

Feminist Interpretation and the Struggle for Women's Rights in Public Space

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Abstract

Issues regarding gender never end, such as leadership issues and the role of women in the public sphere. Some interpretations of the Qur'an show views that do not fully recognize the human dignity of women. The push to reinterpret verses relating to gender to realize gender justice was carried out by Muslim intellectuals with feminist views. Among them, Amina Wadud Muhsin was challenged to fight for the reinterpretation of this problem using the hermeneutic method. The research was carried out by collecting library data, especially Amina Wadud's thoughts on feminist interpretation. Amina Wadud interprets the leadership and polygamy verses to mean that the concept and role of leadership in Islam are not limited to a particular gender. Polygamy is not an ideal form of marriage because it does not allow for the creation of a mutualistic relationship. The methodology used by Wadud critically considers the socio-historical context in which the verses of the Koran were revealed and provides space for a feminist perspective to fight for women's rights.

Keywords: Feminist Interpretation; Women Leadership; Public Space; Amina Wadud's Thoughts

Introduction

Since the 19th century, gender movements and feminism emerged to achieve equal rights and justice for women. This movement was inspired by the thoughts of radical feminism Kate Millett, who in her book entitled *Sexual Politics* (1970) stated that gender relations are power relations and the root of

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the problem of treatment of women lies in the sex/gender system that exists in patriarchy. According to Millett:

*"Because male control of the public and private worlds maintains patriarchy, male control must be eliminated if women are to be liberated. But this is no easy task. To eliminate male control, men and women have to eliminate gender—specifically, sexual status, role, and temperament— as it has been constructed under patriarchy".*¹

Currently, gender justification and feminism must be implemented. Even though there are efforts to achieve equality between women and men, this is still difficult to achieve because public discourse is still influenced by a fundamentalist understanding of religious texts that ignores gender. In Muslim society, there is still a strong opinion that women's position is lower than men or that women are not equal to men.²

One of the reasons women experience injustice is due to biased interpretation of the Qur'an in a gender context. Some interpretations of the Qur'an show views that do not fully recognize the human dignity of women. They are often not given the right to defend themselves, are often considered the source of problems in the family, are marginalized in domestic matters, are forced to submit to male authority, and are required to accept polygamy with up to four wives as normal. Under the umbrella of religion, women are often positioned as objects of law, especially in matters of family law such as marriage and inheritance regulations.³

Tafsir of the Qur'an has an important position in Islamic studies, apart from being a guide, the Qur'an also functions as a furqan or benchmark between right and wrong. Interpreting the Qur'an means explaining its meaning and issuing laws and wisdom. Because of the importance of the position of the Qur'an, interpretation of the Qur'an is not only permitted, but required for people who meet the qualifications. Hermeneutics in feminist interpretation produces interpretations that differ significantly from classical interpretation.

Currently, a significant issue in the religious context is the reinterpretation of verses relating to gender in order to identify social elements that have been included in the interpretation of the Qur'an. The aim is to assess the level of justice and humanity that exists in Islam. This progress has attracted the

¹ R. P. Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction (Third Edition)* (Westview Press, Boulder., 2009).

² S. Y. Al-Faiz, "Feminisme Dan Penafsiran Al-Quran Amina Wadud," <http://pku.unida.gontor.ac.id/feminisme-dan-penafsiran-al-quran-aminah-wadud/>, 2016.

³ C. E Setyawan, "Pemikiran Kesetaraan Gender Dan Feminisme Amina Wadud Tentang Eksistensi Wanita Dalam Kajian Hukum Keluarga," *Zawiyah Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 3, no. 1 (2017).

attention of Muslim intellectuals who have feminist views to develop methods that can produce interpretations that take into account gender and social justice perspectives, as proposed by Amina Wadud Muhsin. This has brought a change in the paradigm of thinking. Amina Wadud argues that to achieve a more objective interpretation, an interpreter must refer to the basic principles in the Qur'an as their framework.

There are still misunderstandings among Muslims in understanding the Qur'an, perhaps related to the characteristics of the language of the Qur'an which has many interpretations or has the opportunity to be interpreted differently.⁴ For example, Islamic teachings about justice between men and women raised concerns in Amina Wadud when she saw Muslim women experiencing setbacks in various fields. Therefore, She began to look for the cause of this decline by researching sources of Islamic teachings related to women. She found that the majority of interpretations and results of Islamic law were written by male scholars and were often influenced by their views. Amina Wadud believes that patriarchal culture has degraded women, ignoring them as *khalifah fil ardh*, and does not recognize the justice described in the Qur'an. Therefore, she felt challenged to fight for a reinterpretation of this problem using the hermeneutic method. She carried out jihad (struggle) in this matter.

