

UNVEILING ISLAMIC FEMINISM: A CRITICAL
ANALYSIS ON FATEMA MERNISSI'S VIEWS ON THE
CONCEPT OF GENDER EQUALITY IN ISLAM

BY

MOHAMAD HAEQAL BIN ISHAK

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Islamic Thought and
Civilization.

ISTAC

International Islamic University Malaysia

SEPTEMBER 2024

ABSTRACT

This research investigates Islamic feminism, focusing on the influential scholar-activist Fatema Mernissi. It begins by examining the rise of Islamic feminism as a response to patriarchal interpretations of *Shari'ah* law, highlighting how Islamic feminists challenged traditional norms and advocated for a feminist reinterpretation of Islamic texts. These feminist groups gained prominence by addressing discriminatory practices against Muslim women, especially in family and personal status laws. The study underscores the vital role of scholar-activists like Mernissi, a Moroccan sociologist, whose work has left a lasting impact on contemporary Islamic feminism. Mernissi's exploration of women's historical experiences in early Islamic history and her critique of misogynistic *hadiths* significantly shaped her influence in feminist discourse. Her ideas have crossed geographical boundaries, gaining recognition in both Western and Eastern feminist circles. This research delves into Mernissi's alternative approach to interpreting religious texts, which challenges mainstream Islamic views on women's roles and rights. By examining her perspective on gender equality through her writings, the study provides insights into ongoing discussions within Islamic feminism, especially in relation to current global gender equality issues. Using qualitative analysis and critical methods, the research explores Islamic feminist theories, focusing on Mernissi's views on gender equality. A comparative analysis contrasts her ideas with traditional Islamic perspectives, including selected *Qur'anic* verses, the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ, and the views of prominent Muslim scholars. The findings reveal Mernissi's critical stance on the Islamic concept of gender equality, while also emphasizing the importance of addressing global gender equality concerns. Despite her negative perception of some Islamic gender concepts, the study acknowledges the validity of some of her arguments and the need to address the gender equality issues she raises. The research advocates for incorporating positive aspects of Mernissi's approach, particularly her self-critical examination, into contemporary Islamic discourse. It highlights the need for a Muslim think tank to re-evaluate and develop new approaches to gender equality issues, ensuring these solutions align with the Islamic concept of justice and are relevant to modern realities.

ملخص البحث

يحقق هذا البحث في النسوية الإسلامية مع التركيز على العاملة والناشطة المؤثرة فاطمة مرنيسي. يبدأ البحث بفحص نشوء النسوية الإسلامية كرد فعل على التفسيرات الأبوية للشريعة، مسلطاً الضوء على كيفية تحدي النسويات الإسلاميات للأعراف التقليدية والدعوة إلى إعادة تفسير نسوي للنصوص الإسلامية. اكتسبت هذه المجموعات النسوية شهرة من خلال معالجة الممارسات التمييزية ضد النساء المسلمات، خاصة في قوانين الأسرة والأحوال الشخصية. يبرز البحث الدور الحيوي الذي لعبته الشخصيات العلمية والنشطاء مثل مرنيسي، وهي عالمة اجتماع مغربية، التي تركت بصمة دائمة على النسوية الإسلامية المعاصرة. ساهمت استكشافات مرنيسي لتجارب النساء التاريخية في بداية الإسلام ونقدها للأحاديث الذكورية بشكل كبير في تأثيرها على الخطاب النسوي. عبرت أفكارها الحدود الجغرافية، وحظيت بالتقدير في الأوساط النسوية الغربية والشرقية على حد سواء. يتعمق هذا البحث في نهج مرنيسي البديل في تفسير النصوص الدينية، والذي يتحدى وجهات النظر الإسلامية التقليدية حول أدوار وحقوق المرأة. من خلال دراسة وجهة نظرها حول المساواة بين الجنسين من خلال كتاباتها، يوفر البحث رؤى حول النقاشات المستمرة داخل النسوية الإسلامية، خاصة فيما يتعلق بقضايا المساواة بين الجنسين على المستوى العالمي. باستخدام التحليل النوعي والأساليب النقدية، يستكشف البحث نظريات النسوية الإسلامية مع التركيز على آراء مرنيسي حول المساواة بين الجنسين. ويقارن التحليل بين أفكارها ووجهات النظر الإسلامية التقليدية، بما في ذلك آيات قرآنية مختارة وسنة النبي ﷺ وآراء العلماء المسلمين البارزين. تكشف النتائج عن موقف مرنيسي النقدي تجاه مفهوم المساواة بين الجنسين في الإسلام، مع التأكيد على أهمية معالجة قضايا المساواة بين الجنسين عالمياً. على الرغم من تصورها السلي لبعض مفاهيم المساواة بين الجنسين في الإسلام، يعترف البحث بصحة بعض حججها وبال الحاجة إلى معالجة القضايا التي تثيرها. يدعو البحث إلى دمج الجوانب الإيجابية في نهج مرنيسي، خصوصاً تقييمها النقدي الذاتي، في الخطاب الإسلامي المعاصر. ويبرز الحاجة إلى تشكيل خلية فكر إسلامية لإعادة تقييم وتطوير مناهج جديدة لقضايا المساواة بين الجنسين، لضمان توافق هذه الحلول مع مفهوم العدالة في الإسلام وتليبيتها لاحتياجات العصر الحديث.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Ph.D of Islamic Thought and Civilization,

.....
Muhammad Ayman al-Akiti
Supervisor

.....
Abdelaziz Berghout
Supervisory Committee Chairperson

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Ph.D of Islamic Thought and Civilization.

.....
Abdul Salam @ Zulkifli Muhamad
Shukri
Examiner

.....
Khadijah Mohd Khambali @
Hambali
External Examiner

This thesis was submitted to the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Ph.D of Islamic Thought and Civilization

.....
Mohd. Feham Md Ghalib
Deputy Dean, International Institute
of Islamic Thought and Civilization
(ISTAC)

This thesis was submitted to the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Ph.D of Islamic Thought and Civilization.

.....
Abdelaziz Berghout, Dean,
International Institute of Islamic
Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)

APPROVAL PAGE

The thesis of Mohamad Haeqal Ishak has been approved by the following:

