<sup>9</sup> Hanno Hardt, *Critical Communications Studies: Sebuah Pengantar Komprehensif Sejarah Perjumpaan tradisi Kritis Eropa dan Tradisi Pragmatis Amerika*, trans. Idi Subandy Ibrahim & Yosai Iriantara (Bandung: Jalasutra, 2007), p. 234.

<sup>10</sup> Heidi E. Grasswick (ed.), *Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science: Power in Knowledge* (London New York: Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg, 2011) p. xiv.



mainstream epistemology, which broadly covers human sciences, such as moral, history, everyday knowledge, social, culture, or politic. The study is the same as general epistemology. However, woman factor and women's experiences become the basis of development and application of the study.<sup>11</sup>

Ahwal Syaikhsiyah Study Program, or also known as Islamic law on family, contains curriculum, which includes subjects on legal study in family environment. Laws related to family are still dominated by patriarchal legal norms. Therefore, the development of feminist epistemology as a basis for developing an academic atmosphere, which can create equity for women, is inevitable.

Feminist epistemology is developed in Ahwal Asyaikhsiyah Study Program of IAID, Ciamis through various activity programs, including:

#### *The Establishment of Female Study Center*

Center of Women's Study (here in after abbreviated as PSP) in Darussalam Islamic Institution Ciamis (here in after abbreviated as IAID Ciamis) was the idea of the rector. With the academic background of alumnus of doctoral education in Gadjah Madha University of Yogyakarta, adequate understanding on multiculturalism and gender equality, the rector established PSP as the epicenter of the development of Islamic study with feminist perspective. Therefore, PSP drives study programs in IAID Ciamis in developing curricula, lessons, studies, and researches with feminist perspective.

PSP is an institution focused on guiding study programs in IAID, so that they apply gender perspective in developing lessons, researches, and community services. PSP was established as a response to the academic atmosphere that is dominated by patriarchal view. So, administrators of PSP are male and female lecturers of study programs and faculties, who

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<sup>11</sup> Phyllis Rooney, "The Marginalization of Feminist Epistemology and What That Reveals About Epistemology 'Proper'" in Heidi E. Grasswick (ed.), *Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science Power in Knowledge* (London New York: Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg, 2011), p. 5.

care about fighting for gender equality and equity.

PSP was established by the rector with full authority, facilitating the development of feminist perspective in the academic atmosphere in study programs in IAID Ciamis. The programs designed by PSP are directly guided by the rector. Therefore, since PSP was established in 2009, PSP is greatly appreciated by the campus and academicians of IAID Ciamis.

In developing the capacity and focus of the advocacy, PSP joins a network of universities which have gender study or women's study institutions started by the Directorate of Islamic Higher Education (DIKTIS) of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. PSP creates a network to reinforce the existence and professionalism of the feminist movement of Indonesian Muslims with gender as the analysis tool. A series of workshop, study, and consolidation by DIKTIS joined by PSP is a powerful recognition of the academicians of IAID Ciamis.

The work program of PSP starts with studies of gender theories and relation with Islam. Gender and Islam baseline study program is an introduction of feminist perspective as an analysis tool and perspective of development of Islamic study for lecturers and students. The programs are studies, studium generale with experts, special discussions with lecturers, and special discussions with students. Various gender study programs provide a new perspective for the academicians in IAID Ciamis.

To reinforce the organization and spreading ideas of feminist perspective among students, PSP recruits student volunteers through open recruitment. Although only for PSP volunteer, the open recruitment process is performed through selection to find volunteers with capacity and militancy in fighting for gender equality.

The volunteers become agents of socialization of gender equality among students and become field implementers of various studies and program activities performed by PSP. The volunteers, which consist of selected students, receive special training on Islamic feminists and principles of gender equality. With the selection process and training,

PSP volunteers possess knowledge and skill in socialization and advocacy of programs to create gender equality.

Beside studies and studium generale on gender equality and equity, PSP also performs advocacy programs. The first is advocacy for victims of sexual violence on women. The advocacy was rescuing 4 female students who were sexually violated. PSP only rescued the victims and didn't bring the perpetrator to court due to limited human resources who have understanding and professional capacity on law. However, the rescue was an important point to show how the advocacy works against violence against women. The second is guidance program for victim of child kidnapping and rape in Ciamis. PSP coordinated with P2TPA and Ciamis Police Station to arrest the perpetrator and bring him to court and to give the victim treatment and rehabilitation from P2TPA Ciamis and Department of Health of Ciamis Regency. The advocacy of PSP was to rehabilitation of child victim of sexual violence.