Thus, every reader who interacts with the text does not only cover a narrow understanding. In this context, interpreters of the Qur'an must be flexible to accommodate countless cultural situations because of its claim to be universally beneficial to those who believe. That's what Amina Wadud calls it *prior texts/* pre text. Therefore, forcing it to have one cultural perspective-even the cultural perspective of the Prophet's original community (Arabs) would greatly limit its applicability and conflict with the universal aims stated in the Book itself.⁵

Around the 1980s, the feminist movement began to be seen openly in Indonesia with the emergence of activists such as Ratna Megawangi, Herawati, Wardah Hafidz, Yulia Surya Kusuma, Marwah Daud Ibrahim, and others. This feminist movement emerged because of the awareness that in the history of human civilization, including in Indonesia, women have often been treated unfairly and even systematically harassed, especially because of the strong

⁴ Dedi Junaedi, Muhammadong Muhammadong, and Sahliah Sahliah, "Metodologi Tafsir Amina Wadud Dalam Menafsirkan Al-Qur'an," *Ta'dib: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 2 (November 30, 2019): 654–65, <https://doi.org/10.29313/tjpi.v8i2.5229>.

⁵ A. Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (2nd Edition). (Oxford University Press, 1999).

dominance of patriarchal culture. Sharp criticism of the patriarchal system, genderism, and sexism has always been the focus of the feminist movement in Indonesia.⁶

At a theoretical level, feminism is a concept consisting of social theory, political movements, and moral philosophy that aims to liberate women from oppression carried out by men. In simple words, feminism is the belief that there is social, political, and economic equality between the sexes and that there is a movement that emerged from the belief that gender should not be a determining factor in shaping social identity or socio-political right, and economics of somebody.⁷

In the human society section, the issue of gender is an issue that is quite widely discussed, discussions about gender include developments in Western thought as well as in Islamic thought itself. In Islamic literature, discussions about gender cannot be separated from the understanding of religious texts, which are sometimes dominated by the subjective interpretation of the interpreter. Muslim interpretation of verses relating to relations between men and women can be divided into two types. The first type is an interpretation based on a patriarchal approach. The second type is an interpretation based on a feminist approach.

In a comparison between interpretations based on a patriarchal approach and feminist interpretations, patriarchal interpretations are usually carried out exclusively by the majority of men. This results in that in their interpretation, women do not represent their interests and experiences because only men's experiences are included in the interpretation. In patriarchal interpretation, women's experiences and perspectives are often ignored and interpreted according to men's paradigms. The basic paradigm used to interpret the Qur'an was created without involving the views of women as an important party.

Feminist interpretation, which is a response to patriarchal interpretation, recognizes that women often experience discrimination and inequality in social life. This cannot be separated from the patriarchal interpretation of religion. Therefore, the feminist approach emphasizes gender equality, namely that men and women have the same position in religion. In this approach, religious texts that are usually hierarchical are interpreted to show equality between men and women.

⁶ E. Zulaiha, "Tafsir Feminis: Sejarah, Paradigma Dan Standar Validitas Tafsir Feminis," *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 1, no. 1 (2016).

⁷ S. Hidayatullah, *Teologi Feminisme Islam (1 Ed.)* (Pustaka Pelajar, 2010).

Changes in religious interpretation are also influenced by social changes in society. Mufasir or religious interpreters can respond to these social changes and change the way they understand social reality. Human demands and needs change along with social changes. For example, the demands of traditional society will be different from the demands of modern society. These social changes can cause tensions in social structures and cultural gaps. A particular interpretation or assumption may become outdated and no longer relevant in responding to these social changes. Therefore, religious interpreters must always pay attention to social changes in society when interpreting religious texts.

Feminist interpretations emerged due to internal and external influences similar to the feminist movement. Tafsir books which are dominated by men's thinking tend to use the same views to look at men's and women's problems, so women's views are hardly represented. This results in a biased view of male and female relationships. There is a gap between the normative-idealist teachings of the Qur'an and its interpretation at the normative-historical level.

