

PERPETUATING WOMEN'S SUBORDINATION Husband-Wife Relation in Pop Fiqh Literature

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Abstract

Popular *fiqh* literature addresses practical aspects of life. A considerable portion of this literature portrays women within a conservative framework. This research aims to investigate the tendency of spousal relationships as depicted in those popular *fiqh* literature. Subsequent to cataloging, a random selection of literary samples underwent qualitative content analysis. The findings revealed that popular *fiqh* literature on the household, especially on marital relations, is dominated by gender biased discourse by placing women only in the domestic realm where their position is inferior. This dominance stems from the authors' references projecting back to the provisions of classical *fiqh*, which are gender biased and lack authoritative interpretation of the texts. The presence of this literature is

also due to the market demands of the publishing industry. Furthermore, societal understanding dominated by patriarchal ideology contributes significantly to the prevalence of gender-biased popular *fiqh* literature.

[Literatur fiqh populer mengatasi aspek praktis kehidupan. Sebagian besar dari literatur ini menggambarkan perempuan dalam kerangka konservatif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki kecenderungan hubungan suami istri seperti yang digambarkan dalam literatur fiqh populer tersebut. Setelah proses katalogisasi, seleksi acak sampel-sampel dianalisis dengan pendekatan konten kualitatif. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa literatur fiqh populer tentang rumah tangga, terutama dalam hubungan pernikahan, didominasi oleh wacana bias gender yang menempatkan perempuan hanya dalam ranah domestik di mana posisi mereka lebih rendah dibanding laki-laki. Dominasi ini berasal dari referensi penulis yang mencerminkan kembali ketentuan fiqh klasik, yang memiliki bias gender dan kurangnya interpretasi otoritatif dari teks-teks tersebut. Kehadiran literatur ini juga karena tuntutan pasar industri penerbitan. Selain itu, pemahaman masyarakat yang didominasi oleh ideologi patriarki turut berkontribusi secara signifikan pada prevalensi literatur fiqh populer yang bersifat bias gender.]

Keywords

Women's subordination, gender bias, popular *fiqh* literature

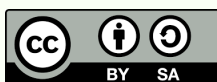
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Introduction

An interesting recent phenomenon in the world of publishing is the increase in the publication of popular Islamic literature. The lack of access to classical *fiqh* literature is accompanied by a growing public interest in consuming popular literature. Popular Fiqh

literature is dominated by self-help books, i.e., books that contain guides, guidelines, and practical solutions for life. These books are based on normative Islamic teachings and packaged in popular language that is more practical and easier to understand.¹ One of the topics that is widely discussed in popular *fiqh* literature is household issues. This literature discusses the ideal family image, family motivation, and solutions to family problems. Muzir, in his 2013 research, found that there were approximately 406 books, or about 3.25% of all Islamic self-help books in circulation, with household topics.² These books came about because of the construction of the household discourse that was developing in Indonesia. One discourse that is very important in household matters is the discourse about women. Through these household texts, the discourse on women is constructed in a way that is based on the normative framework that is developing in society. Based on this normative framework, women are placed as the most important subjects in the context of forming a good and prosperous family.

Many studies have been conducted on the representation of women in *fiqh* literature. For example, the study conducted by Gojali et al. on the role and position of women in the book *Taqrib*³, as also studied by Husin by emphasizing gender bias discourse.⁴ The position of women in *Kitab Kuning* (the Yellow Book) was also studied by Masdar F. Mas'udi in his writings⁵, as well as in the writings of Martin Van Bruinessen.⁶ These studies tend to analyze women in classical *fiqh* literature. The representation of women in the household is related to legal rules. These legal rules are represented in the book of *fiqh* as a medium. Many studies have been conducted on the legal discourse represented by the media, both print and online. This study, including Arifki, highlighted the representation of family law

¹ Ridwan Muzir, "Santri Tanpa Kiai: Kajian Psikoanalisa Atas Judul-Judul Buku Swabantu Islami Di Indonesia" (Univesitas Sanata Dharma, 2013).

² Muzir.

³ Dudang Gojali, Nandang Abdurrohman, and Hapid Ali, "The Representation of Women's Role and Position in *Taqrib* Book: A Discourse Analysis Study," *Mazahib Jurnal Pemikiran Hukum Islam* 19, no. 1 (2020): 135–60, <https://doi.org/10.21093/mj.v19i1.1737>.

⁴ Gusti Muhammad Irhamna Husin, "Representasi Bias Gender Dalam Kitab Fiqh (Studi Terhadap Kitab *At-Taqrīb* Karya Abu Syuja Al Isfahani)," *Al Qalam: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 13, no. 1 (2019): 1, <https://doi.org/10.35931/aq.v0i0.129>.

⁵ Masdar F Mas'udi, "Perempuan Di Antara Lembaran Kitab Kuning," in *Membincang Feminisme: Diskursus Gender Perspektif Islam*, ed. Mansour Fakih (Surabaya: Risalah Gusti, 1996), 167.