Study and advocacy of gender equality by several lecturers and students lead to the interest of academicians of IAID to reinforce the role of PSP in guiding faculties and study programs in developing feminist perspective in scientific field specifications.

### *The Development of Curriculum with Gender Perspective*

The curriculum is the basis of the development of feminist epistemology. Assuming that the existing curricula are dominated by patriarchal culture, they become a normative guide for gender inequality. The curriculum is the systematic process of socialization and cultivation of patriarchal ideology in an academic environment. In Althusser's (1969) framework, patriarchal college curriculum is an apparatus that encloses, indoctrinates, and makes subjects in it have deep unawareness to live and fight for patriarchal ideology.

Overall, the curricula designed in the Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikisyah Study Program of IAID Ciamis initially didn't pay attention to the partiality of studies with a vision of equality and equity between

women and men. The designed curriculum showed patriarchal scientific perspective. Study programs dominated by Islamic teachings based on the dominant view of conservative group in Islam make women academically marginalized. Therefore, curriculum development is a central point of change. Curriculum is designed to consider making curriculum which provides perspective of gender equality and advocacy for issues faced by women.

Curriculum review in feminist perspective is performed by considering the increasingly multi-cultural current development and progress. In the first stage of curriculum review, gender only entered the general perspective of one course. The reinforcement of feminist perspective with gender as an analysis tool was integrated to one course, not to various courses. The course was basic course of Islamic Study Methodology because there are several approaches in Islamic study in it, including feminist approach.<sup>12</sup>

In the second curriculum review, the general vision of the faculty emphasized curriculum which considers current development, human rights, and gender equality. Three elements in the consideration of curriculum development became a unity which reinforced appreciation to women's rights. Courses based on Islamic law and teachings were oriented to a new basis of Islamic law study perspective consistent with current development and human values from the substances of gender equality and human rights.<sup>13</sup>

In the third curriculum review, feminist perspective entered the framework of courses of scientific philosophy, research method, gender equality and Islamic law. Specifically, gender equality and Islamic law course was added. This course is taught in the fourth semester as a basis

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<sup>12</sup> Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program, *Curriculum Review Document*, Ciamis: Darussalam, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program, *Curriculum Review Document*, Ciamis: Darussalam, 2011.

of feminist perspective in other courses.<sup>14</sup>

The fourth curriculum review was curriculum review which referred to the curriculum of Indonesian National Qualification Framework (KKNI). KKNI has various requirements of understanding international development and qualifications in the midst of competition with other countries. Therefore, feminist perspective of gender equality and equity is inevitable in curriculum development. Feminist perspective is reinforced by putting it as the spirit of study program development. Specifically, feminist perspective is reinforced from the first semester in college, undergraduate thesis writing technique, research title submission, research proposal, and undergraduate thesis.

### *College Course with Gender Perspective*

According to the curriculum review, the main purpose of Akhwal Syaikhayah study program is using feminist perspective in Islamic studies to provide a new perspective in learning. Learning is a part of the struggle to realize gender equity and equality. Through learning, socialization and internalization of gender equality can be performed systematically and naturally. Therefore, college course can be a pace to cultivate ideological values to invade all academic behaviors so that they won't have gender biased perspective.

There are three courses which become the basis of feminist perspective, i.e. Islamic Study Methodology, Gender Equity and Islamic Law, research method, and undergraduate thesis writing technique/ undergraduate thesis proposal.

Islamic Study Methodology course introduces various approaches to Islamic study. This course is taught in early semester, along with other basic courses, e.g. Pancasila and language. One of the approaches in Islamic Study Methodology course is feminist approach. The students are introduced to the general concept of gender, gender in Islamic view, and

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<sup>14</sup> Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhayah Study Program, *Curriculum Review Document*, Ciamis: Darussalam, 2013.

usage of gender analysis to discuss issues faced by the society related to gender relation, e.g. female leadership, domestic violence, and sexuality issues in Islam.

