

**Gender Justice in Islamic Studies Based on Integration-
Interconnection: A Study of the Progressive-Reconstructive
Thought of M. Amin Abdullah**

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Abstract: *This article focuses on one of the current contemporary philosophical discourses, namely the discourse regarding gender justice in Islamic studies, from M. Amin Abdullah's perspective in connection with the current development of Islamic studies. The method used in this research is a descriptive-analytical method with an integration and interconnection approach and deep gender discussions. Islamic Studies emphasizes the need for a meeting point between religion and feminism, which leads to position-taking, which should no longer be shown of power or conflict with each other but look for a common ground for negotiation (consensus). It tries to reveal M. Amin Abdullah's ideas and suggestions regarding studying and interpreting gender issues in Islamic studies. The primary data used in this research are the works of M. Amin Abdullah. Meanwhile, secondary data in this research are books, journal articles, and other websites that discuss Amin Abdullah's thoughts. The research results show that Amin Abdullah emphasizes the need to disseminate more egalitarian and just religious and scientific understanding to reconstruct traditional values that are no longer conducive to the process of social change, including gender bias, which often hinders the achievement of a just society. Here, is a critical*

analysis of the understanding of gender in contemporary Islamic studies from M. Amin Abdullah's perspective. In this way, this article will contribute to developing contemporary Islamic studies into a more inclusive, progressive, and gender-free Islamic scientific discourse.

Keywords: *Gender Justice; M. Amin Abdullah; Progressive; Reconstructive.*

Abstrak: Tulisan ini berfokus pada salah satu wacana filsafat kontemporer saat ini yakni diskursus mengenai keadilan gender dalam studi keislaman perspektif M. Amin Abdullah yang sehubungan dengan perkembangan studi keislaman saat ini. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode deskriptif-analitis dengan pendekatan integrasi dan interkoneksi, diskusi gender dalam *Islamic Studies* menekankan perlu adanya titik temu antara agama dan feminisme yang mengantarkan pada *position taking* keduanya yang seharusnya tidak lagi *show of power* atau saling bertentangan satu sama lain, akan tetapi mencari titik temu negosiasi (consensus). Ini mencoba mengungkap gagasan dan saran M. Amin Abdullah terkait kajian dan interpretasi mengenai isu-isu gender dalam studi Islam. Data primer yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah karya-karya M. Amin Abdullah. Sedangkan data sekunder dalam penelitian ini adalah buku-buku, artikel jurnal, dan *website* lainnya yang membahas tentang pemikiran M. Amin Abdullah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Amin Abdullah menegaskan perlunya sosialisasi pemahaman keagamaan dan keilmuan yang lebih egaliter dan berkeadilan dengan dimaksudkan untuk merekonstruksikan nilai-nilai tradisional yang tidak lagi kondusif bagi proses perubahan sosial, termasuk bias gender yang seringkali menghambat tercapainya masyarakat yang berkeadilan. Di sini, analisis kritis terhadap pemahaman gender dalam studi keislaman kontemporer perspektif M. Amin Abdullah. Dengan demikian, tulisan ini akan berkontribusi pada sumbangsih terhadap perkembangan studi keislaman kontemporer yang menjadi diskursus keilmuan Islam yang lebih inklusif, progresif dan tidak bias gender.

Kata kunci; *Keadilan Gender; M. Amin Abdullah; Progresif; Rekonstruktif*

INTRODUCTION

There is a positive correlation between education and social change. The more evenly distributed and improved the quality of education (the rise of education) in Muslim countries, the more it changes the pattern of thinking and has implications for the social order. Amin Abdullah explains that gender results from a portrait of studies and research on the relationship or relations of men and women in social life, which various scientific disciplines review. Gender is also the result of a style of study that uses a multi-, inter-, and transdisciplinary approach. Reviews and

studies from religious disciplines through the study of scriptural texts and the interpretation of these texts throughout history, reviews from the disciplines of biology and health (reproductive health), economic aspects, social aspects, psychological aspects, legal aspects, political aspects, and so on. All perspectives come together, dialoguing, providing input, improvement, refinement, and criticism. The results will be very different if the relations between men and women are only seen from one scientific perspective: monodisciplinary.¹