The interpretation made by male commentators tends to be patriarchal, which places more emphasis on the role of men as leaders and the role of women as followers. This view is influenced by the socio-cultural context that glorifies men's power and restricts women's roles. They are the ones who define ontologically, theologically, sociologically, and eschatologically the position of women.⁸ As a result, many verses of the Qur'an are interpreted biasedly and do not pay attention to gender equality.

Therefore, feminist interpretation exists as an effort to fight for gender equality in the interpretation of the Qur'an. In feminist interpretation, feminist commentators use gender analysis to discuss verses relating to the relationship between men and women. By using a different framework of thought, feminist interpretation attempts to understand these verses more objectively and pay attention to women's perspectives. In feminist interpretation, women's role is no longer considered only as followers, but also as leaders and decision-makers. Here, faith is not just believing in God, but according to her, faith underlies the hard struggle to create a just society.⁹

Overall, feminist interpretation is an effort to fight for gender equality in the interpretation of the Qur'an. By using gender analysis, feminist interpretation attempts to understand the verses of the Qur'an more objectively and pay

⁸ N Saidah, "Bidadari Dalam Konstruksi Tafsir Al Qur'an : Analisis Gender Atas Pemikiran Amina Wadud Muhsin Dalam Penafsiran Al Qur'an," *Palastren* 6, no. 2 (2013).

⁹ M. Latif, *Teologi Pembebasan Dalam Islam* (Orbit Publishing, 2017).

attention to women's perspectives. Because in the history of Islam itself, Islam actually encouraged and elevated the glory of women which had never been given before by any ethnic group or civilization before Islam.¹⁰

Method

The research was carried out through library data collection, especially the thought of Amina Wadud about feminist interpretation. The data collected by book, journal, and research before that included information about the history of the subject of study thought of Amina and the interpretation of others' sides about that. The data was analyzed using the technique of content analysis with descriptive and qualitative.¹¹

Result and Discussion

Women's Rights in Islam

Important to understand that in Islam, women are never treated with discrimination. On the other hand, women are given a very noble position. However, discrimination against women sometimes arises as a result of the jahiliyah doctrine which is still rooted in the thinking of Muslim society. In history, it is recorded that during the period of ignorance, many girls were buried alive because they were afraid of shame or because they were afraid they would not be able to provide their living.¹²

After Islam entered Arab society, Rasulullah saw. eradicating jahiliyah habits through teachings based on Islam. Thus, the position of men and women is considered the same in Islamic teachings, and the only difference is the level of piety (QS. al-Hujurat: 13). Qur'an shows that in Islam, there is no difference in status between men and women. For example, Fadhlan explained, that after Islam came, women's rights as human beings were gradually restored, and women were allowed to be witnesses, receive inheritance, participate in politics, and have other rights.¹³

Explanations regarding gender equality in Islam are not only found in the Qur'an but can also be found in the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad.¹⁴ However, there are challenges in understanding and deriving meaning from hadith which are still textual in nature. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out a textual and contextual study of several hadiths which are often cited as

¹⁰ Hidayatullah, *Teologi Feminisme Islam (1 Ed.)*.

¹¹ Mahmud, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2011).

¹² S. Harahap, *Islam Dan Modernisasi* (Pranamedia, 2015).

¹³ Fadlan, "Islam, Feminisme Dan Konsep Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Islam," *Jurnal Karsa STAIN Pamekasan* 9, no. 2 (2011).

¹⁴ Dinar Meidiana, "The Concept of Gender Equality in Islam," Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta, 2023.

arguments for gender equality in Islam.¹⁵ This is important considering the importance of conformity between the meaning of the hadith and current developments.

About gender inequality, several forms can be explained briefly. The first is a burden, where women often bear more and longer domestic workloads compared to men. Second, is subordination, namely the view that women have a lower position in all fields such as education, economics, and politics. Third, marginalization, where women are often not involved in making important decisions related to the family economy and thus experience a process of impoverishment. Fourth, stereotypes, where women are often viewed negatively because they are considered additional income earners. And fifth, violence, namely acts of physical and psychological violence against women because the husband is considered the sole authority in the family.