⁶ Martin Van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning Dan Perempuan, Perempuan Dan Kitab Kuning," in *Wanita Islam Indonesia Dalam Kajian Tekstual Dan Kontekstual*, ed. Lies M. Marcoes Natsir and Johan Hendrik Meuleman (Jakarta: INIS, 1993), 173.

in print-based media which are popular Islamic self-help books.⁷ This study focused on family law discourse in general. Jihad, continuing Sofjan's research⁸, analyzing Mamah Dedeh's lectures in *Mamah and Aa Beraksi* program.⁹ Nur Hadi examined films with Islamic nuances that narrate Islamic family law.¹⁰ Yulmitra specifically examined family legal representation on social media, namely Instagram.¹¹ Yazid commented on the polygamy discourse represented by Indonesian preachers on YouTube.¹² Ansori also examined the contestation of gender discourse in family law on social media.¹³ These studies generally concluded that the media play an important role in representing the law to society. The law presented is dominated by conservative legal discourse and gender bias. However, these studies have not specifically discussed the discourse of women in the home, especially in popular *fiqh* literature.

This study sought to complement previous studies on the representation of women in *fiqh* literature and legal discourse in the media. This study focused on the discourse representation of women in the household in popular *fiqh* literature. Therefore, this study was conducted to answer the question of how women in the household are represented in popular *fiqh* literature. To find the answer to this question, this research focused on the representation of the role and position of women in husband-and-wife relations in the household in popular *fiqh* literature. It is important to conduct this study because popular *fiqh* literature is currently more popular among the younger generation due to the limited

⁷ Arifki Budia Warman, "Konservatisme Fikih Keluarga (Kajian Terhadap Buku-Buku Populer Rumah Tangga Islami)," *Tesis Magister UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta*, 2017.

⁸ Dicky Sofjan, "Gender Construction in Dakwahtainment: A Case Study of Hati Ke Hati Bersama Mamah Dedeh," *Al-Jami'ab* 50, no. 1 (2012): 57–74, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2012.501.57-74>.

⁹ Muhammad Jihadul Hayat, "Preaching Islamic Legal Rules on Screen: Conservatism on Islamic Family Law in Digital-Based Dakwah Program Mamah Dan Aa Beraksi," *Al-Jami'ab* 60, no. 2 (2022): 427–66, <https://doi.org/10.14421/AJIS.2022.602.427-466>; Muhammad Jihadul Hayat, "Tradisionalisme Pemikiran Hukum Keluarga Islam Dalam Dakwahtainment (Studi Relasi Gender Pada Vidio Ceramah Program Mamah Dan Aa Beraksi)" (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2019).

¹⁰ Mukhammad Nur Hadi, "Conservative Muslim on the Screen: The Narrative of Islamic Family Law in Indonesian Films," *Al-Ahwal* 14, no. 2 (2021): 133–45, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2021.14202>.

¹¹ Yulmitra Handayani, "Hukum Perkawinan Islam di Ruang Digital: Bias Gender Dalam Wacana Hukum Perkawinan Di Instagram," *Al-Ahwal* 14, no. 2 (2021): 112–32, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2021.14201>.

¹² Mhd Yazid, "NEGLECTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS: Indonesian YouTube Preachers' Legal Opinion on Polygamy," *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 16, no. 1 (April 25, 2023): 69, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2023.16104>.

¹³ Ansori and Muhammad Iqbal Juliansyahzen, "The Contestation of the Family Law Discourse in the Digital Age: Islam, State, and Gender," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 6, no. 1 (2022): 244–72, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v6i1.9111>.

access to classical *fiqh* literature. Moreover, popular *fiqh* literature, as a medium of knowledge transformation, certainly brings new *fiqh* knowledge to the readers. In other words, there is a legal discourse provided by popular literature. The discourse contained in the literature is transformed to the reader so that a new religious authority emerges that can provide religious knowledge to the reader.¹⁴ Fiqh will shape the way the younger generation thinks about religious knowledge in their lives.

This research is library research. This research was conducted on popular *fiqh* literature, especially family *fiqh*. In popular *fiqh* literature on family, the focus is on women's issues, on how women are positioned in the relationship between husband and wife, as well as their role in the household. Therefore, this research data focused on literature about marital relations. Based on a search of the online catalog of Gramedia and the new social agency, about 189 books were found about Islamic literature about husband-and-wife relations. Of the 189 books, books that discussed about wives were more numerous than those that discuss about husbands or both. There were about 94 books about wives, 59 books about husbands, and 36 books about both (husband and wife). The books discussed about roles, mistakes, and even prayers and practices that husbands and wives must do to make their lives better. Popular *fiqh* literature about marital relations was selected randomly by taking samples from several literatures. The data were then analyzed descriptively using a qualitative content analysis approach. This article began by explaining the position of print-based media, especially popular literature, as a medium that plays an important role in the transformation of legal knowledge among the public. Next, this article presented some data that explained the representation of women in popular *fiqh* literature. Finally, the data were analyzed using the qualitative content analysis method.

¹⁴ Najib Kailani, Munirul Ikhwan, and Suhadi, "Preface: Meneroka Wacana Islam Publik Dan Politik Kebangsaan Ulama Di Kota-Kota Indonesia," in *Ulama, Politik, Dan Narasi Kebangsaan: Fregmentasi Otoritas Keagamaan Di Kota-Kota Indonesia*, ed. Ibnu Burdah, Najib Kailani, and Munirul Ikhwan (Yogyakarta: PusPIDeP, 2019).