In various literature, women are approached and how they are presented. As revealed by Zuhriyah, women have a significant role in efforts to build the civilization of a nation. So far, the stereotype that has always been attached to women is that women are only as *konco wingking* who contribute less in the public sphere, so their existence is less taken into account. As second-class beings, women are considered not to need higher education because they only play a role in the domestic sphere, which is often called the kitchen, well, and mattress. If women are given a good education, they can make extraordinary contributions to the nation. It is believed that education serves as a driving force for social change. This means that education is the key for women to improve their quality of life and contribute to developing a more dignified national civilization. This article will examine the importance of education for women in developing national civilization.²

The same thing was also conveyed by Zuhriyah, et al., who found that many women experience inequality in gender relations, especially in the family environment. This not only has implications for material economic factors but also psychologically and sociologically; there is a complexity of family problems whose impact can lead to the destruction of household relationships and their

¹M. Amin Abdullah, "Gender dalam Studi Keislaman," in *Kata Pengantar dalam Feminisme Muslim di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2019).

²Lailatuzz Zuhriyah, "Perempuan, Pendidikan dan Arsitek Peradaban Bangsa," *Martabat: Jurnal Perempuan dan Anak* 2, no. 2 (2018): 249–268, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21274/martabat.2018.2.2.249-268>.

children's education.³ Zuhriyah said that the theme of gender equality is studied from a social perspective and politics, economics, religion, and education. The concept of equality between men and women, also known as feminism, is offered by the West. However, the concept has only been discussed in recent years. Islam itself has been talking about it since the Prophet Muhammad was sent.⁴

In addition, related to the concept of integration and interconnection initiated by M. Amin Abdullah and its implementation in breaking the dichotomy of rigidity and silence in the development of Islamic studies, in this case including gender issues in Islam, Because, as revealed by Tabrani Tajuddin and Neny Muthiatul Awwaliyyah, so far the picture that has become a discourse in the development of science is confined due to partial reference in obtaining a science. The dichotomy between general science and religion is a problem in the contemporary era. This separation will impact the mismatch between the formulation of scientific discourse and the development of community culture. This will make science as a solution to society's problems stagnate.⁵

Therefore, in its development, a new, fresher breakthrough is needed in facing the times' challenges, as stated by Muhammad Ichsanul Akmal, explaining that in the contemporary era, the Islamic world tends to make a dichotomy between religious and general sciences. M. Amin Abdullah feels it is essential to reconstruct the scientific paradigm to respond to this condition. Abdullah proposed a scientific concept as a theocentric-integralistic spider web in

³Lailatuzz Zuhriyah, Saiful Mustofa, and Ghinanjar Ahmad Syamsudin, "Potret Pergeseran Relasi Gender dan Dampaknya bagi Keluarga Pekerja Migran Indonesia (PMI)," *Martabat: Jurnal Perempuan dan Anak* 4, no. 1 (2020): 41–64, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21274/martabat.2020.4.1.41-64>.

⁴Lailatuzz Zuhriyah, "Relasi Gender dan Rekonstruksi Kritis Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam," *Martabat: Jurnal Perempuan dan Anak* 1, no. 1 (2017): 111–134, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21274/martabat.2017.1.1.111-134>.

⁵Tabrani Tajuddin and Neny Muthiatul Awwaliyyah, "Paradigma Integrasi-Interkoneksi Islamisasi Ilmu dalam Pandangan Amin Abdullah," *Aksiologi: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Ilmu Sosial* 1, no. 2 (2021): 56–61, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.47134/aksiologi.v1i2.11>.

his research. This concept combines religious disciplines with other interrelated disciplines.⁶

In line with the above, Fauzi Aly Mustofa et al. also said that the concept of integration and interconnection is illustrated in the "Theoanthropocentric-Integralistic Science Spider Web." The purpose of the spider web is mutual knowledge between one another that is interrelated (interconnection integration). The ethos and breath of the reintegration of scientific epistemology developed are three things, including *Hadarah al-Nash* (Bayani text culture support), *Hadarah al-'Ilm* (technique, communication), and *Hadarah al-Falsafah* (ethics).⁷ M. Afiquil Adib added that the integration-interconnection paradigm initiated by M. Amin Abdullah is an effort to dialogue normative Islam and historical Islam in the study of Islamic thought so that the variety of Islamic studies can develop and not be confined more comprehensively so that the truth claims of each can be understood proportionally.⁸

Adi Ari Hamzah added that the discipline of M. Amin Abdullah's view of integration-interconnection parses the basis of thought, namely the philosophical meaning and meaning of evaluation in a meeting of disciplines. Has very clear roots in the world of science. The position of the religious, social, natural, and philosophical sciences is an effort to reconcile these general sciences.⁹ That way,

⁶Muhamad Ihsan Hasanudin, "Konsep Pendidikan Islam Menurut Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi," *Syntax Idea* 1, no. 2 (2019): 32–50, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.46799/syntax-idea.v1i2.16>.