In the fourth semester, the students of Ahwal Asyaikhshiyah (AS) Study Program receive gender and Islamic legal justice course. This course focuses on gender and Islamic law study in every meeting. The discussion starts from theology of Islamic liberation as the basis of theology of gender equality, history of women's social construct in the world and Indonesia, gender theories in family law study, tauhid and essay of gender equality, women friendly interpretation, hadis interpretation using gender perspective, women in the view of *fiqh*, women's life cycle in the view of *fiqh*, reproductive health in Islam, domestic violence (KDRT), Indonesian sect of *fiqh*, Islamic law implemented by Indonesia, research with gender perspective, mini research assignment on gender, and discussion of mini research result.<sup>15</sup>

The backgrounds of the students of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program are different from students from other study programs in IAID Ciamis. Most of them are ustad from Islamic boarding schools selected competitively to receive scholarships. The students have adequate understanding on Islam from classical Islamic literatures in Arabic. Therefore, the students have strong patriarchal understanding of Islam. The usage of lecture method was often resisted by the students due to the lesson materials because gender equality was viewed by most students who studied in Islamic boarding schools as Western teaching, which went against Islamic teachings. In the class, arguments often happened between lecturer and students on the concepts of feminist perspective in the topics of Islamic study. Indoctrination method was then changed by increasing case studies, discussions, and analyses. So, students are shown cases of gender inequality in daily life in Indonesia. In the beginning of

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<sup>15</sup> Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah study program, *Learning Activities Program Plan Semester Document: Gender and Islamic Law, Academic Year 2013-2015*, Ciamis: Darussalam, 2015.

the course, the lecturer gives general perspective on gender theories and the application of the study on Islamic law issues. Afterward, the course topics are divided to groups to be discussed and complemented with cases on gender relation problems in Indonesia. The cases come from studies of religious texts, daily life, and studies of various journals. Theoretical, practical and case approaches improve the students' understanding of gender equality. Real world examples of gender inequality and trend of increasingly equal positions between men and women in various aspects of life develop the students' awareness on the certainty of equality between women and men.

After gender and Islamic legal justice course in the fourth semester, in the fifth semester, the students learn research method course. The gender perspective in Islamic law study they have learn are used to learning about research. Issues on Islamic Law in Ahwal Syaikisyah Study Program are tightly related to issues of family law, focusing on gender relation that harms women. Therefore, research method court focuses on study of issues fighting for gender equality and equity, method selection, issues faced by women, and liberating critical value base.

#### *Development of Lecturer's Capacity*

The development of lecturer's capacity to understanding feminist epistemology in Islamic study is performed in several programs, including: *first*, sending lecturers to gender training. Lecturers are sent to various gender training since 2008 in gender sensitivity methodology training by the Research and Development Center of the Ministry of Religion of Indonesia and Fahmina Institut. In 2010, lecturers were sent to Short Course of Research Methodology with Gender Perspective by the Women's Study Center of Universitas Indonesia and Directorate of Islamic Higher Education of the Ministry of Religion. In the same year, they were also sent to Women's Congress in the Japanese Study Center of Universitas Indonesia, which was held by the National Commission of Protection of Women. *Second*, involving lecturers in the administration of

the Center of Women's Study. By being involved in the administration, the capacity of the lecturers to master feminist perspective in their academic ability improves. Themes on women in work programs and study objects raise awareness of the importance of gender equality. *Third*, Ahwal Syaikhisyah Study Program encourages the lecturers to perform researches using feminist epistemology as the basis for developing Islamic sciences.

### *The Development of Research with Feminist Perspective*

The next stage after reinforcement in learning and introduction of research with gender perspective is applying gender analysis in research. In feminists' view, religious study and research using feminist perspective are a critical transformation from the perspective of existing theories by using gender as a main analysis category<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, various qualitative research methods which characterize Ahwal Syaikhisyah Study Program are elaborated using gender as analysis tool. The implication facilitates students and lecturers in performing research.

Theoretically, research with feminist perspective has several characteristics, including: *first*, partiality toward/for women. Research is oriented to showing partiality to women and problems faced by women. Research topics center on problems faced by women. Research method isn't tightly restricted, so any method considered able to reveal and understand problems faced by women is selected. Research purpose isn't about women but for women. Research validity is related with women's experience as an indicator of reality. Perspective of women as respondents of their own experiences is an important part of a research with women's perspective. *Second*, gender as tool of analysis. Gender is viewed as a determining factor of women's perception and life, forming their conscience, skills, and forming power relation pattern between men and women. Research focus is unique problem faced by women as

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<sup>16</sup> Sue Morgan, "Pendekatan Feminis," in Peter Coloni (ed.), *Aneka Pendekatan Studi Agama*, trans. Imam Khoiri (Yogyakarta: LKiS Group, 2012), p. 63.