Dissemination of Islamic Law in Popular Literature

The media, both print and online, have undergone very significant developments.¹⁵ The media plays an important role in the development of Islam¹⁶, especially in the dissemination of Islamic teachings. The spread of Islamic teachings was initially carried out not only orally by Islamic authorities through *halaqa* studies, but also by building Islamic institutions such as Islamic boarding schools.¹⁷ However, with advances in printing technology, the spread and development of Islamic knowledge began to use new media¹⁸, such as books, newspapers, and magazines. Through these media, religious symbols and discourses spread, a process Herbert describes as “religious publications.”¹⁹ Print-based media play a role in inculcating Islamic ideology²⁰ which also causes ideological rivalry among Muslim communities in Indonesia.²¹ In Indonesia, Islamic publishing is part of private efforts to create and sustain Islamic boarding schools and student movements.²² This fact complements the role of the print media in producing and disseminating Islamic knowledge, especially Islamic law in society.

The spread of Islamic law is most visible in print-based media such as books. At the beginning of the 20th century, printed media in the form of Islamic books began to play a role as a source of Islamic learning, replacing the books of classical scholars.²³ Islamic

¹⁵ Michael W. Albin, “The Book in the Islamic World: A Selective Bibliography,” in *The Book in the Islamic World: The Written and Communication in the Middle East*, ed. George N Atiyeh (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 273.

¹⁶ Francis Robinson, “Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print,” *Modern Asian Studies* 27, no. 1 (1993): 229–51.

¹⁷ Eva F. Nisa, “Creative and Lucrative Dawa: The Visual Culture of Instagram amongst Female Muslim Youth in Indonesia,” *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 5, no. 1–2 (2018): 68–89, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22142312-12340085>.

¹⁸ Robinson, “Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print.”

¹⁹ David E.J. Herbert, “Theorizing Religion and Media in Contemporary Societies: An Account of Religious ‘Publicization,’” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 14, no. 6 (December 2011): 626–48, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549411419981>.

²⁰ Akh. Muzakki, “Cultivating Islamic Ideology: Print Islam in Post-Independence Indonesia (A Preliminary Study),” *Studia Islamika* 14, no. 3 (December 2007): 419–46, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v14i3.543>.

²¹ Robert W. Hefner, “Print Islam: Mass Media and Ideological Rivalries among Indonesian Muslims,” *Indonesia* 64 (October 1997): 77, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3351436>; C. W. Watson, “Islamic Books and Their Publishers: Notes on the Contemporary Indonesian Scene,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 16, no. 2 (May 2005): 177–210, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/eti131>.

²² Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, “Print, Islam, and the Prospects for Civic Pluralism: New Religious Writing and Their Audiences,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 1 (January 1997): 43–62, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/8.1.43>.

²³ Jajat Burhanudin, “The Fragmentation of Religious Authority: Islamic Print Media in Early 20th Century Indonesia,” *Studia Islamika* 11, no. 1 (2004): 23–62, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v11i1.609>; Jajat

literature began to circulate widely in society. Islamic literature can be divided into three styles: ideological Islam, puritanism, and popular piety.²⁴ This third type of self-help literature model then became widespread after the 2000s.²⁵ Popular literature has shifted to ideological literature, especially among millennials.²⁶ The rise of popular literature was influenced by three factors. First, the development of technology and the printing industry. This development was also driven by economic interests. Second, cultural changes due to changes in modes of knowledge. The transmission of knowledge, which was initially oral, became literate or written. Third, the condition of human beings who become "rational masters" of themselves in modern life. In this modern era, people can rationally determine what is best for themselves.²⁷

Despite its rapid development, popular *fiqh* literature has become an important medium for the transmission of Islamic law. The relationship between Islamic legal discourse and popular literature must be seen in the social context in which this literature is produced. This is because discourse refers to the relationship between the social context of language use. Thus, popular literature is a text produced based on the social context and religious discourse that is currently developing in Indonesia, especially Islamic law. Islamic popular texts are not only a profitable business, but also an important preaching medium in spreading Islamic ideology. Muzakiki notes the relationship between the transmission of Islamic intellectuals, the cultivation of Islamic ideology, and the accumulation of profits in the Islamic publishing industry.²⁸ The texts represented are also closely related not only to religious discourse but also to social, economic, and political discourse. Messick also notes that changes in the format of interpretation of religious texts are closely related to shifts in

Burhanudin, "Islamic Book and Islam in Indonesia: A Historical Perspective," *Insaniyat: Journal of Islam and Humanities* 6, no. 1 (2021): 29–41, <https://doi.org/10.15408/insaniyat.v6i1.21946>.

²⁴ Munirul Ikhwan, "Produksi Wacana Islam(Is) Di Indonesia: Revitalisasi Islam Publik Dan Politik Muslim," in *Literatur Keislaman Generasi Millenial: Transmisi, Apropiasi, Dan Kontestasi*, ed. Noorhaidi Hasan (Yogyakarta: Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 2018), 75.

²⁵ Muzir, "Santri Tanpa Kiai: Kajian Psikoanalisa Atas Judul-Judul Buku Swabantu Islami Di Indonesia."

²⁶ Najib Kailani, "Perkembangan Literatur Islamisme Populer Di Indonesia: Apropiasi, Adaptasi, Dan Genre," in *Literatur Keislaman Generasi Millenial: Transmisi, Apropiasi, Dan Kontestasi*, ed. Noorhaidi Hasan (Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 2017), 143.

²⁷ Muzir, "Santri Tanpa Kiai: Kajian Psikoanalisa Atas Judul-Judul Buku Swabantu Islami Di Indonesia."