⁷Fauzi Aly Mustofa, Ahmad Arifi, and Mahmudah Muhtadi, "Paradigma Integrasi-Interkoneksi dalam Studi Islam di Perguruan Tinggi," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 9, no. 1 (2024): 5061–5077, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v9i1.12556>.

⁸ M. Afiquil Adib, "UPAYA MENDIALOGISKAN PENDEKATAN NORMATIF DAN HISTORIS DALAM STUDI ISLAM: Konsep Integrasi-Interkoneksi Amin Abdullah," *Al-Tarbawi Al-Haditsah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (2022): 87–97, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24235/tarbawi.v7i2.11665>.

⁹Adi Ari Hamzah, "Analisis Makna Intergrasi-Interkoneksi," *Pappasang* 2, no. 2 (2020): 33–53, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.46870/jiat.v2i2.69>.

the integration-interconnection paradigm solves the dichotomy between religion and science.¹⁰

Furthermore, about gender issues in Islam, especially regarding the role and position of women in Islam, M. Amin Abdullah explained that there are at least three aspects of women's existence that are most discussed and become discourses in society, including their bodies, their roles, and their thoughts. For example, about the female body, the resulting discourse can start from being a symbol of purity, fertility, and satisfaction to being called a source of disaster. The practical consequence is that women's roles vary, ranging from being considered only capable of taking care of domestic areas such as the kitchen, well, and bed to being considered the determinant of the nation's future. Women's participation in these roles, in turn, is also associated with women's thinking preferences, which divide women into various groups of thought.¹¹

On the other hand, gender thinkers and feminism propose the fact that, from the beginning, the conversation about women has been unequal, unfair, and disparate. Whether viewed from any aspect, be it her body, her role, or her thoughts, women are discussed in a way that historically contains many biases, be it political bias, ideological bias, or even gender bias itself. These biases end up ostensibly talking about women and for the benefit of women, but in practice, they benefit men and harm women both implicitly and explicitly. For example, discourses that are familiar in society, such as how the discourse of the female body is constructed as a symbol of purity, are then used as propaganda to confine women in the house and keep them away from public access. At first glance, it seems like protecting or keeping women from the “dirty” outside world, but it reduces the development of women's potential to take part in society.

One of the most debatable biases in the discourse around women's issues comes primarily from religion. Not only Islam but all world religions. In Islam,

¹⁰Dewi Masyitoh et al., “Amin Abdullah dan Paradigma Integrasiinterkoneksi,” *JSSH: Jurnal Sains Sosial dan Humaniora* 4, no. 1 (2020): 81–88, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30595/jssh.v4i1.5973>.

¹¹Abdullah, “Gender dalam Studi Keislaman.”

for example, women are included in special discussions because, in many verses, the Qur'an talks about women on specific topics, such as inheritance, marriage, leadership, and so on. Given that the Qur'an is the primary reference in determining the rules of law in Islam, women automatically become the object of discussion of Islamic law. This brings the conversation about women to a single point as human beings. At the same time, she contains assumptions different from those of men and has explicitly her world, which is then known in various references to *Fiqh an-Nisa`*.

This is where the “tension” between genderists and feminists begins in understanding the instructions or rules in Islamic law. The struggle of genderists and feminists, or the women's movement that seeks to remove women from the inequality and injustice created by male interests, is "accused" of not recognizing the differences between men and women or that women do have their world. When women's movements affect many women, especially women in the Islamic world, they are seen as a threat from the outside, and the West is blamed. Not as a result of education in the world's nations that has implications for social change.