Muhammad Ayman al-Akiti
Supervisor

Abdelaziz Berghout
Supervisory Committee Chairperson

Abdul Salam @ Zulkifli Muhamad Shukri
Internal Examiner

Khadijah Mohd Khambali @ Hambali
External Examiner

Asadullah Shah
Chairman

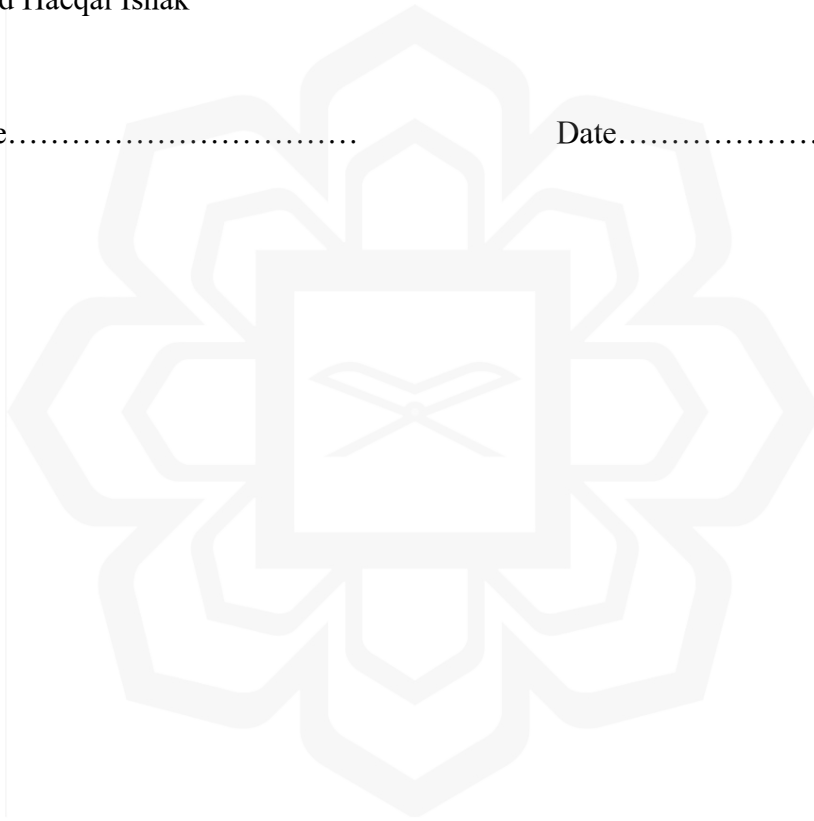
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Mohamad Haeqal Ishak

Signature.....

Date.....



INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF
FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

TITLE OF THE THESIS/DISSERTATION

I declare that the copyright holder of this thesis/dissertation are jointly owned by the student and IIUM.

Copyright © 2014 Student Name and International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may only be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purpose.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieval system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

By signing this form, I acknowledged that I have read and understand the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialization policy.

Affirmed by Mohamad Haeqal bin Ishak

.....
Signature

.....
Date

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF
FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

TITLE OF THE THESIS/DISSERTATION

I declare that the copyright holder of this thesis/dissertation is International Islamic University Malaysia.

Copyright © 2014 International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may only be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purpose.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieval system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

By signing this form, I acknowledged that I have read and understand the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialization policy.

Affirmed by Mohamad Haeqal bin Ishak

.....

Signature

.....

Date

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF
FAIR USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

TITLE OF THE THESIS/DISSERTATION

I declare that the copyright holder of this thesis/dissertation is Name of the Student.

Copyright © 2014 Student Name. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may only be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purpose.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieval system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

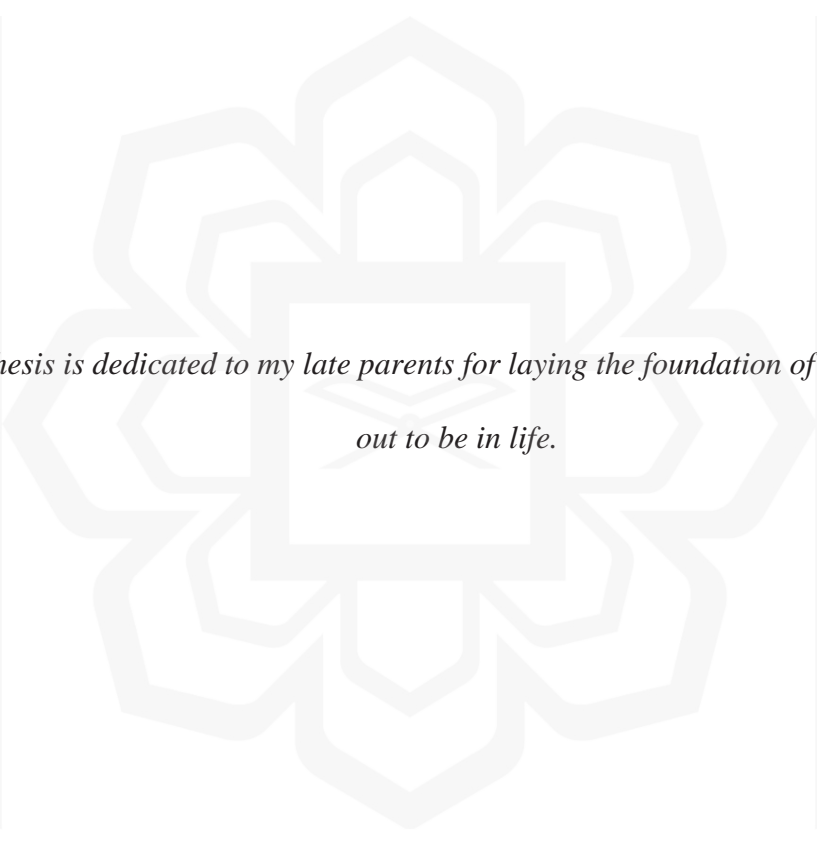
By signing this form, I acknowledged that I have read and understand the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialization policy.

Affirmed by Mohamad Haeqal bin Ishak

.....
Signature

.....
Date

NO TITLE FOR THIS PAGE



*This thesis is dedicated to my late parents for laying the foundation of what I turned
out to be in life.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,

All praise is due to Allāh, the Almighty, whose Grace and Mercies have guided me throughout my academic journey. Despite the challenges, His blessings and kindness have lightened the arduous path of completing this thesis.

My deepest gratitude extends to my dear parents, *Allāhyarḥam* Ishak Arshad and Nor Haida Sulaiman, my beloved wife and lovely children, Siti Aminah Ahmad and Nur Ain Khadeeja, along with my siblings— *Allāhyarḥamah* Nurahayu, Nurhamima, Nurhafifa, Nur Najwa, Nur Hafeza—and my extended family and in-laws. Their unwavering support and belief in my capabilities have been my constant inspiration on this incredible postgraduate journey. I am profoundly grateful for their enduring patience and encouragement.

I owe a profound debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Assist. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ayman al-Akiti, whose enduring disposition, kindness, promptitude, and friendship have played a crucial role in the successful completion of my work. I acknowledge and appreciate his detailed comments, useful suggestions, and inspiring queries that have significantly enhanced this thesis. His brilliant grasp of the aim and content of this work led to his insightful comments, suggestions and queries which helped me a great deal and proved invaluable in helping me to complete my study. Despite his commitments, he generously took time to listen and attend to me whenever requested, providing moral support that greatly contributed to the drafting of this research. My gratitude also extends to the supervisory committee chairperson, Prof. Dr. Abdelaziz Berghout, whose support and cooperation have contributed significantly to the outcome of this work.