²⁸ Akh. Muzakki, "The Islamic Publication Industry in Modern Indonesia: Intellectual Transmission, Ideology, and the Profit Motive" (University of Queensland Australia, 2009).

the mode of production and the social, economic, and political transformation of Muslim societies.²⁹

The relationship between texts and discourses outside of this can be seen, for example, in the role of women in domestic life. Classical fiqh literature presents women as the second group below men. This subordination of women has been demonstrated in several studies. For example, Husin's research concluded that the representation of gender bias is evident in Taqrib book.³⁰ Similarly, in other classical books such as Uqūd al-Lujjain and Qurratul 'Uyūn, which emphasize the superiority of men in husband and wife relationships,³¹ although several fiqh texts prioritize gender equality.³² The discourse on women in the household is not only found in classical fiqh literature, but with the widespread publication of Islamic books, women have also become objects represented in popular literature.

The Role, Right and Dutie of Women in the Household in Popular Fiqh Literature

This study focused on popular *fiqh* literature about husband-wife relations in the home. Based on a search of the bookstore's online catalog, at least 189 popular books about husband-wife relations were found. Of the 189 books, more are about wives than about husbands or about both. There were about 94 books about wives, 59 books about husbands, and 36 books about both (husband and wife). The book discussed the issue of roles, even the prayers and practices that husband and wife need to do to make their lives better.³³ In this study several books were taken randomly as samples to see the representation of women in the household.

²⁹ Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

³⁰ Husin, "Representasi Bias Gender Dalam Kitab Fiqh (Studi Terhadap Kitab At-Taqrīb Karya Abu Syuja Al Isfahani)."

³¹ Ahmad Munawir, Indri Maidona, and Hayatun Nufus, "Fikih Seksual Dan Relasi Gender Kajian Kitab Qurrotul 'Uyun," *Hukama* 2, no. 1 (2023): 1–16; Didi Pramono, "The Authority of Kyai Toward the Santri: A Review of Gender Construction at Pondok Pesantren," *KOMUNITAS: International Journal of Indonesian Society and Culture* 10, no. 1 (September 4, 2018): 92–100, <https://doi.org/10.15294/komunitas.v10i1.8142>.

³² Sheila Fakhria, Moh. Shaleh Afyuddin, and Muhammad Nazir Alias, "The Indigenous Idea of Gender Equality: Husband-Wife Relationship in the Manuscript of Adabul Muasaroh," *Juris: Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah* 22, no. 2 (2023): 317–28, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v22i2.9475>.

³³ Warman, "Konservatisme Fikih Keluarga (Kajian Terhadap Buku-Buku Populer Rumah Tangga Islami)."

The representation of women in the household can be seen in the relationship between husband and wife as constructed in popular *fiqh* texts. The husband is portrayed as the head of the household who has an important role in providing for the needs of the household. Meanwhile, the wife is portrayed as a housewife who has the task of managing the needs of her husband, children, and home. This can be seen in the choice of words associated with the husband, such as “leader,” “imam,” “head,” “dream,” “pious,” and words with similar connotations. The use of these words is clearly visible in several book titles, such as *Kiat-kiat membahagiakan Istri, Mejadi Suami Idaman* (Tips for Making Your Wife Happy, Becoming a Dream Husband)³⁴, *Suami Shalih Dambaan Istri* (Shalih Husband, Wife’s Dream), and so on. However, there are several books that do not have the husband’s role in the title, such as *Agar Suami Disayang Istri* (How to be loved by wife)³⁵, However, the title still indicates things that husbands must do in the home to be loved by their wives.

Meanwhile, the words "shalihah," "muslimah," "serve," and "make happy" are often used for wives. The wife is presented as a subject who must be able to serve her husband well in order for domestic life to go well. This can be seen, for example, in the book *Tips Melayani Suami Layaknya Istri Nabi* (Tips for Serving Your Husband Like what Prophet's Wife did)³⁶, *Istri yang Hebat: Kiat2 Membahagiakan & Mengagungkan Suami Sejak Malam Pertama* (A Great Wife: Tips to Keep Your Husband Happy & Appreciative After the Marriage Ceremony)³⁷, and so on. Some book titles even explicitly describe a woman's role in the home, such as *Bahagia Hanya Menjadi Ibu Rumah Tangga* (Happy Just Being a Housewife).³⁸ There are also several titles that do not prioritize roles in the home, such as the book *Wanita Karier dalam Pandangan Islam* (Career Women in Islamic Views, The Love Language of Husband and Wife).³⁹, *Bahasa Cinta Suami Istri* (The Love Language of Husband and Wife).⁴⁰, *Buku pintar Suami Istri Mempesona* (Smart book Charming Husband and Wife)⁴¹, and

³⁴ Firanda Andirja Abidin, *Kiat-Kiat Membahagiakan Istri Menjadi Suami Idaman* (Jakarta: Penerbit Naashirussunnah, 2012).

³⁵ Muhammad ibnu Ibrahim Al-Hamd, *Agar Suami Disayang Istri* (Jakarta: Pustaka Alt-Tazkia, 2005).

³⁶ Nor Fadhilah, *Tips Melayani Suami Layaknya Istri Nabi* (Yogyakarta: Noktah, 2018).

³⁷ Nurlaela El-Anwar, *Istri Yang Hebat : Kiat-Kiat Membahagiakan Dan Mengagungkan Suami Sejak Malam Pertama* (Yogyakarta: Diva Press, 2015).