Later, when the women's emancipation movement in the Islamic world began to rise and called itself Muslim feminism, this movement was inevitably considered a threat from within that should be responded to differently. Most commonly, they would be accused of heresy or infidelity. However, what has happened is that many Muslim feminist ideas have become a turning point in the interpretation of the Islamic world itself. The “struggle” for the legitimacy of interpreting Qur'anic verses is inevitable. Interpretation and understanding of debates involving various scientific disciplinary perspectives gave birth to many exciting discussions. Even from this gender study, a typology of hadith has emerged, which is referred to as hadith and tends to disrespect or demean the status and dignity of women. This cluster of hadith has not been found in the Scholastic era.

From the above issues, M. Amin Abdullah explains that there are two mainstream approaches to interpreting and understanding verses: the textual and contextual approaches. Each gave birth to many thoughts, which were then grouped into literalist, moderate, and progressive groups. The readiness and unpreparedness to face these developments are essential to use as a measuring tool to prove how close and far the Islamic world faces the challenges of the times, which, among others, are caused by the education process (education for all; co-education). In the scholastic era, no female interpreters came to the surface because women did not have access to education, did not have the opportunity to study or attend school, let alone do research as well and as evenly as they are today.

In responding to these ongoing changes, M. Amin Abdullah emphasizes the need for a meeting point between religion and feminism that leads to position-taking between the two, which should no longer be a show of power or conflict with each other but look for a meeting point of negotiation (consensus). These meeting points give birth to the possibility of reconstructing the meanings that have been established, starting in the family, institutions, and society.

METHOD

The method used in this research is a descriptive-analytical method with an integration and interconnection approach. Gender discussions in Islamic Studies emphasize the need for a meeting point between religion and feminism that leads to position-taking; both should no longer be a show of power or conflicting with each other but looking for a meeting point of negotiation (consensus).¹² It tries to reveal Amin Abdullah's ideas and suggestions regarding studying and interpreting gender issues in Islamic studies. The primary data used in this research are M. Amin Abdullah's works. The secondary data in this study are books, journal articles, and other websites that discuss Amin Abdullah's thoughts. The data analysis techniques used in this research are: *First*, qualitative analysis, a

¹² M. Amin Abdullah, *Islamic Studies: Paradigma Integrasi-Interkoneksi Sebuah Antologi* (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, 2007).

procedure that will produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the discussion under study. *Second*, descriptive analysis. The purpose of the descriptive analysis in this study is to describe gender justice in Islamic studies based on Amin Abdullah's perspective.¹³

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Intellectual Biography of M. Amin Abdullah: Gait, Thought, and Work

Amin Abdullah is among the most influential Indonesian Muslim intellectuals in contemporary Islamic thought. M. Amin Abdullah was born in a small village in Yogyakarta on July 14, 1953. He showed a deep interest in Islam and education from a young age. After completing his primary and secondary education in Yogyakarta, M. Amin Abdullah continued his studies at the Jakarta College of Qur'anic Sciences (PTIQ), where he delved into Islamic studies and obtained a bachelor's degree in Tafsir—after completing his studies at PTIQ, M. Amin Abdullah continued his education at Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. At Al-Azhar, he deepened his religious knowledge and earned a Master's degree in Ushuluddin. His education at Al-Azhar provided a strong foundation for M. Amin Abdullah to understand classical Islamic texts and broadened his horizons regarding the Islamic scientific tradition.¹⁴

Upon his return to Indonesia, M. Amin Abdullah began his academic career at various Islamic higher education institutions. He taught at the State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, which later became one of the centers of his academic and intellectual activities. M. Amin Abdullah is known as one of the thinkers who tried to bridge the classical Islamic scientific tradition with the modern context. He proposed "integration-interconnection" in Islamic studies, which integrates religious sciences with social sciences and the

¹³Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, ed. 38 (Edisi Revisi) (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2018).

¹⁴Al Makin and et.al, *70 Tahun M. Amin Abdullah (1953-2023): Pemikir, Guru, dan Pemimpin* (Yogyakarta: Laksbang Akademika, 2023).

humanities. This approach seeks a more holistic and contextualized understanding of Islamic teachings.¹⁵

M. Amin Abdullah also emphasizes the importance of interfaith and intercultural dialogue in the context of globalization and modernity. He believes that dialogue is one of the keys to creating peace and harmony in an increasingly plural and complex world. M. Amin Abdullah is often involved in various interfaith dialogue forums at the national and international levels, where he voices the importance of tolerance, respect, and interfaith cooperation.¹⁶