Special appreciation goes to those who have extended their helping hands in countless ways throughout the process, including my spiritual teacher, *Shaykh* Dr. Khalil Ilyas al-Iraqi, and friends Dr. Ahmad Arif Zulkefli, Dr. Nashwan Abdo Khaled, Ust. Zainul Abidin Abdul Halim, Ust. Izzat Shukur, and colleagues at AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, AHAS KIRKHS IIUM. I also express my gratitude to the administration of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization ISTAC-IIUM, especially Brother Noor Mohd Azmy Mohd Husin and Madam Rosliza Ismail, for their cooperation, courtesy, and kindness.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks go to all who have directly or indirectly aided me in completing this thesis. I owe each one of you a great debt of appreciation for being an integral part of my colourful journey. Once again, we glorify Allāh for His endless mercy on us one of which is enabling us to successfully conclude the efforts of writing this thesis. Alhamdulillah.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Abstract in Arabic.....	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration.....	vii
Copyright.....	viii
Acknowledgements.....	xii
List of Figures.....	xix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....1

CHAPTER TWO: INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC FEMINISM.....22

Introduction	22
Definition and Objective	23
Epistemological and Historical Background	28
Feminism vs Islamic Feminism	34
Islamic Feminism Categorisation	38
Counter-movements and Opposition	43
Brief Exploration into The Islamic Feminist Theory	47
Autonomy in Public Sphere	47
Rights to Re-Interpret the Islamic Law and Reforming Islamic Teaching	50
Scepticism on Past Scholars' Authority	54
The Spirit of al-Sharī'ah: A Feminist Justification	56
Islamic Feminism: Works and Achievements	57
Muslim Feminist Personas around the Globe and Their Contributions.....	57
Western Countries	58
Middle East	62
India Subcontinent	72
Africa	74
Central and Southeast Asia	76
Islamic Feminism Movements on Global Platform	78
The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA).....	79
Sisters in Islam (SIS).....	80
MUSAWAH	82
Sister-hood	83
Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML).....	84
Muslim Women's Quest for Equality	85
Ni Putes Ni Soumises (NPNS).....	86
Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE)	87
Conclusion	88
Conclusion	89

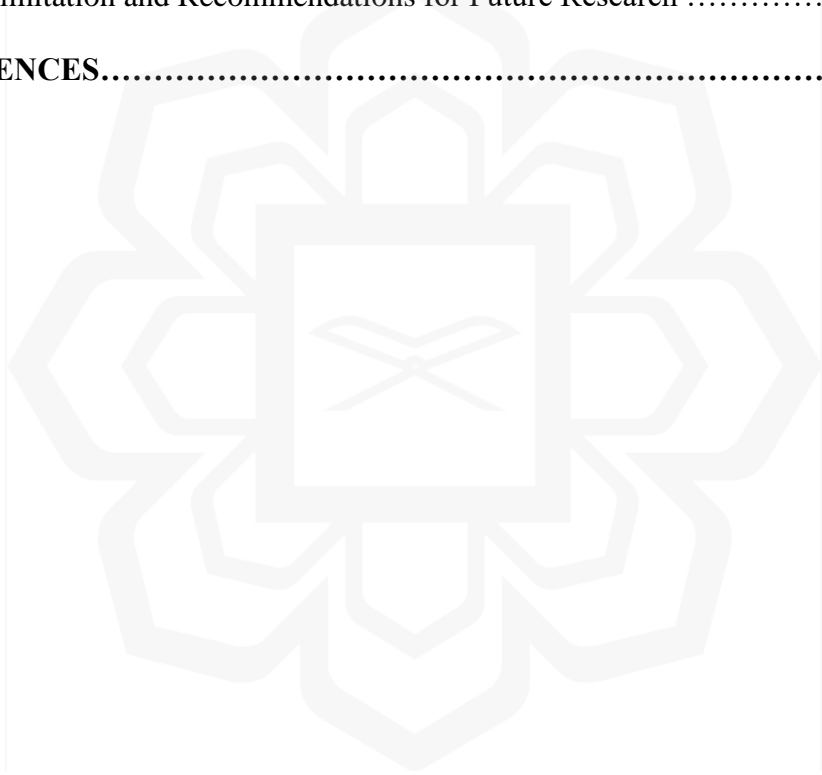
CHAPTER THREE: THE CONCEPT OF GENDER EQUALITY IN ISLAM: MERNISSI'S PERSPECTIVE	91
Introduction	91
Fatema Mernissi: A Muslim and Feminist.....	92
Fatema Mernissi: Background and Influences	93
Educational and Career Background	96
Fez in Mernissi's Time	97
Mernissi and the Harem	99
Childhood, Adolescence and Adulthood	102
Works of Fatema Mernissi	104
Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in the Modern Muslim Society (1975).....	106
Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women (1983).....	107
Woman in the Muslim Unconscious (1984).....	109
L'amour Dans Les Pays Musulmans (1986).....	110
The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam (1987).....	111
Chahrazad N'est Pas Marocaine: Autrement, Elle Serait Salariee (1988).....	114
The Forgotten Queens of Islam (1990).....	115
Islam and Democracy (1992).....	117
Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood (1994).....	118
Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory (1996).....	119
Les Aït-Débrouille: Ong rurales du Haut-Atlas (1998).....	121
Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems (2001).....	122
Les Sindbads Marocains: Voyage dans le Maroc civique (2004).....	124
Un Libro Para La Paz – Asturias Prize Book (2004)	125
Le Jardin Des Amoureux: Les 50 Noms D'amour (2004 and 2011).....	126
Ruses de Femmes? Ruses d'Hommes (2006).....	128
A Quoi Rêvent Les Jeunes? (2008).....	129
Reflexions Sur La "Violence" Des Jeunes (2015).....	130
Essay and Articles	131
Fatema Mernissi and the Islamic Feminist Movement.....	134
Mernissi Influence on Islamic Feminist Figures and Movements	135
Fatema Mernissi Contributions to the Islamic Feminist Theory	143
Fatema Mernissi's Views on The Concept of Gender Equality in Islam	134
Gender Equality in Islam: Mernissi Perspective	146
Women 'Kayd'	147
Free Will and Self-Autonomy	149

Women Empowerment	152
Sexual Identity	154
Gender Relationship	157
Patriarchal Family Unit	160
Against Heterosexual Intimacy	161
Conclusion	163
Mernissi's Methodology in Approaching Gender Issues in Islam ...	164
Mernissi's Motives and Reasons Approaching Gender Issues in Islam	164
Reclaiming History.....	164
Improving Policy on Women.....	169
Altering Consciousness	171
Mernissi Approaches and Methods in Criticizing the Gender Equality Issues in Islam	173
Contextual and Socio-Historical Analysis.....	173
Authentication Methodology	175
Multiple-Front Critique	175
Secular Critique.....	176
Double Investigation.....	178
Demystifying Religion	179
Marxist Approach.....	180
Feminist Perspective	181
Incorporating Fiction and Humour.....	182
Improvising Approach.....	183
Conclusion	184

CHAPTER FOUR: FATEMA MERNISSI AND GLOBAL ISSUES ON GENDER EQUALITY: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE186

Introduction	186
Identity and Intersectionality	187
Identity and Expression	187
Equality in Feminism	193
An Analysis from the Islamic Perspective	196
Autonomy and Religious Absolutism	204
Veiling, Sexual Segregation and Ḥudūd	205
Women's Autonomy and Leadership	210
An Analysis from the Islamic Perspective	217
Deconstruction of the Traditional Family Institution	224
Virginity and Sanctity	225
Wifhood and Motherhood	226
An Analysis from the Islamic Perspective	232
Law and Cultural Conflict	243
Extremism and Violence	244
Reproductive Rights and Healthcare	247
An Analysis from the Islamic Perspective	249