For example, a Hadith whose interpretation is still subject to debate from Utsman bin Haitsam from Auf Hasan from Abi Bakrah said that when the Persians had appointed Princess Kisra as leader, Rasulullah said, 'A people who hand over their affairs to women will not be lucky (HR Al-Bukhari). In terms of the status of the hadith itself, scholars agree that it has an authentic quality. One of the consequences of a hadith being declared authentic is that it can become the basis for law or evidence in the Shari'a. From the Prophet's statement "...A people who hand over their affairs to women will not be lucky..." this is where a long debate about women's leadership occurred.¹⁶

In the context of women, especially the role of women in the public sphere and decision-making (ed; politics), there is still little space available. Claims stating that women's participation in politics can trigger arguments in the household are often made. The reason given was that her main duties and duties as a wife and mother of her children were neglected. However, this claim is not entirely true because many other factors can influence household breakdown, not only related to women's involvement in politics. Apart from that, the husband's role as a leader in the household also greatly influences household harmony.

Women's involvement in politics is often a hot topic for debate. Although women are often in the spotlight for being considered "extraterrestrials" who do not fit the roles considered typical for men, there are various conclusions that can be drawn from this discussion. However, sometimes decisions made from these discussions can be very unfair to women. When these men return to

¹⁵ Erniati, "Gender Dalam Perspektif Hadis Mawdu'i," *Musawa* 8, no. 1 (2016).

¹⁶ M. I. Syauqi, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Kajian Hadits," 2021.

their households, they still have power and influence that can influence women's rights, so women often find it difficult to choose and determine their attitudes.¹⁷

In terms of leadership, an individual needs several important traits, including the traits of a leader. A leader is someone who has certain skills and strengths in one area that make her able to influence other people to carry out activities to achieve a certain goal or several goals at once. A good example is very important for a leader because every person in Islam is considered a leader who should have a sense of leadership and responsibility.¹⁸

In the realm of leadership, according to Faqihudin as quoted in Haryadi,¹⁹ Women often experience the impact of stigma and patriarchal culture that still exists in various environments, including the world of work. In the world of politics, for example, religion is often used to win contests by attacking political opponents. Unfortunately, women are often the targets of these attacks.

In Islam, there is no prohibition on women becoming leaders.²⁰ The concept of leadership in Islam emphasizes benefit or goodness, which does not look at a person's sex or gender. Even though women have an important role as wives, housewives, and educators for their children, they also have the right to play roles outside the family according to their nature.

The view that women/wives are only companions to their husbands, and women are only housewives is widely misunderstood. The negative image that is often given to women is that they are seen as temptresses and entertainers, both for children, husbands, and other parties who need their services. This can cause some people to look down on the role of a wife, and consider them merely tools to satisfy their lust or cooking spices, even as household servants. This negative image arises because women are often placed under the domination and power of men or husbands so that women are only used as objects, while men or husbands are considered as subjects.²¹

Being a housewife is considered a woman's nature, it is even considered an obligation that has existed for thousands of years and is considered a religious

¹⁷ Fatmawati, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Perspektif Hadis," *Jurnal Al-Maiyyah* 8, no. 2 (2015).

¹⁸ Jumiati Sasmita and Said As'ad Raihan, "Kepemimpinan Pria Dan Wanita," in *Proceeding Of The 6TH NCFB And Doctoral Colloquium* (Riau, 2014).

¹⁹ S. K. Haryadi, "Kyai Faqihuddin: Konsep Kepemimpinan Perempuan Dalam Islam Tak Kenal Gender," 2021, n.d.

²⁰ Mardiah, "Wanita Sebagai Pemimpin Dalam Perspektif Islam," Djuanda University, 2022.

²¹ Fatmawati, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Perspektif Hadis."

rule.²² The gift of women's nature is used as an excuse to reduce women's role in the family and society, even though nature itself is considered a gift from the Creator. Therefore, it is necessary to question whether such an understanding is truly God's creation or just an invention of society, especially among men. Questions like these require further exploration.²³

As a result of opinions built on the meaning of "women's nature", for example, the origin of its occurrence or creation, lack of reason or ability, and religion place women in a low and even very weak position. Through the pages of history, it can be seen how influential the fatwas of Mecca's religious judges were in building public opinion regarding the position of women. Four sultanahs (the four sultanahs were Sultanah Taj al-Alam (1641-1675), Nur al-Alam (1675-1678), Inayat Syah (1678-1688), and Kamalat Syah) who had ruled continuously, had to end and be interrupted. because the judge's fatwa did not allow women to become leaders of the country because it violated their nature as women.²⁴

Likewise, if we look at the history of the Indonesian national movement, we can find the fact that women's participation in the movement was quantitatively and qualitatively much less than that of men. One of the reasons is the existence of religious barriers.²⁵ In general, society has the perception that physical struggle and political tasks are only the responsibility of men, while women are only allowed to take care of the household. However, in the early history of Islam, women's involvement in public life was very large, even during the time of the Prophet Muhammad.