As an academic and thinker, M. Amin Abdullah is also very concerned about the reform of Islamic education in Indonesia. He plays an active role in formulating a curriculum integrating the religious sciences with the general sciences. M. Amin Abdullah believes that Islamic education must be able to answer the challenges of the times and prepare young people who understand religious teachings textually and have high critical and analytical abilities.¹⁷ As rector of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta (2001-2005), M. Amin Abdullah made various innovations in the curriculum and teaching methods. He encouraged the development of interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary study programs and strengthened research relevant to contemporary issues.¹⁸ In addition, he is also active in increasing cooperation with various educational institutions at home and abroad to expand academic networks, enrich insights, and improve the academic community's human resources (HR).

¹⁵Waryani Fajar Riyanto, *Integrasi-Interkoneksi Keilmuan: Biografi Intelektual M. Amin Abdullah (1953-...)* (Yogyakarta: Suka Press, 2013).

¹⁶ Adib, "UPAYA MENDIALOGISIKAN PENDEKATAN NORMATIF DAN HISTORIS DALAM STUDI ISLAM: Konsep Integrasi-Interkoneksi Amin Abdullah."

¹⁷ Syamsul Kurniawan, "Al-Jabiri's Traces in M. Amin Abdullah's Idea About Integrative-Interconnective Paradigm for Higher Education," *ATTARBIYAH: Journal of Islamic Culture and Education* 5, no. 1 (2020): 60–79, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18326/attarbiyah.v5i1.60-79>.

¹⁸ Waryani Fajar Riyanto, Saefudin, and Harsya Denny Suryo, "Transdisciplinary Policy in Handling Covid-19 in Indonesia: A Comparative Study on the Thought of Kuntowijoyo, M. Amin Abdullah and Yudian Wahyudi," *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* 1, no. Special Issue on COVID-19 (2022): 173–220, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.sp2022no1.6>.

Muslim intellectuals, such as Fazlur Rahman, Muhammad Abduh, and Nurcholish Madjid, heavily influenced Amin Abdullah's thinking.¹⁹ He adopts a critical and contextual approach to understanding Islamic texts and proposes the importance of *ijtihad* (independent thinking) in answering contemporary issues. In scientific methodology, he emphasizes the importance of renewal in contemporary Islamic studies to ground the teachings of Islam as a celestial, sacred, and transcendental heritage, diving into the need to answer various empirical and immanent worldly problems. The implication of M. Amin Abdullah's thought is to provide a new interpretation of contemporary Islamic scientific studies that is more contextual-empirical, which is different from the classic textual-normative format of Islamic studies.²⁰

In addition, M. Amin Abdullah is also active in research and writing activities, producing various scientific works that focus on contemporary Islamic thought, including the following: First, “*Studi Agama: Normativitas atau Historisitas?*” (1995). In this book, M. Amin Abdullah explores the relationship between religion as a normative system and religion as a historical phenomenon. He argues that combining both aspects is needed to understand religion comprehensively.²¹ *Second*, “*Islamic Studies di Perguruan Tinggi: Pendekatan Integratif-Interkonektif*” (2006). In this book, M. Amin Abdullah outlines the concept of integration and interconnection in Islamic studies in higher education, which combines religious sciences with social sciences and humanities.²² *Third*, “*Religion, Science, and Culture: An Integrated, Interconnected Paradigm of Knowledge*” (2014). This book explores the integrative and interconnected

¹⁹Alim Roswanto and et.al, *Islam, Agama-agama, dan Nilai Kemanusiaan: Festschrift untuk M. Amin Abdullah*, ed. Moch Nur Ichwan and Muttaqin Ahmad (Yogyakarta: CISForm UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2013).

²⁰Muhammad Azhar, “Pandangan Murid terhadap Guru: 60 Tahun Prof. Dr. M. Amin Abdullah,” *PROFETIKA, Jurnal Studi Islam* 15, no. 1 (2014): 28–43, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.23917/profetika.v15i1.1965>.

²¹M. Amin Abdullah, *Studi Agama: Normativitas atau Historisitas* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002).

²²M. Amin Abdullah, *Islamic Studies di Perguruan Tinggi Pendekatan Integratif-Interkonektif* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2006).

paradigm of knowledge and its implications for religious studies and education.²³ In addition to books, M. Amin Abdullah also actively writes articles and scientific journals that discuss various contemporary issues in Islamic thought. His articles often discuss Islamic thought, pluralism, democracy, human rights, and modernity from an Islamic perspective.