Feminization of Poverty	254
Women’s Economic Issues	255
Discrimination and Domestic Economy Dilemma	259
An Analysis from the Islamic Perspective	263
Women and Education	269
Education for Empowerment	270
Privileges and Educated Women’s Issues	273
An Analysis from the Islamic Perspective	274
Conclusion	279
CHAPTER FIVE: HEADING.....	281
Introduction	281
Discussion of Findings	282
Limitation and Recommendations for Future Research	286
REFERENCES.....	288



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Islamic Feminism Determinant	30
Figure 2	Islamic Feminist Categorisation	40
Figure 3	Fatema Mernissi's Life	94



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The emergence of feminism in the West has managed to extend its influence on the Muslim world. This has given rise to Islamic feminism and has reshaped discussions concerning women's rights within *Sharī'ah* law.¹ Several individuals within the Muslim community, identifying themselves as "Islamic feminists," contend that certain laws embedded within *Sharī'ah* are unjust and misogynistic from an authentic Islamic standpoint.² These activists challenge conventional interpretations of *Sharī'ah* and advocate for a feminist reinterpretation of the *Qur'ān*.³ Their ideas have spread across Muslim countries globally, including regions such as the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia. These Muslim feminists and their supporters are presently active in various parts of the world, advocating for women's rights.

Iranian scholar Ziba Mir-Hosseini originally used the phrase "Islamic Feminism" in the early 1990s when she contributed to the Tehran women's periodical "Zanan."⁴ This term gained widespread recognition within the Muslim community by the mid-1990s.⁵ Islamic feminism's concept emerged as a response to both patriarchal Islamism and secular feminism.⁶ As articulated by Margot Badran, Islamic feminism represents a "feminist

¹ Mohd Norzi Bin Nasir, "Fatima Mernissi Dalam Timbangan Ilmu Hadith: Kritik Terhadap Pemikiran Dan Dakwaan Hadith-Hadith Misoginis" (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2009), 42–43.

² For example of this claim, see Asra Q. Nomani, "Let These Women Pray!," *The Daily Beast*, 2010, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110518000448/http://www.thedailybeast.com/blogs-and-stories/2010-02-27/let-these-women-pray/#>.

³ Shazia Malik, "Towards a Feminist Interpretation of Islam: Faith and Gender in the Work of Fatima Mernissi," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 19, no. 3 (2014): 26; Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "Stretching the Limits: A Feminist Reading of the Sharia in Post-Khomeini Iran," in *Feminism and Islam; Legal and Literary Perspectives*, ed. Mai Yamani (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1996).

⁴ Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "Beyond 'Islam' vs 'Feminism,'" *Gender, Rights and Religion at the Crossroads* 42, no. 1 (2011): 72–73, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2011.00202.x>.

⁵ Liv Tønnessen, "Islamic Feminism: A Public Lecture" (Ahfad University for Women, Sudan: CHR. Michelsen Institute, 2014).

⁶ Margot Badran, "Islamic Feminism: What's in a Name?," *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, 2002, 1–8, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150320074746/http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/569/cu1.htm>.

discourse and practice articulated within an Islamic paradigm.”⁷ These Islamic feminists acknowledge the existence of discriminatory practices against Muslim women under Islamic law, particularly concerning marriage and personal status. In many Muslim nations, these laws are commonly referred to as family or personal status laws.⁸ Importantly, Islamic feminists do not advocate for the complete abolition of Islamic laws governing these areas; instead, they argue that women’s empowerment should be achieved through a re-evaluation of Islamic principles. They maintain that the *Qur’ān*’s ultimate objectives are equality and justice, but these principles have been subverted by patriarchal influences in both contemporary systems and traditional practices.⁹

Given the emphasis on religious reinterpretation, scholar-activists play a pivotal role among Muslim feminists. However, this group is far from homogeneous, as its members vary significantly in terms of ideological framework, educational background, gender, historical and geographical context, and more.¹⁰ Throughout history, numerous scholar-activists have made substantial contributions and remain influential for present-day Islamic women’s activists. One of the most noteworthy figures is Moroccan sociologist Fatema Mernissi, whose works continue to wield significant authority and influence among Muslim feminists.

Mernissi, although a Moroccan, has always been especially concerned with the position of women in the dynamic Muslim communities of the Arab world at large. Like her fellow Islamic feminist activists and scholars, she grappled with how to leverage Islam’s transnational nature to empower herself while upholding her identity as a "Muslim

⁷ Badran, 1.

⁸ See the term use in these various sources, Nikki R. Keddie, “The Past and Present of Women in the Muslim World,” *Journal of World History* 1, no. 1 (1990): 95; Rochelle S. Witcher, “The Effects of Western Feminist Ideology on Muslim Feminists” (Naval Postgraduate School, 2005), 42; Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

⁹ Raja Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi, Women and Gender: The Middle East and the Islamic World* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 14, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004176164.i-296>; Liv Tønnessen, “Islamic Feminism” (Ahfad University for Women, Sudan: CHR. Michelsen Institute, 2014), 3.

¹⁰ Julie Elisabeth Pruzan-Jørgensen, “Islamic Women’s Activism in The Arab World” (Copenhagen, 2012), 34.

Woman."¹¹ Mernissi embraced the Islamic feminist perspective and dedicated herself to exploring the historical experiences of women during the early stages of Islamic history, particularly after the Prophet's ﷺ death in 632 AH. She critically examined and discredited various *hadiths* that were perceived as misogynistic, also scrutinizing the backgrounds of certain narrators.¹² Her efforts, while promoting a feminist perspective, significantly influenced subsequent works by Islamic feminist scholar-activists. Beyond her engagement with feminist issues, she delved into matters of faith, identity, colonialism, and culture. Her contributions to the discourse on Islamic feminism have made substantial advancements in feminist theories.

Mernissi's ideas and works have garnered attention from feminists both in the Western and Eastern world. She presented her arguments on women's rights in Islam in a logical and scholarly manner, leading discussions on topics such as colonialism, orientalist biases, identity politics, intersectionality, discrimination and tolerance within feminist theory.¹³ Her groundbreaking book, "Beyond the Veil: Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society," propelled her to a central and influential position in Arab feminist scholarship.¹⁴ In addition to critiquing the misogynistic handling of religious texts, she advocated for a reformed methodology for reinterpreting these texts. Simultaneously, she challenged the ethnocentric stereotypes propagated by Western societies about Islam and Muslim women.¹⁵ Furthermore, she provided a critical perspective on Western feminist theories and emerged as a prominent voice in the context of third-world feminism.¹⁶

¹¹ Miriam Cooke, "Multiple Critique: Islamic Feminist Rhetorical Strategies," *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 1 (2000): 8.

¹² See her discussion in Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond The Veil: Male-Female Dynamics In Modern Muslim Society* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975); Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, trans. Mary Jo Lakeland (New York & Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1991).