³⁸ Jazimah Al Muhyi, *Bahagia Hanya Menjadi Ibu Rumah Tangga* (Jakarta: Inti Medina, 2009).

³⁹ Anshorullah, *Wanita Karier Dalam Pandangan Islam* (Klaten: Mitra Media Pustaka, 2010).

⁴⁰ Karim Shadzili, *Bahasa Cinta Suami Istri* (Surakarta: Pustaka Al Kautsar, 2012).

⁴¹ Hepi Ando Bastoni, *Buku Pintar Suami Istri Mempesona* (Jakarta: Belanoor, 2011).

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other books. However, the discourse raised in the book generally prioritizes roles in the household.

The choice of words in some titles is clearly to represent the roles of family members. The words used are words directly related to the role. It is the same with the book *Membimbing Istri Mendampingi Suami* (Guiding Wives to Accompany Husbands).⁴² The title indicates that the wife's role is to accompany while the husband's role is to guide. These roles are emphasized in the sub-discussion titles, which are then explained in the explanations. For example, in the sub-discussion title on livelihood, the words "obligatory" tend to be emphasized on the husband: "Providing for the family is the husband's obligation."⁴³ The sentence used in the title of the sub-discussion emphasizes the husband's role in the household which is earning a living. The confirmation of the husband's role as the head of the family, whose job is to earn the living, can also be seen in the sentences used.

"Husbands should try as much as possible to provide for the family with a livelihood that is halal and obtained in a way that is approved by Allah SWT. A husband should not stand idly by and should not be stingy with the people for whom he is responsible. He must provide for his family sincerely, hoping for Allah's approval and for the sake of his family's happiness."⁴⁴

From the sentence structure used, there is an affirmation of the husband's role. The use of the words "he should try his best", "it is not appropriate to stand idly by", and "not be stingy" reinforce the husband's role. Livelihood is also associated with the words "halal" and "blessed" which indicate that the husband's role is to earn a good living. The paragraph even ends with the words "sincere" and "for the sake of the family's happiness" to reaffirm this role. In the text, the wife is portrayed as the husband's servant and home organizer. These roles are emphasized, for example, in the sub-discussion titles "Able to Provide Satisfaction in Bed," "Smart at Managing the Family Economy," "Smart at Organizing the Home," and so on⁴⁵. The sentences used indicate that it is very important

⁴² Fuad Kauma and Nipan, *Membimbing Istri Mendampingi Suami* (Yogyakarta: Mitra Pustaka, 1997).

⁴³ Kauma and Nipan.

⁴⁴ Kauma and Nipan.

⁴⁵ Kauma and Nipan.

for the wife to play this role well so that the husband is happy and the household is prosperous. Sentences representing the wife's role, for example:

“As the head of her husband's household, a wife must be good at caring for and managing the household, including managing the family economy. To make her husband happy, a pious wife should be grateful for her husband's support and strive to live a simple life.”⁴⁶

The words “head of the household,” “take care of,” “manage,” “make happy,” “grateful,” and “strive” in this sentence emphasize the wife's role in the household. This sentence also indicates that someone can be said to be a pious wife if she is able to manage the household and make her husband happy. This sentence is also a confirmation of the previous paragraph regarding a wife's duties in the home. In addition to being portrayed as the head of the household, wives are often portrayed as women who play an important role in bringing their husbands to a path that is approved by Allah. In the household, husbands tend to behave in ways that are not in accordance with the norms. This is where the role of the wife is really needed. Texts that illustrate this are texts that discuss the role of the wife separately, for example, the book *Menyikapi Tingkah Laku Suami* (Responding to Husband's Behavior).⁴⁷ In general, the book provides guidelines for wives to guide their husbands to the best path when the husband strays.

The words that tend to be used in the text are words of advice, such as “remind,” “ask,” “keep,” and so on. Based on the use of these words, it can be understood that the wife is still represented as the “loser” because her role is only as a reminder, asking for mercy, even as an object. This can be seen, for example, when the problem that arises is that the husband is cheating. The cause of the problem is usually blamed on the wife, and the wife is the one who should fix it.

“The triggers are many and varied, but they all boil down to disharmony in the relationship between husband and wife. “It could be because of poor communication, a fussy wife, too many demands from your partner, lack of attention, or it could be because of unsatisfactory sex life.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Kauma and Nipan.

⁴⁷ Muhammad Abdul Ghoffar, *Menyikapi Tingkah Laku Suami: Solusi Islami Untuk Para Istri* (Jakarta: Almahira, 2010).

⁴⁸ Ghoffar.

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From this sentence it is clear that the main cause of husbands cheating is their wives. A wife who is picky, has many demands, lacks attention, and does not satisfy her husband in bed is a trigger for her husband to cheat. Therefore, for husbands not to cheat, wives must improve their attitudes. Some of the attitudes offered in the text include pampering your husband, dressing up just for him, giving frequent surprises, being a good listener, and even making sex an important part of the marriage.