Amina Wadud and the Critique of Patriarchal Interpretation

Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) once wrote in "Women, Religion and Development",²⁶ saying that in general, the topics discussed were the role of women in two broad categories: 1) in the context of religion as "spiritual symbols". Examples can be found in the beliefs of Ancient Egypt, Hinduism, Buddhism, and even certain Christian sects. For example, we can refer to the Goddess Kali in Hinduism, Goddess Kuan Yin in Mahayana Buddhism, Goddess Minerva in Babylonian religion, Goddess Venus in Assyrian religion,

²² M. A. Hasan, *Masa'il Fiqhiyyah Al-Haditsah (Masalah-Masalah Kontemporer Hukum Islam)* (Raja Grafindo Persada, 1996).

²³ Dimiyati Huda, *Rethinking Peran Perempuan Dan Keadilan Gender* (Bandung: Cendekia Press, 2020).

²⁴ Fatmawati, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan Perspektif Hadis."

²⁵ Brigida Intan Printina, *Merawat Memori Menyupuk Kebangsaan: Komitmen Pada Cita-Cita Kongres Perempuan Indonesia* (Jakarta: Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2019).

²⁶ Komnas Perempuan, *Perempuan Dalam Relasi Agama Dan Negara*. (Jakarta: Komnas Perempuan, 2010).

as well as the role of Mother Mary in Catholicism. 2) in religions such as Islam and Judaism, women are not placed as spiritual symbols or are not used as representations of divinity. Regarding Christianity, despite strong debate and opposition from Protestant circles, the Virgin Mary is still considered a symbol of God in several Christian traditions.

Again, in the context of Islamic teachings (interpretation), it cannot be denied that the reality in it (culture) is that men still play a bigger role than women. It is this equality between men and women that causes anxiety in Amina Wadud when she sees women falling in various fields. As a Fully Human Agency, she began to look for the cause of this problem by looking at the sources of Islamic teachings related to women. She realized that the majority of Islamic interpretations and laws were written by male clerics and often brought bias to their views.²⁷

According to Amina²⁸, Patriarchal culture has marginalized women, denied women as caliph fil-ardh, and rejected the teachings of justice promoted by the Qur'an. Wadud felt challenged to reinterpret this problem using the hermeneutic method. This anxiety then inspired her to write books such as the Qur'an and Woman, Inside The Gender Jihad, and Women's Reform In Islam, which reformed the view of Islamic women and was a major intellectual project that made his thoughts and role recognized.

The work written by Wadud is the result of his intellectual anxiety regarding gender inequality that exists in his society. This is caused by the influence of ideologies that influence the interpretation of the Qur'an which is considered to tend to carry a patriarchal bias. In this book, Wadud attempts to deconstruct and reconstruct the classical interpretive model which is dominated by patriarchal views. Likewise, the construction of his thoughts was influenced by Fazlur Rahman's thoughts on interpretation (hermeneutics) which combines Western and Islamic traditions.²⁹

Furthermore, Wadud in interpreting the Qur'an is heavily influenced by the thoughts of Fazlur Rahman "Neo Modernism" which places greater emphasis on the normative aspects of the teachings of the Qur'an in interpreting the Qur'an, which Wadud calls an interpretive holistic method.³⁰ Wadud uses Fazlur Rahman's theory of double movement hermeneutics to examine all

²⁷ Sokhi Huda, "Kontroversi Hak Dan Peran Perempuan Dalam Pemikiran Kontemporer Amina Wadud," *Urwatul Wutsqo* 2 (2013): 87–112, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1174230>.

²⁸ Kurdi, *Hermeneutika Alquran Dan Hadis* (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ Press, 2010).

²⁹ A. Mujahidin, *Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an* (STAIN PO Press, 2013).