¹³ Malik, "Towards a Feminist Interpretation of Islam: Faith and Gender in the Work of Fatima Mernissi," 25.

¹⁴ Malik, 25.

¹⁵ Malik, 25.

¹⁶ Third world feminism is usually categorized into various branches, black feminism, South Asian feminism, Islamic/Arab feminism, etc. See Malik, "Towards a Feminist Interpretation of Islam: Faith and Gender in the Work of Fatima Mernissi."

As an Islamic feminist, Mernissi championed an alternative methodology and approach compared to the mainstream teachings of Islam in interpreting religious texts. She advocated for a reinterpretation of these texts in light of the egalitarian principles present in Islam. Nonetheless, her method that utilizes hermeneutics and secular critics does not adhere to the traditional way and has been opposed by many authorities and mainstream Muslim scholars worldwide.¹⁷ Some areas of Islamic law that Mernissi disagreed with were polygyny, the veil, and women's rights in family institutions. Despite the significance of her work, it has not been subject to the thorough examination it deserves. Her critics often focus on isolated aspects of her extensive scholarship, neglecting the complexity and interconnections within her ideas. Comprehensive analyses are frequently selective, leading to inaccuracies and misunderstandings of her complex contributions. Mernissi's work is often either praised or criticized without a detailed, holistic review.

Studying Mernissi's views on gender equality is of great academic importance. A comprehensive analysis can address the limitations of existing critiques, moving beyond reductionist interpretations to offer a more nuanced understanding of her work. Examining these tensions is crucial due to her significant influence. Thus, this research will explore her perspective and its foundations, comparing her ideas with mainstream Islamic teachings through critical analysis of the *Qur'ān and ḥadīth*. Additionally, it will assess her approach to gender equality issues in contemporary contexts. This study aims to deepen the understanding of gender equality from an Islamic perspective through a comprehensive and critical examination. By doing so, it seeks to clarify Mernissi's stance on the Islamic concept of gender equality and to open up avenues for further discussion and refinement of gender dynamics within Islam. This approach will foster a more inclusive and informed dialogue on this important issue.

¹⁷ Mainstream teaching of Islam can be understood as the teaching that adheres to the methods and viewpoints of the primary Islamic schools of jurisprudence (*al-Fiqh and al-Uṣūl al-Fiqh*) when formulating a legal ruling (*fatwā*). Further explanation on it, see Zulkifli bin Mohamad Al-Bakri, *Istilah-Istilah Fiqah Dan Usul: Empat Mazhab* (JAKIM, 2017); Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Fiqh Al-Islāmī Wa 'Adillatuhu*, vol. 4 (Damshiq: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir, 2004); Gloria Moran, "The Development of Laws and Jurisprudence in Islam: Religious and Imperial Legacies," *Labyrinths of Political and Religious Identities in a Global World*, 2020.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Feminist activists, including Islamic feminists, are unwavering in their commitment to disseminating their theories through various channels. Subsequent to the influence of feminist and women activists, the United Nations has been orchestrating international conferences on women since the 1970s. These conferences have resulted in the adoption of consequential documents that promote the empowerment and advancement of women. The UN General Assembly's 1979 adoption of CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women),¹⁸ which went into effect in 1981, and the 1995 passage of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action,¹⁹ are two instances of this influence. These developments inevitably affect Muslim-majority countries, making it crucial to acknowledge and comprehend Islamic feminism as a subset of the broader feminist movement. Supported by international law and the broader feminist movement, Islamic feminist activists and organizations have openly promoted their ideas. Ignorance of the intricacies of Islamic feminist theory and the Islamic notion of gender equality could result in potential disputes and misunderstandings that exacerbate tensions between religious and secular perspectives.

As a leading figure among Islamic feminist scholars, Fatema Mernissi significantly influenced the development of Muslim feminist ideals and theories. Her contribution to the discourse on gender equality has sparked a paradigmatic shift in how Islam is perceived in relation to women's rights and gender roles. This shift signifies the coexistence of divergent perspectives on gender within the Islamic tradition, making it a critical area of study for scholars, policymakers, and the broader global community. Her works serve as representative pillars of Islamic feminism, cited by activists and organizations globally such as Sisters in Islam and Musawah.²⁰ Her influence on the Islamic feminism domain

¹⁸ CEDAW, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is considered as an International Bill of the Rights of Women, prepared by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, CSW. Entered into force in 1981.

¹⁹ UN Department of Public Information, *Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration*, United Nations (New York: United Nations, 1996), 58.

²⁰ Sisters in Islam and Musawah has dedicated several articles to honour Mernissi's passing and her contributions. See Amina Wadud, "We Were Soul Sisters," in *Musawah Vision*, ed. Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Special (Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2016); Zakia Soman, "What Fatima Mernissi Means To Me," in *Musawah*

represents a pivotal moment in the evolution of Islamic feminist thought, marked by a profound transposition in her approach and perspective toward Islam. Nevertheless, her perspectives have encountered resistance from prominent Muslim scholars and authorities who perceive her ideas as deviating from authentic Islamic teachings.²¹

Despite the importance of her scholarship, Mernissi's work has not been subjected to the comprehensive scrutiny it deserves. Critics often focus on isolated elements of her extensive scholarship, neglecting the complexity and interconnectedness of her ideas. This selective critique leads to major inaccuracies and misconceptions about her multifaceted contributions. Mernissi's work is typically either highly praised or sharply criticized, yet it rarely undergoes a thorough and detailed analysis. This gap in scholarship highlights the need for a comprehensive examination of Mernissi's ideas and arguments. A thorough analysis will address the limitations of existing critiques, offering a more nuanced understanding of her work. Mernissi's perspectives on gender equality frequently conflict with mainstream Islamic teachings, sparking significant debate. Understanding her work is not only an academic pursuit but also a means of bridging her unique Islamic feminist perspective with broader Islamic scholarly views.

In response to these complexities, this study undertakes an in-depth examination of the notion of gender equality within an Islamic feminist framework, with a specific focus on the ideas put forth by Fatema Mernissi and their significance in ongoing global issues on gender equality. This investigation encompasses a thorough assessment of the logical underpinnings, methodology, critiques, and practical applicability of Mernissi's perspective on the concept of gender equality in Islam. Furthermore, it scrutinizes her approach and justification when interpreting contentious Islamic texts pertaining to gender equality. It is important to note that this study positions itself within the mainstream Islamic teachings while analysing Mernissi's commentary on these texts. However, it remains open and receptive to her criticisms and perspectives regarding misogynistic practices within the Islamic community. This approach seeks to strike a balance between acknowledging the

Vision, ed. Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Special (Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2016); Ziba Mir-Hosseini, ed., *Musawah Vision: Honouring a Fierce Feminist Foremother*, *Musawah Vision*, Special (Musawah, 2016).