a consequence of gender relation, which tends to be oriented toward positivistic approach.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, Muslim feminists fight for gender equality by focusing on two important things. *First*, inequality between men and women in the social structure of Muslim society isn't rooted in existing Islamic teachings, but male biased understanding, which is crystalized and believed to be standard Islamic teachings, and *second*, to achieve equality, sources of Islamic teachings related to gender relation should be reviewed using the basic principles of the teachings, i.e. equity and equality of human dignity that don't privilege any particular gender.<sup>18</sup>

Based on principles of research with feminist perspective, lecturers and students are directed to study topics which promote values of gender equality and equity. The result is in general among lecturers there are only a few researches with feminist perspective, including Gender Bias in Domestic Violence in Muslim Households, Gender Bias in Salafiyah and Modern Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia, Islam and Gender Biased Sexuality in Humors in Islamic Boarding Schools, etc.<sup>19</sup>

Among students, in academic years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016, most performed studies with feminist perspective with themes of gender equity and equality, including:

*First*, researches on claim of husband's injustice toward their wife. Themes in Islamic family law are dominated by absolute authority in men over women. This condition is contended. Some of the researches are: *Obligation to Provide for Nusyuz Wife (Analytical Study on the Opinion of Ibnu Hazm in Al-Muhalla)*<sup>20</sup>, *Non-earning Husband According to Compilation*

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<sup>17</sup> Saparinah Sadli (dkk), *Metodologi Penelitian Berperspektif Perempuan dalam Riset Sosial* (Jakarta: Postgraduate Program of Indonesia University, 1999), p. 4-8.

<sup>18</sup> Andik Wahyun Muqoyyidin, *Wacana Kesetaraan Gender...*, p. 509.

<sup>19</sup> Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program, *Research Document Academic Year 2013, 2014, and 2015*, Ciamis: Darussalam, 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Entan Sutarto, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

*of KHI Islamic Law and Law of Marriage No.1 of 1974*<sup>21</sup>, *Illegal Polygamy and Fulfilling Rights of First Wife According to KHI and Law No 1 of 1974 on Marriage*<sup>22</sup>, *Provision by Wife to Husband According to Ulama of Sindangjaya Village, Mangunjaya Sub-District, Pangandaran Regency*<sup>23</sup>, *Husband's Inability to Provide for Wife's Physical Needs as a Reason for Divorce According to Ibnu Hazm*.<sup>24</sup>

Second, research themes of gender bias claims in Islamic Law and positive law. Normatively, positive law and religious norms contain articles and contents that marginalize women. Positive laws, which regulate the relation between husband and wife, are partial to men who are unjust to women. Claims of positive laws being gender biased are reflected in the following research themes: *Rights and Obligations of Husband and Wife in the Law of Marriage No. 1 of 1974 and Compilation of Islamic Law According to Gender Study*<sup>25</sup>, *Comparison of Positions of Child in Unregistered Marriage According to the Law of Marriage (UUP) No. 1 of 1974 and Code of Civil Law (KUHP)*.<sup>26</sup>

Third, promotion of women's productive role. Although normatively positive law and women's ethics have subordinate positions, in reality, women occupy productive roles, starting from their own households to broader public roles. The research themes include: *Productive Role of a Wife in Providing for Her Family according to M. Quraysh Shibab*<sup>27</sup>, *Taking Over of Husband's Obligation to Provide by Wife (A Case*

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<sup>21</sup> Tita Muspitawati, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Septi Pratiwi, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Alvin Luthfiani, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Tsamratul Rohmat Zahroh, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Saepul Bahri, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Tatun Madiatun Halimah, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Arif Ahmad Rifai, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

*Study in Karangampel Village, Ciamis*).<sup>28</sup>

Fourth, claim of domestic violence against women. Muslim women in Indonesia experience a lot of violence such as physical, psychological, economic, and verbal violence. Indonesian women aren't safe from violence. According to the Commissioner of National Commission of Women, this country is in an emergency situation of violence against women. It's because violence against women keeps increasing every year. This phenomenon is very worrying. The data of National Commission of Women in 2014 showed 293.220 cases of violence against women. It increased from 279.688 cases in 2013. In fact, since 2010, this number has kept increasing. Currently, 68 percent of these cases are domestic and personal relation violence and 30 percent of them are violence in community. This indicates that home and environment, such as workplace, aren't safe for women. The rest is the state's violence toward Indonesian women, such as case of virginity test of police, adoption ban, and migrant worker cases.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, women should be protected against violence. The research themes include: *Marriage at Young Age and Its Effect on Divorce A Case Study in Cidolog Village, Cidolog Sub-District*<sup>30</sup>, *Violence against Women According to the Criminal Code and Law of PKDRT & KUHAP*<sup>31</sup>, *Problems of Divorce Law Outside of Court- a case study of divorce law in Tunggilis Village, Kalipucang Sub-District, Pangandaran Regency*<sup>32</sup>, *Law of Sexual Violence Against Children According to Positive Law and Islamic Law*<sup>33</sup>,