³⁰ A. Zabidi, "Metode Amina Wadud Dalam Penafsiran Al-Quran," *Jurnal Alwatziqboebillah: Kajian Islam, Pendidikan, Ekonomi, Humaniora* 6, no. 2 (2020).

verses of the Qur'an that provide special instructions for women, both those mentioned separately and those mentioned together with men. Wadud agreed with Rahman's criticism and emphasized that this criticism caused women's position in the interpretation of the Qur'an to be marginalized.³¹

In double movement theory, there is a concept of social pre-understanding that shapes the interpreter's view of the text to be interpreted. Therefore, to produce an objective interpretation, the interpreter must let go of these pre-understandings and focus on the text by understanding the historical setting in which the text appears. Fazlur Rahman admits that texts always have their own context, so to understand and interpret texts, it is necessary to study the social context in which the text was produced. In the application stage of this theory, Rahman emphasized the importance of not using the literal meaning of a text, but rather the moral ideal contained in it.³²

In this theory of interpretation, the socio-historical context of the revelation of the Qur'an and the social context in which the interpretation is carried out are very important. Saeed said that Rahman stated that for the eternal message of the Qur'an to be upheld, a double movement was necessary. This requires the interpreter to ignore the pre-understanding that exists within her and focus on the text itself by understanding the historical background in which the text appears. Saeed quotes Rahman's opinion, that to liberate the eternal message of the Qur'an, a double movement needs to be carried out.³³

1. To understand the meaning of a statement, one needs to pay attention to the historical context and issue being discussed to import or interpret the correct meaning.
2. To be able to liberate the eternal message of the Qur'an, one must generalize specific answers and articulate them as statements of general social moral goals. To do this, specific texts must be filtered taking into account their socio-historical background. Furthermore, this general thing must be realized in a concrete socio-historical context at this time.

From Fazlur Rahman's theory above (double movement) shows how someone must understand the messages in the Qur'an by considering the socio-historical context in which the text appears.³⁴ In this theory, one must examine

³¹ Ismatul Izzah, "Pendekatan Hermeneutika Untuk Gerakan Gender (Studi Tentang Metodologi Interpretasi Amina Wadud Untuk Kesetaraan Gender)," *Al-Fikri* 2, no. 1 (2021).

³² Kurdi, *Hermeneutika Alquran Dan Hadis*.

³³ Z. Fanani and Juliansyah, "Metodologi Penafsiran Kontekstual Abad 21: Tawaran Tafsir Al-Qur'an Abdullah Saeed," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmiah Intaj* 3, no. 2 (2019).

³⁴ Yuniarti Amalia Wahdah, "Hermeneutika Double Movement Fazlur Rahman Dalam Studi Hadits," *Al-Fawatih* 2, no. 2 (2021).

the specific meaning of the statements of the Qur'an by understanding the historical situation or problems faced at that time. Then, one must generalize the specific answer and articulate it as a statement of general social-moral goals that can be applied in the current concrete socio-historical context.

In addition, according to Asghar Ali, Islam itself has never questioned gender equality, because in essence the Qur'an has explained their respective positions proportionally. The current commotion regarding gender is only a lack of understanding in the interpretation of the text. As an intellectual who is concerned about gender issues, Asghar Ali, in formulating gender issues does not necessarily follow the statements of the formulation that already applies.

Engineer's thinking is based on the fact that classical fiqh texts tend to have discriminatory elements against women. Engineer seeks to re-present by reconstructing the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith, which are also accompanied by the Prophet's customary tradition (prophetic sunnah), with the aim of finding and re-assembling Islamic views on women that are more in line with current social realities. This is done in the hope that religious texts can remain relevant in following the times and context, given that the law has a nature that can adapt to changing times and situations.³⁵

Then Wadud specifically studied how women are perceived in the Qur'an, according to her several things must be remembered; First, there is no truly objective interpretation. Second, the category of interpretation of the Qur'an, which according to her regarding women, there are three interpretations, namely, traditional, reactive, and holistic.³⁶

Wadud believes that the tafsir tradition is inadequate in highlighting gender issues because it uses intra-textual methods that are too simple. Therefore, he proposed rebuilding the premise of interpreting the Qur'an based on the principle of monotheism which emphasizes the unity of the Qur'an which permeates all parts. Wadud proposed monotheistic hermeneutics as an alternative to create a systematic framework of thought and be able to make appropriate correlations between verses of the Qur'an to describe the impact of the coherence of the Qur'an as a whole. This is more effective than looking for the meaning of a verse in isolation and only referring to other verses.