²¹ Refer footnotes 16.

established Islamic tradition and acknowledging the need for critical discourse and examination of gender-related issues in contemporary Islamic practice.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study seeks to address the following research questions:

- i. What are the objectives and aims of Islamic feminism in its pursuit of gender equality?
- ii. How does Fatema Mernissi perceive the Islamic concept of gender equality?
- iii. What methodology or approach does Fatema Mernissi utilize in dealing with gender equality issues in Islam?
- iv. How does Fatema Mernissi's stance on current global gender equality issues align with Islamic perspectives?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To analyse the objectives and aims of Islamic feminism in its pursuit of gender equality.
- ii. To examine Fatema Mernissi's viewpoint regarding the Islamic concept of gender equality.
- iii. To investigate Fatema Mernissi's methodology and approach when dealing with gender equality issues in Islam.
- iv. To assess Fatema Mernissi's stance on the current global gender equality issues and examine how it aligns with Islamic perspectives.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this thesis seeks to investigate and analyse Fatema Mernissi's perspective on gender equality within the Islamic context. This study will delve

into her unique methodology and approach while exploring her stance against mainstream Islamic perspectives. Additionally, it aims to explore Mernissi's commentary on women's issues and assess her viewpoints and arguments. The primary methodology utilized in this research is qualitative methodology, focusing on 'library study' of Mernissi's works and related literature. It also employs the critical analysis method in examining her concepts of gender equality, and the comparative analysis approach in apprehending her commentary on current global gender equality issues with respect to the mainstream Islamic teachings.

1.5.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, relying on the examination of textual sources and scholarly discourse related to Fatema Mernissi's views on gender equality in Islam. The following research methods will be applied to achieve the research objectives.

1.5.1.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a key research method, which will be employed to extract and examine the fundamental concepts and issues of gender equality embedded within Fatema Mernissi's writings, speeches, talks, and journal articles. This approach will facilitate the identification, categorization, and critical examination of Mernissi's thematic content, thereby providing insights into her perspective. Furthermore, the research will explore how Mernissi's perspective and approach are positioned in the contemporary discourse on selected global issues on gender equality and women's rights.

1.5.1.2 Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis is a pivotal component of this research, aimed at assessing the agreeability of Fatema Mernissi's perspective on global issues of gender equality with Islamic scripture and mainstream Islamic scholarship. This involves a meticulous examination and comparison of Mernissi's commentary on selected women's issues, *Qur'ānic* verses, traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, with views expressed by

prominent Muslim scholars. These sources will be assessed in accordance with mainstream Islamic methodology (*al-Manhaj al-Uṣuliyy*).²² Additionally, the study will consider the perspectives of Islamic feminist and non-feminist scholars, along with their commentaries and critiques of Mernissi's work, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the discourse surrounding gender equality in Islam.

1.5.2 Data Collection

In order to conduct the content and comparative analyses essential for this research, a wide range of data sources will be systematically collected. These sources encompass Fatema Mernissi's extensive body of work, which includes her books, articles, speeches, and interviews. Additionally, the study will draw upon *Qur'ānic* verses and *ḥadīth* (the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ) that are directly pertinent to the theme of gender equality. To provide a comprehensive context, the research will also incorporate the scholarly writings and works of prominent mainstream Islamic scholars, serving as foundational elements of Islamic jurisprudence and thought for examination. Furthermore, the study will tap into the extensive literature produced by both Islamic feminist and non-feminist scholars, thus embracing diverse viewpoints on gender-related issues within the Islamic framework. Lastly, academic critiques and reviews of Fatema Mernissi's writings will be included to offer valuable insights and evaluations of her work. This meticulous data collection process will facilitate a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of Fatema Mernissi's perspectives on gender equality within the Islamic context.

1.5.3 Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected data will follow a systematic procedure encompassing several essential steps. First, the research will involve the identification and extraction of fundamental concepts, perspectives, and arguments pertaining to gender equality within Mernissi's body of work. Subsequently, Mernissi's ideas will undergo a rigorous evaluation,

²² *Supra* note 17, page 4.

with reference to Islamic sources such as the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*, as well as mainstream Islamic scholarship. Furthermore, the study will meticulously examine commentaries and critiques of Mernissi's ideas by both Islamic feminist and non-feminist scholars, fostering a comprehensive understanding of her work. Additionally, a comparative analysis will be conducted to discern disparities and commonalities between Mernissi's position and those articulated by other scholars. Finally, the research will culminate in a critical assessment of the contemporary relevance, argumentation and applicability of Mernissi's ideas, addressing their significance in the context of current global gender equality issues.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Fatema Mernissi's contributions to the discourse of gender equality's issues in Islam hold profound significance in the realm of academia, gender studies, and the broader societal dialogue. The importance of studying Mernissi's work becomes evident when considering the limitations of existing scholarship that critically addressed gender dynamic in Islam, and considering the extensive impact of her discourse on both Muslim and Western societies, scholars, and academia.

Despite its ubiquity, her work has rarely received the comprehensive scrutiny it merits. Many critics have addressed only specific facets of her extensive body of work, inadvertently overlooking the intricacies and interconnectedness of her ideas. The few critics who have undertaken this task often do so selectively, addressing one aspect of her work while overlooking others.²³ This selective approach often results in major inaccuracies and a misconception of Mernissi's multifaceted scholarship. Fundamentally, Mernissi's body of work is either universally lauded or vehemently criticized; however, it is seldom thoroughly dissected.

²³ Studying only a particular book of Mernissi, which many scholars do, might limit the understanding of her perspective since it overlooks the evolution of her approach and views on Islam throughout her life. For a study on her shift in perspective, see Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*.

This gap in scholarship highlights the need for a comprehensive examination of Mernissi's ideas and arguments. By undertaking such an analysis, we can address the limitations of existing critiques. It allows us to avoid reductionist interpretations and instead offer an explorative understanding of her work. Moreover, Mernissi's general ideas and perspectives on gender equality are in conflict with mainstream Islamic teachings. While Islam inherently promotes gender equality, Mernissi's arguments on this issue have been criticized by many Muslim scholars for its deviation from established Islamic methodologies.²⁴ The tension between her positions with mainstream Islamic positions is a matter of paramount importance due to her influence. Thus, studying her ideas is not only an academic endeavour but could also become a bridging process of understanding between her unique Islamic feminist perspective and the broader Islamic scholarly perspective.

Furthermore, the significance of this research extends to both Muslim and Western societies. In the contemporary globalized world, where diverse voices and perspectives intersect, understanding Mernissi's work has implications for societal interactions and dialogue. Her thoughts on Muslim women's identity and rights in Islam, although controversial, is considered as the best portrayal of the Muslim women's image by Western academia. Her ideas and perspective are celebrated and considered reflective of the authentic spirit of Islam by non-Muslim Western scholarship. A contrast in her methodologies and positions in comparison with mainstream Islamic teachings provides an opportunity for reflection and a deeper comprehension of her perspective. This comprehension is crucial for fostering constructive conversations and exchange of perspectives between Muslim scholars of different ideologies, academic disciplines and cultural backgrounds.

In conclusion, this study of Fatema Mernissi's perspective on the concept of gender equality in Islam holds immense significance in academia. It addresses the gaps of existing scholarship in gender dynamics in Islam, navigates the complexities of her work, and bridges or clarifies the misconception between her Islamic feminist position and mainstream Islamic teachings. Moreover, it enriches the dialogue between Muslim and

²⁴ One of the examples, see Abdelkébir Alaoui Mdaghri, *Al-Mar'ah Bayna Ahkām Al-Fiqh Wa Al-Da'wā Ilā Al-Taghyār* (Mohammedia: Fedala, 1999).