Amin Abdullah also received awards and recognitions. For his contributions to Islamic thought and education, M. Amin Abdullah has received various awards and recognitions, both at the national and international levels. He is often invited to speak at various countries' scientific conferences and interfaith dialogue forums. M. Amin Abdullah is also active in various scientific and religious organizations, such as the Majelis Tarjih Pusat Muhammadiyah (1991-1995) and the Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia (ICMI) Orwil DIY.²⁴

Amin Abdullah is one of the Muslim intellectual figures who has made an extraordinary contribution to developing contemporary Islamic thought and education reform in Indonesia. Through his works, he has proposed an integrative approach that combines religious sciences with social sciences and the humanities and encourages interfaith dialog to create peace and harmony. M. Amin Abdullah is a clear example of how Muslim intellectuals can actively respond to the times' challenges and contribute to advancing science and society.

The Position of Women in Islam

First, religion and women. Lately, the public has been presented with a variety of information that is very painful to our feelings, especially regarding our sense of religion and humanity. The cases of rape, kidnapping, harassment, trafficking, and others make it seem as if there is no more breath or morality to see this issue more clearly and measurably. I no longer see that religion, namely human understanding of religious teachings, has contributed significantly to understanding and resolving these problems. One aspect that is of common

²³M. Amin Abdullah, "Religion, Science, and Culture: An Integrated, Interconnected Paradigm of Science," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 52, no. 1 (2014): 175–203, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2014.521.175-203>.

²⁴Roswanto and et.al, *Islam, Agama-agama, dan Nilai Kemanusiaan: Festschrift untuk M. Amin Abdullah*.

concern is how to look at the issue of religion and women and whether the current understanding of religious teachings contributes to discrimination against women or vice versa.

M. Amin Abdullah emphasized the need for the socialization of religious and scientific understanding that is more egalitarian and equitable to reconstruct traditional values that are no longer conducive to the process of social change, including gender bias that often hinders the achievement of an equitable society. Therefore, a good and accurate set of analytical tools is needed in the academic-scientific field, which will result in preparing and developing curricula and syllabi from elementary school, secondary school, and university levels.²⁵

Second, critique of the masculinization of epistemology. It is no exaggeration to say that the statement so far that positivistic science and the theories it builds are the construction of men, especially if you believe what Simone de Beauvoir said: "The world is the work of men," and 'women are the second sex.'²⁶ This is where what scholarly thinkers and observers of the philosophy of science call the masculinization of epistemology occurs.

M. Amin Abdullah detects that the masculinization tendency has entered various areas of study, including the study of '*Ulum al-Din*, or Islamic religious sciences. The world of science, in addition to having developed very rapidly, is also accompanied by latent conflict between two shades of dogmatism: the dogmatism of extreme secularism and the dogmatism of rigid and radical negative religious fundamentalism. *Dirasat Islamiyyah* (Islamic Studies) or contemporary Islamic studies are required to be problem-solving or as a way out of the problems and difficulties faced by '*Ulum al-Din* (old), as well as being required to be able to provide solutions that are relevant to the dynamics of the times as a logical consequence of the success of education at every level, which encourages the

²⁵ M. Amin Abdullah, *Fresh Ijtihad: Manhaj Pemikiran Keislaman Muhammadiyah di Era Disrupsi*, ed. Azaki Khoirudin and Mu'arif (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2019).

²⁶ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex: Kehidupan Perempuan*, Trans. by Toni B. Febriantono (Jakarta: Pustaka Promotea, 2003).

growth of solid ideas about justice, equality, and respect for human dignity (*al-karamah al-insaniyyah*).²⁷

For this reason, Islamic scientific discourse is no longer positioned as an exclusive religious science. Still, it is inclusive (open) and always needs enrichment with social-humanities theories such as hermeneutics to support and develop it. M. Amin Abdullah explains that, if traced further, the phenomenon of monolithic understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an and as-Sunnah is actually due to a lack of fresh understanding of the historical factors (*tarikhiyyah*) that exist in the teachings of Islam itself. A monolithic and rigid understanding, and rigidly adhering to the view as if 'religious science' (*'Ulum al-Din*) is a sacred science that was born once and for all.²⁸