“And if you want your husband to stop looking at other women, start making sex an important part of the marriage. Try to be more responsive and energetic.”⁴⁹

Husband and wife are shown emphasizing their respective roles. Thus, the relationships established between the subjects in the text are relationships that need and complement each other. This relationship is framed in the context of building a household. If one of the actors in the household does not play his role well, then the household will not develop well. On the other hand, if that role is played well, the household will be good. This relationship of mutual need and complementarity can be seen in texts that directly address the issue of household building. These texts are found, for example, in the book *Dalam Bingkai Mahabbah: Menjadi Suami Istri Idaman* (In the Frame of Mahabbah: Becoming the Dream Husband and Wife)⁵⁰, *Membangun Keluarga Bahagia* (Building a happy family)⁵¹, *Tuntunan Mewujudkan Keluarga Bahagia* (Guide to Creating a Happy Family),⁵² and so on. The text cannot be separated from the discussion of the relationship between husband and wife in building a happy family. In addition, this relationship can also be seen in books that directly discuss the behavior of the husband and wife, such as the book *Menyikapi Tingkah Laku Suami* (Responding to Husband's Behavior)⁵³. The texts in the book explicitly explain the relationships that must be established in the home, especially by the wife, so that the husband's behavior does not deviate from what has been determined by Islamic teachings.

“In responding to the ups and downs of domestic life, a woman must be truly sane and objective, able to control her emotions and feelings. He must put his household

⁴⁹ Ghoffar.

⁵⁰ M. Thobroni and Aliyah A. Munir, *Dalam Bingkai Mahabbah: Menjadi Suami Istri Idaman* (Jakarta: Citra Risalah, 2011).

⁵¹ Bambang Udoyono, *Membangun Keluarga Bahagia Dengan Iman, Cinta, Dan Wacana* (Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo, 2019).

⁵² Fatchul Mubin Hamid, *Tuntunan Mewujudkan Keluarga Bahagia* (Yogyakarta: Qibla, 2014).

⁵³ Ghoffar, *Menyikapi Tingkah Laku Suami: Solusi Islami Untuk Para Istri*.

and family before himself. That is, when she must make a decision, she must not be selfish and ignore the interests of her husband and children.”⁵⁴

Based on the text, wives must give priority to family life. The relationship shown in the text is that the wife plays a very important role in determining the integrity of the household. She is shown not to be selfish and ignore her husband and children. Therefore, she must meet the shortcomings and needs of her husband as well as the needs of the children. This also indicates that the relationship that is built is an unequal power relationship where the husband has more power in the household than the wife and children.

This unequal relationship tends to discriminate against women. Discrimination against women is common in several books that deal with issues of husband-wife relationships. For example, the book *Membimbing Istri Mendampingi Suami* (Guiding Wives to Accompany Husbands) by Fuad Kauma and Nipan.⁵⁵ From the title of the editorial, the position of the wife is inferior to that of the husband. The word “leading” for wives indicates that the wife is someone who is weak and needs to be led and directed by her husband. The word "accompany" for husbands indicates that husbands do not need to be directed or guided by their wives, but only need to be accompanied and helped in their domestic life.

The roles of husband and wife described in the book tend to be one-sided. The wife only plays a role in the home, such as managing the family economy, being grateful for her husband’s support, living simply, taking care of the family’s assets, and other roles, such as managing the home. In fact, if the wife is able to earn a living outside, then this role should be more flexible. The husband's role in the household is more emphasized on supporting and guiding the wife. This indicates that the husband has more power than the wife in the household. The same thing can also be seen in the book *Tuntunan Kehidupan Suami-Istri* (Guidance for Husband-Wife Life) by Shaykh Yusuf A. Ba’darani. Even though this book is a guide to family life, both for husbands and wives, in its discussion it places more emphasis on wife issues. The discussion includes the issue of wife’s obedience to her

⁵⁴ Ghoffar.

⁵⁵ Kauma and Nipan, *Membimbing Istri Mendampingi Suami*.

husband, wife's obligations, *nusyuz*, wives who are part of the occupation of heaven, and wives who are cursed.⁵⁶ In explaining the cursed wives, he mostly refers to misogynistic hadiths, such as the curse for wives who leave their homes without their husbands' permission,⁵⁷ and refused her husband's request for sexual intercourse.⁵⁸

This emphasis on the wife's role in the home is specifically discussed in several books. For example, the book *Menyikapi Tingkah Laku Suami* (Responding to Husbands' Behavior) by Muhammad Abdul Ghoffar specifically discusses the role of wives in dealing with problems in their households.⁵⁹ Wives are advised to prioritize the household, so when the husband has problems, the wife must respond calmly and accept all of the husband's shortcomings. This indicates that even if the husband is wrong, the wife must still give in and prioritize the continuity of the household.

The book *Kiat-Kiat Membahagiakan Suami Labir-Batin Sejak Malam Pertama* (Tips for Making Your Husband Happy Body and Soul since the Consummation of a Marriage) by Nurlaela el-Anwari also shows gender bias.⁶⁰ This book, which has been printed five times, describes in general terms what a wife must do to her husband from the beginning of their marriage, from the first night until the following nights. In giving these tips, Nurlaela tends to present women as subjects who must do this and that in order for family life to run smoothly and peacefully.

Although dominated by the discourse of gender bias, some literature also gives the impression of gender equality, for example, the book *Awas Illegal Wedding: Dari Penghulu Liar Hingga Perselingkuban* (Beware of Illegal Weddings: From Illegal Marriage to Infidelity) by Nurul Huda Haem.⁶¹ Nurul rejects domestic violence in her work because violence can cause discomfort in the family. Therefore, husband and wife must be equal, complement each other and provide security for each other. Apart from that, when discussing polygamy, Nurul stated that polygamy must be discussed in the spirit of universal humanity. The pros and cons of polygamy should not be blind to the many factors that destroy the integrity of

⁵⁶ Syekh Yusuf A. Ba'darani, *Tuntunan Kehidupan Suami Istri: Membentengi Keluarga, Melanggengkan* (Bogor: Al Azhar Freshzone Publishing, 2013).