Western societies, scholars, and academia. By examining her ideas comprehensively and critically, this research contributes to an even more detailed and improved understanding of gender equality issues from an Islamic perspective, transcending the boundaries of disciplines and promoting a more inclusive and informed discussion on this vital topic.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this research provides a comprehensive analysis of Fatema Mernissi's perspective on the concept of gender equality in Islam, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. Firstly, the scope of this study is delimited by its primary focus on Fatema Mernissi's ideas and writings. The research does not undertake an exhaustive examination of various other Muslim feminist thinkers, thus potentially limiting the spectrum of Islamic feminist perspective in the discourse on gender equality in Islam.

Secondly, the study does not aim to encompass all aspects of Islamic feminism. Instead, it selectively addresses specific issues and claims relevant to the broader topics of gender equality and women's rights within the Islamic context. Consequently, there may be areas of Islamic feminism that are not thoroughly explored within the confines of this research.

Thirdly, the study acknowledges a limitation in language expertise, as the analysis primarily relies on translated versions of Mernissi's works in English. The absence of proficiency in French may constrain the depth of understanding derived from the original texts, potentially affecting the nuances of Mernissi's expressions and arguments. Additionally, this study utilized several versions of Mernissi's books with different publications due to the availability of some sources in hand. Nonetheless, this study rightfully includes correct reference and bibliography for each book and ensures that it does not affect or have any differences to Mernissi's main arguments.

In conclusion, while this research provides valuable insights into Fatema Mernissi's contributions to the discourse on gender equality in Islam, it is imperative to recognize the outlined limitations. These limitations shape the boundaries of the study and emphasize the

need for future research endeavours to explore a more expansive array of perspectives within Islamic feminism and consider the broader spectrum of works by various Muslim feminist thinkers.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW²⁵

Fatema Mernissi has left an indelible mark on Islamic feminism, igniting extensive discussions both within and beyond the Islamic feminist discourse. Her contributions have been thoroughly examined from various perspectives, earning recognition from scholars in both Western and Muslim contexts. Shazia Malik, for instance, provides insight into Mernissi's exploration of women's rights in the Arab world and her overarching mission.²⁶ Her exploration encompasses Mernissi's notable works such as "Beyond the Veil: Female Dynamics in the Modern Muslim Society," "Islam and Democracy," and "The Forgotten Queens of Islam." She highlights Mernissi's distinctive approach in skilfully weaving together elements of faith, identity, colonialism, and culture within her discourse.

Despite her predominantly secular perspective, Mernissi's ideas have made a lasting impact on subsequent Islamic feminist scholar-activists. Her arguments challenge Islamic fundamentalists and their male-centric interpretations, advocating for a re-examination of Islamic heritage. It is crucial to recognize that Mernissi embraced two positions of feminism—secular and Islamic feminism—at different points in her life. Raja Rhouni's research, which charts Mernissi's transition from a "secularist" to an "Islamic" feminist, provides insightful information about how events in Morocco and the Islamic world throughout Mernissi's lifetime impacted her position and writings.²⁷ Rhouni's work plays a pivotal role in clarifying the misunderstanding in Mernissi's stances and addressing inconsistencies in many of her writings.

²⁵ The arrangement of the literature in this part follows three key elements:

1. The relevance of each source to the study.
2. A distinction between Western and Eastern literature on Mernissi.
3. A progression from general discussions of Mernissi's ideas to comparisons with other Islamic feminists, and finally to literature addressing specific aspects of her work.

²⁶ Malik, "Towards a Feminist Interpretation of Islam: Faith and Gender in the Work of Fatima Mernissi."

²⁷ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*.

Rebecca Barlow and Shahram Akbarzadeh have also discerned Mernissi's dual ideological shift, tracing her progression from advocating a secular reconstruction of Muslim societies to a stance resembling Islamic reformism.²⁸ According to them, Mernissi's Islamic reformism or Islamic feminism stance has embraced an apologetic approach. Barlow and Akbarzadeh perceive Mernissi's 'secularist' phase as "reconstructionist", while perceiving her "revolutionary" and "Islamic feminist" phase as "reformist". In placing Mernissi's progress in context, they see this ideological turn as essentially a reaction against the more widespread ideological changes that occurred throughout the Muslim world during her time. They contend that the increasing popularity of the reformist approach is consistent with the general public's dissatisfaction with the Western development model and a growing tendency toward re-embracing Islam as a representation of a new national, cultural, and religious identity. Mernissi modified her once-revolutionary message in this setting, which called for a significant reorganization of Muslim society in order to mitigate the difficulties encountered by Muslim women. Criticizing Mernissi's 'new' tactic, Barlow and Akbarzadeh expressed their criticism, saying that reformism always has to fight to redefine and expand what is already considered acceptable without providing something anew.

Lamia Ben Youssef Zayzafoon centres her analysis on Fatima Mernissi in her preliminary chapter titled "A Semiotic Reading of Islamic Feminism: Hybridity, Authority, and the Strategic Reinvention of the 'Muslim Woman' in Fatima Mernissi."²⁹ The chapter explores how Mernissi reconstructed or "reinvented" her definition of "Muslim woman," which contradicts the monolithic interpretations held by both Orientalists and conservative Muslims. Zayzafoon duly acknowledges Mernissi's dual aim of protecting the rights of 'Muslim women' in the face of the escalating Islamist threat and addressing the escalating anti-Islamic sentiments observed in Western societies. Nevertheless, Mernissi's work is subject to critical analysis by Zayzafoon, who points out several significant shortcomings, most notably the way in which her discourse persists in Orientalist and conservative

²⁸ Rebecca Barlow and Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Women's Rights in the Muslim World: Reform or Reconstruction?," *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 8 (2006): 1481–94.

²⁹ Lamia Ben Youssef Zayzafoon, *The Production of the Muslim Woman: Negotiating Text, History, and Ideology* (New York: Lexington Books, 2005).

Muslim narratives. In her view, Mernissi ironically supports the idea of truth that underlies the validity of the *ḥadīth*, thus strengthening the capability of tradition to sustain itself. Zayzafoon's analysis, on the other hand, has a major flaw: it mixes up Mernissi's secularist and Islamic feminist writings, which Rhouni, Rebecca Barlow, and Shahram Akbarzadeh have pointed out.

Numerous articles also provide unique perspectives on Mernissi's ideas. Claire Noon, for instance, draws connections between Mernissi's Islamic feminism and Christian missionary studies.³⁰ Noon reassesses Christianity missiological approaches by leveraging the insights from her analysis on Mernissi's work on Islamic feminism. She emphasizes that a Christian understanding of Muslim women inherently carries ethical implications. Western missionaries, according to Noon, have faced significant criticism for their misunderstandings of Islamic cultures, particularly regarding the role of women in Islam. In response, she explores Mernissi's ethical framework, suggesting potential benefits for missionary work, such as fostering an open discussion about misogynistic practices in the Bible and the church.