Third, reconciling the terms 'religion and religious understanding'. As in the discussion above, M. Amin Abdullah strongly refutes this view, saying it is untrue. M. Amin Abdullah explains the difference between religion and religious knowledge, *al-Din* and *Ulum al-Din*, or Islam and Islamic knowledge. Islam does not change, but human understanding of Islam constantly changes. Unlike religion, religious knowledge is not a "heavenly revelation" because it is a human construction, not call it a social and cultural construction like the branches of various other human sciences.²⁹

Suppose the above discourse and fundamental understanding are applied to the interpretation of the Qur'an. In that case, it can be said contemporary Muslim scholars call it—"what changes is not the Qur'an, but the capacity and specificity of human understanding and reflection on the Qur'an in the community of people has always and continues to change." For this reason, this kind of discourse and fundamental understanding must be developed among the *ummah* and the wider community, which is inclusive (open) and always needs enrichment with social-humanities theories such as hermeneutics to support and develop it.

M. Amin Abdullah explains that hermeneutics is not intended to erase the difference between the Qur'an and its interpretation but to bridge the gap that

²⁷Abdullah, *Fresh Ijtihad: Manhaj Pemikiran Keislaman Muhammadiyah di Era Disrupsi*.

²⁸Abdullah, "Religion, Science, and Culture: An Integrated, Interconnected Paradigm of Science."

²⁹Abdullah, *Fresh Ijtihad: Manhaj Pemikiran Keislaman Muhammadiyah di Era Disrupsi*.

exists between the two, between the text and the interpreter, because the interpreters of the Qur'an cannot but are always trapped and shackled by time (traditional, modern, postmodern), level of education (primary, secondary, higher), and experience (local, traditional, global), and so on. It needs to be understood that the misogynistic attitudes that emerge in some Muslim communities are mainly derived from sources outside the Qur'an, especially *Tafsir* and Hadith.

Furthermore, despite the abundance of hadiths that have a very positive view of women, conservatives prefer to take misogynistic hadiths. These, namely hadiths, hate or harass women as guidelines rather than hadiths that are friendly to women. It is not only the anti-women hadiths that are problematic but the fact that misogynistic hadiths have been introduced into the official body of Islamic scholarship since the Middle Ages and maintained until now. Precisely because of this, M. Amin Abdullah criticizes this model of hadith that colors depict and construct a static, backward, undereducated, and inexperienced "model of Islamic women," which to this day still contributes to shaping attitudes and stigma against women. It is very ironic because there are only six misogynistic hadiths that are accepted as saheeh out of about 70,000 Hadith collections. But in reality, it is precisely these six Hadiths that some male interpreters use when they try to provide arguments against gender justice and equality. This group completely ignores the positive and woman-friendly hadiths, which are far more numerous.

It must also be admitted that there are still many Fiqh studies that have an authoritarian face and are demeaning to women. This indicates that patriarchal culture tends to reproduce the structural hegemony of gender in theory and practice. The strength of this patriarchal and masculinized structure needs to be balanced with a more just way of looking at women, as explained above. Collective efforts are needed to encourage equality and equality of human dignity (al-karamah al-insaniyyah) in the development of religious knowledge and daily life. The development of science, especially religious studies, and Islamic studies,

requires a new perspective that emphasizes gender justice to make it a social theory and praxis that is fair to all people, without gender bias, because this attitude and bias color the style of understanding and religious interpretation of some community leaders.

The Urgency of Gender Equality in Islamic Universities

Islamic studies in the current contemporary era, the main study area at Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI) in Indonesia, are no longer exclusive, isolated, and sterile from the contact and intervention of social sciences, humanities, and even natural sciences (science). Within the scope of PTKI in general, Islamic sciences need to enter and discuss contemporary social sciences and humanities. Without doing so, Amin Abdullah explained that there would be confusion and even difficulties for the PTKI academic community to answer and solve contemporary global problems and issues such as gender equality, religious plurality, social, economic, political, cultural, environmental, and other human rights issues. In the last few decades, the field of contemporary humanities that has developed rapidly is gender studies, characterized by the rise of academic studies and the number of research and scientific publications such as journals, books, and writings on gender studies, including even in Indonesia.³⁰