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<sup>28</sup> Ade Aas, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>29</sup> National Commission for Women, *Data on violence against women in Indonesia*, in *tempo.com*, accessed March 26, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Ela Laelaturohmah, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>31</sup> Salman Sobari, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Huda Falahudin, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Ii Rizalullah, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

*and Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) According to Islamic Law.*<sup>34</sup>

*Fifth*, promotion of harmonious family as prevention of domestic violence. It means harmonious family is a predictor of prevention of violence against women in household environment. These researches are early prevention of violence against women, starting from creating harmonious family. Happy family full of love and peace is a strong foundation of a family with equality. Themes related to this include: *The Concept of Harmonious Family as a Factor to Prevent Domestic Violence in Verse 21 of Ar-Rum of Al-Qur'an according to the Al-Misbah Interpretation*<sup>35</sup>, *Theory of Limit of Polygamy According to Muhammad Syabrur*<sup>36</sup>, *Forced Marriage According to Law No. 1 of 1974, Law No. 23 of 2004 and Imam Syafi'r*<sup>37</sup>, *Forming Factors of Harmonious Family According to Sayyid Qutb*<sup>38</sup>, *Mut'ah Marriage According to Imam Taqiyudin in Kifayatul Abyar.*<sup>39</sup>

Factors which cause the high number of student researches using gender perspective are, firstly, the students' better understanding of gender equality; secondly, research issues for undergraduate thesis in Ahwal Syaikhshiyah program are issues related with gender relation; and thirdly, the process of composing proposal is directly supervised by the chairman of the study program and the dean, who have many experiences on gender. The factors support the internalization process and the application of feminist epistemology with gender analysis is welcomed by the students during the research.

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<sup>34</sup> Dede Nurjamar, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>35</sup> Tita Yulianti, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>36</sup> Ujang Kamal Fauzi, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Sulus Juardian, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>38</sup> Arif Karya Nugraha, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

<sup>39</sup> Imam Muslihudin, *Undergraduate Thesis*, Ciamis: Faculty of Syariah of Ahwal Syaikhshiyah Study Program of Darussalam Islamic Institute, 2016.

## **The Long Road to Breaking Patriarchal Academic Structure**

Ahwal Syaikisyah Study Program of Faculty of Syariah is the first study program since the establishment of Darussalam Islamic Institute, Ciamis in 1970. This university is under Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, Ciamis. The Islamic studies applied in the Faculty of Syariah are Islamic studies predominantly based on classical Islamic literatures which contain gender bias. Literatures of Islamic study in Ahwal Syaikisyah Study Program that focus on Islamic family law still use classical *fiqh* books as its leading sources. However, *fiqh* has centralized Islamic view, focusing on patriarchal culture. *Fiqh* texts represent dominated women and consider it the nature of women. Texts are cultural products formed by long social interactions in a society (socially constructed). However, people think of the texts as fixed products of God's wills with no chance for reconstruction<sup>40</sup>. Ulama categorized as having modern views, such as Ar-Razi, Az-Zamakhsari, Ibnu Katsir, Al-Qurtubi, Muhammad Abduh, Muhammad Thahir bin Asyur, Ath-Thabathabi'i, and al-Hijazi also still have patriarchal view by putting women as inferior and men as superior in various aspects of life, from intellectual to physical aspects. For hard and public positions, men are viewed to be more able to work well than women.<sup>41</sup>

The long history of Islamic study based on patriarchal perspective makes developing feminist perspective face various challenges, such as: *first*, older generation more comfortable with dominant ideology so that gender equality is considered against Islamic conventions. Renewal of views focused on feminist perspective is resisted. Established ideology makes changing belief difficult.

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<sup>40</sup> Budi Munawar Rachman, "Islam dan Feminisme dari Sentralisme kepada Kesetaraan," in Mansour Fakhri (et.al), *Membincang Feminisme: Diskursus Gender Perspektif Islam* (Surabaya: Risalah Gusti, 2000), p. 187-188.