Wadud assumes that there is gender inequality in several verses of the Qur'an based on the misinterpretation of specific verses (*hash*) as universal or general concepts (*amm*), and ignores the ethical principles implied by the Qur'an as part of the value of monotheism. There are large differences in the status of

³⁵ Asghar Ali Engineer, *Islam Dan Teologi Pembebasan* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009).

³⁶ Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective (2nd Edition)*.

women within and between Muslim-majority countries. In some countries, it is illegal for women to drive cars, or move freely outside the home, in others, women have become heads of state.³⁷

Wadud considers that monotheistic hermeneutics has an important role in providing a methodology for interpreting the Qur'an. In this case, every interpreter is faced with many choices and alternative meanings when interpreting a verse. Wadud admits that readers are free to explore meaning based on their perceptions or conclusions, but must still follow the principle of monotheism to find the unity of the Qur'an. According to Wadud, the text of the Qur'an should not be limited by personal understanding or limited truth.³⁸

Amina believes that traditional interpretation has a view that is dominated by the male perspective. Therefore, he proposed an interpretation of the Qur'an from a woman's perspective. In her work, Amina tries to revive the identity of Muslim women which she considers to have been lost due to interpretations that tend to favor men. According to her, this can only be achieved by reformulating perceptions of justice with a meaning that supports equality between men and women.³⁹

Wadud conducts a philosophical analysis of gender in the Qur'an and shows the Qur'an's ability to overcome excessive simplification efforts that have narrowed the role of women.⁴⁰ Through this analysis, Wadud shows that the Qur'an can provide solutions to the complexities of the development of civilization and overcome restrictions that have long been applied to women due to narrow views.

Wadud made the most important contribution to the discourse of the Qur'an and tafsir by trying to show the theoretical and methodological relationship between the interpretation of the Qur'an and its social context.⁴¹ She focuses on "what the Qur'an says, how the Qur'an says it, what it says about the Qur'an, and who says it". Wadud criticizes traditional interpretations of texts about women in the Qur'an and attempts to offer his own ideas, framework, methodology, and interpretation of the Qur'an. All these efforts

³⁷ F. Seedat and A. King, *Feminisme, Islam, Dan Islam Feminis* (Osiris, 2019).

³⁸ M Rusydi, "Relasi Laki-Laki Dan Perempuan Dalam Al-Qur'an Menurut Amina Wadud," *MIQOT* XXXVIII, no. 2 (2014).

³⁹ Irsyadunnas, "Tafsir Ayat-Ayat Gender Ala Amina Wadud Perspektif Hermeneutika Gadamer," *Musawa* 14, no. 2 (July 2015).

⁴⁰ Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (2nd Edition).

⁴¹ Irsyadunnas, "Tafsir Ayat-Ayat Gender Ala Amina Wadud Perspektif Hermeneutika Gadamer."

aim to understand gender relations in the light of the egalitarian teachings of the Qur'an.

Therefore, Wadud makes an offer to interpret the verses of the Qur'an, especially the verses that are gender biased, which he packages in three important aspects, namely:⁴² *First*, in what context the text was written or about the Qur'an is the context in which the verse was revealed? *Secondly*, The grammatical composition of the text (verse), how it is expressed, and what it says? *Thirdly*, What is the overall text (verse), weltanschauung, or view of life?

Conclusion

The methodology used by Wadud in carrying out feminist interpretations is to look at the social-historical context in which the verses of the Qur'an were revealed, and position herself as a feminist who tries to fight for women's rights in the interpretation of verses of the Qur'an. Wadud also pays attention to the importance of reading the text of the Qur'an critically and considering the existing socio-historical context, as well as providing space for a feminist perspective in understanding the verses of the Qur'an. Hermeneutical analysis in this discussion has not been explained, the use of hermeneutical methods for interpretation the Al-Quran and hadith regarding feminism needs to be explain at again. The results of this research show that from Amina Wadud's perspective, women have equal positions and opportunities in leadership and the public sphere. The position of women in seeking knowledge, in giving opinions, and in other public activities has equal opportunities and positions.

⁴² Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective (2nd Edition)*.

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