In Indonesia, women can access all positions and career fields, including leadership. However, people generally assume that women are mainly in the domestic area, while the public area and leadership positions are men's work. The normative reasons supporting this view include the concept of *aurat*, *mahram*, and the prohibition of women from becoming leaders, which are understood from the arguments (especially hadith) and interpreted textually. Normative problems in gender issues above are a challenge for PTKI as an institution that studies Islamic sciences from its sources, namely the text of the Qur'an and Hadith. M. Amin Abdullah explains that the study of gender discourse is at least supported and encouraged by two factors: the rise of education and the spirit of

³⁰M. Amin Abdullah and et.al, "Desain Pengembangan Akademik IAIN Menuju UIN Sunan Kalijaga: Dari Pendekatan Dikotomis-Atomistis ke Arah Integratif-Interkonektif," in *Islamic Studies dalam Paradigma Integrasi-Interkoneksi (Sebuah Antologi)* (Yogyakarta: SUKA Press, 2007).

antiauthoritarianism.³¹ With the increasing quality of education, especially for women, there is an awareness of gender imbalance in society. The number of women who study and teach at universities and are active in the Centers for Women's Studies (PSW), the Center for Gender and Child Studies (PSGA), and non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) automatically adds to and increases awareness of women's thoughts about the need for gender studies. Gender distinctions in society and religion, even though they have become ideologies, are still human constructions that can be changed and adjusted to the times. Education is a determinant factor that can reveal the veil of gender ideology that has taken root in the community.³²

In addition, modernization and new awareness through education have created a new view of the family. There have been many transitions and changes from the original authoritarian family form to a more democratic-humanist family so that now girls have the same opportunities as boys in education. With this education, women and men can access religious literature and have the same opportunity to understand, interpret, and criticize existing religious texts sooner or later. All of this will affect the patterns of relations in the family and society that have been running traditionally and for generations.³³

M. Amin Abdullah explained that the combination of the rise of education and the spirit of antiauthoritarianism has opened up conversations about gender discourse. Gender problems and issues, such as opening up conversations about gender discourse, Gender problems and issues such as marginalization, subordination, domination, stereotypes, double burden, domestic violence, and other problems began to be discussed openly, including in religious discourse and other areas. Old religious concepts and practices allow for review, so it is

³¹M. Amin Abdullah, "Kata Pengantar," in *Sri Sumarni, et.al, Kesetaraan Gender di Perguruan Tinggi Islam* (Yogyakarta: UIN Suka dengan McGill - IAIN – ISEP, 2004).

³²Mustofa, Arifi, and Muhtadi, "Paradigma Integrasi-Interkoneksi dalam Studi Islam di Perguruan Tinggi."

³³Zuhriyah, "Relasi Gender dan Rekonstruksi Kritis Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam."

legitimate for gender studies to ask how to understand misogynistic Hadiths: should they be accepted as they are textually, or should they be reviewed and reinterpreted by considering the universal values of Islamic teachings in the Qur'an? Of course, with common sense, we answer "no."

In the study and interpretation of gender issues in Islamic studies, a transparent and academically accountable approach and methodology are needed. PTKIN, as a higher education institution, must study and have a straightforward approach and theoretical framework for analyzing these gender issues so that the results can be not only scientifically accountable but also acceptable to the broader community. In the development of gender studies, it is necessary to distinguish between the terms gender gap, gender bias, and gender inequity. The gender gap, which is a quantitative reality of gender differences, is distinguished from gender bias, which is a view and thought that distinguishes the roles and relationships between men and women, and gender inequity, which is already in the form of attitudes and policies. In addition to being scientifically more accountable, this distinction also makes it easier to diagnose existing shortcomings so that more appropriate methods can be found to overcome them and their problem-solving.³⁴

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, we can conclude that gender discourse in Islamic studies needs to be continuously studied and developed, especially religious studies and Islamic studies need a new perspective that emphasizes gender justice and equality to make it a fair social theory and praxis for all people, without gender bias because this attitude and bias color the style of understanding and interpretation of religion in society, both for academics, and intellectuals in answering various religious, environmental and universal humanitarian issues. This will undoubtedly affect the discourse on the development of contemporary Islamic studies, which becomes a more inclusive, progressive, equitable, and gender-biased Islamic scientific discourse, such as marginalization, subordination,

³⁴Abdullah, "Kata Pengantar."

domination, stereotypes, and other problems and is not trapped with the masculinization of epistemology.

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