<sup>41</sup> Husein Muhammad, *Fiqh Perempuan: Refleksi Kiai atas Wacana Agama dan Gender* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2009), p. 24-25.

*Second*, influence of predominant usage of textual approach in curriculum in religious real in Islamic universities in Indonesia. Reinforcement of the importance of adhering to al-Qur'an and Sunah is translated as returning to holy texts that deny following the changing times.

Beside the two factors, culturally, this Islamic university grows under patriarchal Sundanese culture. Naturally, Sundanese culture influences the gender biased academic view. Malinowski and Mead<sup>42</sup> argue in theory that culture has a significant role in affective gender equality and equity. Malinowski states that cultural system of society enables putting women in subordinated role although they have productive role or multiple roles. For example, women in villages perform productive economic role such as digging, planting, harvesting crops. However, they still must take the domestic role of a housewife. Conversely, Mead discovered that in Samoa women and men are equal because the local culture allows a woman to have more than one boyfriend. It means the cultural system in this society gives a space to men and women to have equal roles. Therefore, gender perspective is a course often directly and indirectly resisted by most lecturers.

In the optimism of Zaenah Anwar<sup>43</sup>, a women activist from Malaysia, she uses Indonesia as a benchmark of discourse of openness of women and Islam. In other Muslim countries such as Egypt, which has a large number of Muslim intellectuals, openness dialogue is difficult to perform. However, Islamic study in Islamic universities in Indonesia still faces disputes between proponents and opponents of it. The academic world tends to resist gender equality and equity because: *first*, lack of understanding of the significance and meaning of gender as an analysis

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<sup>42</sup> Dinara Maya Julijanti, "Potret Nyai Salimah Hadi sebagai Pemimpin Publik di Madura," in Siti Hariti Sastryani (ed.) *Gender and Politics* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2009), p. 386-387.

<sup>43</sup> Kurniasih, *Politik Otoritas Tafsir Agama Terhadap Represi Perempuan*, in Siti Hariti Sastryani (ed.), *Gender and Politics...*,

which encourages the creation of gender biased academic perspective; *second*, Islamic universities are mostly under the authority of men; third, choice of ideology. Many lecturers are affiliated with certain Islamic community organizations which refuse gender equality. The ideology of these organizations enters courses and academic discussions. They can't separate their roles as scientists and activists. So, lecturer promotes patriarchal ideas of Islamic community organizations.

In the academic world, feminist epistemology is still marginalized. However, Islamic scientific structure is heading toward gender equality. Along with improved intellectual, academic, power, and economic abilities of Indonesian women, feminist movement appeared in Indonesia due to awareness that religion hasn't liberated women from oppression. Regarding the reality in Indonesia, Riffat Hasan<sup>44</sup> criticizes the Muslim world that anti-women laws become mainstream under the cover of "Islamization" of culture and state, such as the situation in Pakistan.

In this context, the development of feminist epistemology in Islamic study in Indonesia is systematic, starting from developing perspective of scientific study, curriculum, learning, and research with feminist perspective, making space systematically, naturally and academically to break patriarchal structure. The scientific structure in Islamic universities in Indonesia still has strong tendency to use misogynic and androgenic theological normative basis, which is changed by women friendly epistemology. Thus, slowly and surely academic discrimination against women and women's oppression can be eliminated.

## Conclusion

The development of feminist epistemology is inevitable in Islamic universities in Indonesia. Although various government policies encourage gender equality and equity, misogynic normative theology

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<sup>44</sup> Riffat Hasan, "Perempuan, Agama, dan Seksualitas Perspektif Islam" in Jeanne Beacher (ed.) *Perempuan, Agama, dan Seksualitas: Studi tentang Berbagai Pengaruh ajaran Agama terhadap Perempuan* (Jakarta: Gunung Mulia, 2004) p. 129-169.

still dominates Islamic study. The reinforcement of anti-gender equality and equity ideology in Islamic universities and classrooms along with strengthening Islamization movement of campus by carrying jargons of returning to the Islamic lessons of al-Qur'an and hadis. The reinforcement is supported by Islamic community organizations joined by lecturers and administrators of universities.

Campus political power in the hand of figures and groups with awareness to defend against women's oppression academically, such as in Ahwal Syaikisyah study program of Darussalam Islamic Institute Ciamis and other Islamic universities in Indonesia can be an effective way in developing women-friendly academic awareness. Feminist epistemology in Islamic study will systematically change campus academic world, liberating women from oppression and discrimination.



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