⁵⁷ Ba'darani.

⁵⁸ Ba'darani.

⁵⁹ Ghoffar, *Menyikapi Tingkah Laku Suami: Solusi Islami Untuk Para Istri*.

⁶⁰ El-Anwar, *Istri Yang Hebat : Kiat-Kiat Membahagiakan Dan Mengagungkan Suami Sejak Malam Pertama*.

⁶¹ Nurul Huda Haem, *Awas Illegal Wedding: Dari Penghulu Liar Hingga Perselingkuban* (Jakarta: Hikmah, 2007).

the household. Even if polygamy is allowed, Nurul said, one should never close one's eyes to the plight of women.⁶²

Fahmie, in his book *Siapa Bilang Poligami Itu Sunnah* (Who Says Polygamy is Sunnah), also emphasizes the evil of polygamy. According to him, polygamy is not the Sunnah of the Prophet, but the assumption that polygamy is Sunnah is simply based on misunderstandings of the verses and Sunnah of the Prophet. Quoting Shihab, Anshori explained that polygamy is like an emergency door on an airplane that can only be opened in certain emergency situations. Therefore, in his explanation, Anshori places more emphasis on polygamy, not on a Sunnah, the effects of polygamy, and the things that must be done to prevent husbands from polygamy. In other words, in his book, Anshori tries to build the mindset of husbands not to engage in polygamy because polygamy is more harmful to women as wives.⁶³

Although Gus Arifin's book *Menikah untuk Bahagia* (Marriage is for Happiness) is dominated by classical jurisprudence and gender bias discourse, some of his explanations also pay little attention to women's rights. This can be seen, for example, in his explanation of the wife's livelihood. According to Gus, if his wife is willing to earn a living for various reasons, then it is not a problem for him. If she is not willing, she can go to court. Likewise, if a wife was a worker before marriage, the husband has no right to forbid her.⁶⁴ Gus also discussed the issue of prenuptial agreements. According to Gus, the prenuptial agreement is expected to be a reference in case of conflict. A prenuptial agreement can also be a basis for each partner's rights and responsibilities in the household. A prenuptial agreement is one of the provisions that can provide guarantees to women in their family life. In explaining this, Gus also referred to the provisions of Article 29 of the Marriage Law, as well as to the provisions of religious sects.⁶⁵ From the description of these data, it can be understood that the popular *fiqh* literature on male-female relations in the home wants to provide knowledge on how to build families and relationships to make them better. It is just that this knowledge is dominated by a gendered discourse that subordinates women.

⁶² Haem.

⁶³ Anshori Fahmie, *Siapa Bilang Poligami Itu Sunnah* (Depok: Pustaka IIMaN, 2007).

⁶⁴ Gus Arifin, *Menikah Untuk Bahagia* (Jakarta: Elex Media Komputindo, 2013), 345–48.

⁶⁵ Arifin, *Menikah Untuk Bahagia*.

Perpetuating Subordination: Gender Inequality in the Household

The results of this study indicate that women are represented in popular *fiqh* literature as subjects subordinate to men. Women's roles are limited to *the kitchen, the well, and the bed*, in other words, the domestic sphere, while men's roles are in the public sphere. This leads to gender inequality. Therefore, the discourse of gender bias is more dominant in popular *fiqh* literature. This study reflects the circulation of popular *fiqh* literature in the home, which is dominated by gender discourse, which is an attempt to perpetuate the subordination of women. From these findings, several things need to be discussed, such as why gender bias discourse is dominant in popular *fiqh* literature, even though this literature exists in an era of technological progress and modernization.

In principle, gender differences are not a problem as long as there is no gender inequality.⁶⁶ But in families there is a lot of gender inequality, especially against women. This injustice is legitimized in classical *fiqh*, so it is not uncommon for society to tolerate it. Based on this concept, the presence of popular *fiqh* literature with gender bias discourse begins with the writers' references to *fiqh* provisions. The *fiqh* provisions that writers refer to in popular *fiqh* literature tend to be classical *fiqh* literature that is gender biased. Thus, when this discourse is expressed in their works, it comes back to legitimize the provisions of classical *fiqh*. Apart from this, the authors also refer to the Quran and Hadith without any authoritative interpretation and explanation, thus it seems that the authors only use verses and Hadith to support their opinions. This shows that the authors do not have extensive knowledge in this field.

Apart from references to writers who tend to be gender-biased, the presence of popular *fiqh* literature is also accompanied by the orientation of book publishing in Indonesia, which is shifting from alternative discourse to popular themes to survive.⁶⁷ This change in the direction of book publishing has led to a lack of attention to the discourses in the books that are published. Book publishers tend to publish interesting discourses in society that are packaged in popular language so that many people will buy them. In other words, these books are also produced according to the logic of the market. There is a market demand for books that are light, easy to read and contain interesting discussions.

⁶⁶ Mansour Fakih, *Analisis Gender Dan Transformasi Sosial* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2013), 12.

⁶⁷ Adhe, *Declare! Kamar Kerja Penerbit Jogja (1998-2007)* (Yogyakarta: KPJ, 2007), 76.

The existence of popular household *fiqh* literature with a gender bias is also a response to the problematic situation of domestic life in contemporary Indonesian society. This book contains various guidelines and instructions on how to live in the home, as well as solutions for dealing with family problems. The aim is to make the domestic life of the Indonesian people better, more peaceful, and more prosperous. However, it cannot be denied that the current state of Indonesian society is still overshadowed by patriarchal ideology because Indonesian society still maintains the classical *fiqh* paradigm that tends to marginalize women in the family.⁶⁸

Gender biased texts are closely related to patriarchal culture. Patriarchy is a social system in which men have more control and power than women (subordinates). Many women are not aware of their rights due to their disadvantaged socio-cultural background and men's indifference towards women.⁶⁹ However, the strength of patriarchal culture is not caused by men alone. Patriarchal culture cannot survive without the help and cooperation of women, which occurs because of the weak position and power of women. This cooperation occurs because of; gender doctrine, restrictions on educational rights, separation of women's groups and clashing with each other, discrimination in access to economic resources and political power, and giving awards to women who support patriarchal culture.⁷⁰ This patriarchal culture is deeply rooted in Indonesian society.⁷¹ This is evidenced, for example, by the many cases of domestic violence where women are the victims, polygamy, and other cases.⁷² These family problems that lead to the oppression of women at least explain how dominant male power is in the household. The irony is that male dominance in the home has become commonplace in society. This is because

⁶⁸ Fuady Abdullah, Nova Anggraini Putri, and Youssof Salhein, "Revisiting 'Iddah: A Critical Analysis of Gender Equality in Indonesian Feminist Islamic Legal Discourse," *Juris: Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah* 22, no. 2 (2023): 275–90, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v22i2.10320>.

⁶⁹ Elimartati Elimartati et al., "Family Instability: A Study of Livelihoods during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Tanah Datar Regency, Indonesia," *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 22, no. 1 (June 13, 2023): 93–104, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v22i1.6054>.

⁷⁰ Fatahuddin Aziz Siregar et al., "Staying at Home: The Perspectives of Minangkabau Ulemas Concerning Husbands' Provision of Sustenance in Covid-19 Impacted Households," *Juris: Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah* 21, no. 2 (2022): 133–42, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v21i2.6551>.

⁷¹ Busyro Busyro et al., "Female Imam and Khatib: The Shifting in Worship Traditions from Progressive to Conservative in Sungai Landia, West Sumatra, Indonesia," *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 22, no. 1 (June 13, 2023): 39–51, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v22i1.8545>.

⁷² Jumni Nelli et al., "The Immorality of a Husband as the Cause of a Working Wife to File for Divorce Lawsuit in Indonesia," *Juris: Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah* 22, no. 1 (2023): 119–32, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v22i1.7392>.

society's gendered understanding is influenced by the texts that guide family life. The texts that circulate in society are texts that implicitly or explicitly show that men have more power than women in the household. These texts often refer to normative provisions of Islamic law, such as classical *fiqh*, which are gender biased.

Many of the provisions of classical *fiqh* do not correspond to current social conditions. What happened then was a different interpretation of the religious teachings. This is often due to patriarchal interpretations. Many Islamic teachings that have well divided the roles of men and women have apparently had some of their content taken, mistranslated, and then disseminated to Muslims without explaining the full background and arguments. This is what Syafiq Hasyim later called Islamic patriarchy. This term is not an accusation against Islam as a patriarchal religion. Islamic patriarchy is a way of interpreting it by certain groups, whether due to the effects of culture, politics, social roles, and certain histories, resulting in the statement that Islam is a religion that supports patriarchal ideology.⁷³ This has led to many interpretations by ulama who are unconsciously educated or influenced by patriarchal culture, which is clearly detrimental to the rights and position of women.

This patriarchal interpretation can be exemplified by the position of the man as head of the household and the role of the woman as a domestic servant. This understanding is taken from the text that speaks of the higher position of men.⁷⁴ The interpretation that emerges is that men are obligated to earn a living while women take care of the household. Moreover, the wife is obligated to serve her husband in all matters. In fact, Islam teaches the opposite, that it is the husband's duty to take care of the home and the children.⁷⁵ These social conditions and the general understanding of society are then reconstructed and represented by writers in popular literature. This indicates that there is an effort to maintain the status quo through popular texts, which are widely circulated and in demand by the public compared to other authoritative texts.

⁷³ Syafiq Hasyim, *Bebas Dari Patriarkhisme Islam* (Depok: KataKita, 2010), 23.

⁷⁴ Nelli et al., "The Immorality of a Husband as the Cause of a Working Wife to File for Divorce Lawsuit in Indonesia."

⁷⁵ Fatahillah A. Syukur, *Mediasi Perkara KDRT (Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga) Teori Dan Praktik Di Pengadilan Indonesia* (Bandung: CV. Mandar Maju, 2011), 32.

Conclusion

This study found that popular *fiqh* literature on the household, especially on the relationship between husband and wife, was dominated by gender biased discourse by placing women only in the domestic realm, where their position was inferior to that of men. This is because the authors' references tended to refer to the provisions of classical *fiqh*, which were gender biased, and without an authoritative interpretation of the texts. The presence of this literature was also due to the market demands of the publishing industry, which must shift to popular discourses that were of interest to the public. In addition, the understanding of society as dominated by patriarchal ideology also contributed to the presence of popular *fiqh* literature that is gender biased. This study confirmed that the presence of popular *fiqh* literature was an attempt to perpetuate the subordination of women.

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