The ongoing discussion surrounding Mernissi's status as an Islamic feminist introduces an additional layer of complexity. Some classify her as a liberal feminist, highlighting her efforts to promote equal rights within the Islamic context. Conversely, others contend that her ideas are firmly grounded in a professedly Islamic viewpoint. Fatima Seedat aligns Mernissi's initiatives for women's empowerment with those of other Muslim feminists like Amina Wadud, Leila Ahmed, and Asma Barlas.³¹ This alignment is particularly evident in their shared approach of employing feminist analysis to comprehend Islamic revealed texts.

³⁰ Claire Noon, "The Missiological Implications of the Islamic Feminism of Fatima Mernissi," *Encounters Mission Ezine* December 2, no. 27 (2008); Claire Noon, "Islamic Feminism as Articulated by Fatima Mernissi and Its Implications for Christian Mission," *Encounters Mission Ezine* December 2, no. 27 (2008), https://encountersmissionjournal.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/missiological_implications_of_islamic_feminism_27.pdf.

³¹ Fatima Seedat, "Islam, Feminism, and Islamic Feminism: Between Inadequacy and Inevitability," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29, no. 2 (2013): 25–45, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2979/jfemistudreli.29.2.25>.

Meryem Ouedghiri, comparing Mernissi to Assia Djebar, considers their works essential blueprints for women's emancipation against Islamic fundamentalism.³² Despite Mernissi never personally identifying as an "Islamic Feminist," Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke place her within the realm of Islamic feminism.³³ Elboubekri sheds light on the intricacies of Mernissi's perspectives, delving into her assertions about patriarchy's impact on Islamic tradition and her proposal for a secular approach to women's liberation. Mernissi's narrative, grounded in evidence from Islamic discourse, emerges as a crucial tool against patriarchal ideologies within Islam.³⁴

Roohi Stack has dedicated considerable effort in analysing Mernissi's discourse in conjunction with other prominent Islamic feminist scholars like Amina Wadud and Riffat Hassan.³⁵ The primary objective of her thesis is to scrutinize the arguments of these influential Muslim women scholars, exploring the reasons behind their perspectives and the methodologies they employed in presenting their viewpoints. A thorough evaluation of "The Veil and the Male Elite" by Fatima Mernissi, "Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective" by Amina Wadud, and "Muslim Women and Post-Patriarchal Islam" by Riffat Hassan are all part of Stack's analysis. It underscores the differing focuses of these three Islamic feminists; Wadud emphasizes hermeneutic analysis of the *Qur'ān*, Mernissi delves into the study of *ḥadīth* narrators, lineage criticism, and history, while Hassan concentrates on critiquing misogynistic interpretations of *ḥadīth*. Similarly, another work that draws a comparison between Mernissi and Amina Wadud is authored by Cengiz KOC, exploring their distinct understandings of the sacred text.³⁶

³² Meryem Ouedghiri, "Writing Women's Bodies on The Palimpsest of Islamic History," *Cultural Dynamics* 14, no. 1 (2002): 41–64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09213740020140010301>.

³³ Badran, "Islamic Feminism: What's in a Name?," 17–23; Miriam Cooke, *Women Claim Islam: Creating Islamic Feminism through Literature* (New York, London: Routledge, 2001), 61.

³⁴ Abdellah Elboubekri, "Is Patriarchy an Islamic Legacy? A Reflection on Fatima Mernissi's Dreams of Trespass and Najat El Hachmi's The Last Patriarch," *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 10, no. 1 (2015): 30.

³⁵ Roohi Khan Stack, "An Analysis of Muslim Women's Rights Based on the Works of Amina Wadud, Fatima Mernissi, and Riffat Hassan" (Harvard Extension School, 2020).

³⁶ Cengiz KOC, "Fatima Mernissi and Amina Wadud: Patriarchal Dominance and Misinterpretation of Sacred Texts in Islamic Countries," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 6, no. 8 (2016).

Conversely, Abdellah Elboubekri connects Mernissi's "Dreams of Trespass" with Najat El Hachmi's "The Last Patriarch."³⁷ In "The Last Patriarch," El Hachmi offers a viewpoint on the developing diasporic tales by depicting patriarchy as a cross-cultural practice rather than an inherent feature of Islam. In contrast, Mernissi portrays gendered separation in "Dreams of Trespass" as a socially manufactured phenomenon. By crossing the actual or perceived borders of the "harem" in these fictions, both pieces symbolise the decline of patriarchal authority. Another author, Ziad Bentahar, similarly delves into the concept of spatial boundaries and compares it with feminists Assia Djébar and Malek Alloula.³⁸ This comparison brings forward the critiques of Djébar and Alloula reflected in their art and photography alongside Mernissi's critique expressed through her written memoir particularly on Orientalist representations of Moroccan women. Similarly, Carine Bourget's work focuses on Mernissi's autobiography, "Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood," where it critically examines and challenges the Orientalist stereotype associated with the concept of the harem.³⁹ Bourget, whose approach combines both literary and sociological perspectives, raises concerns about Mernissi's portrayal of life in a harem, pointing out its oversight of the issue of social class.

Jonas Svensson plays a crucial role in offering an in-depth exploration of Mernissi's background, shedding light on her engagement in human rights activism and how she connects her discussions of Islamic Law to The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Women's Convention.⁴⁰ The study includes a comprehensive analysis of Mernissi's diverse areas of activity, her involvement in human rights, her self-presentation—particularly evident in her fictional autobiography "Dreams of Trespass"—her argumentation regarding her approach to Islamic sources, and the application of her gender dynamic model. Additionally, the study makes a comparison between Mernissi's ideas and

³⁷ Elboubekri, "Is Patriarchy an Islamic Legacy? A Reflection on Fatima Mernissi's Dreams of Trespass and Najat El Hachmi's The Last Patriarch."

³⁸ Ziad Bentahar, "Beyond Harem Walls: Redefining Women's Space in Works by Assia Djébar, Malek Alloula and Fatima Mernissi," *Hawwa* 7, no. 1 (2009): 25–38, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156920809X449526>.

³⁹ Carine Bourget, "Complicity with Orientalism in Third-World Women's Writing: Fatima Mernissi's Fictive Memoirs," *Research in African Literatures* 44, no. 3 (2013): 30–49.

⁴⁰ Jonas Svensson, *Women's Human Rights and Islam: A Study of Three Attempts at Accommodation*, ed. Tord Olsson, *Lund Studies in the History of Religions*, vol. 12 (Lund: Religionshistoriska avdelningen, Lunds universitet, 2000).

methods and those of Indian-born philosopher and religious studies expert Riffat Hassan, and Sudanese legal studies and human rights expert Abdullahi Ahmed an-Na'im.

Another noteworthy article by Jessica da Silva C. de Oliveira explores Mernissi's contribution to the development of intersectionality discourse within feminism.⁴¹ This study draws parallels between Mernissi's Islamic feminist intersectionality discourse and other forms of intersectionality discourse within feminism, such as Black feminism and third-world feminism, without relying solely on a theoretical framework rooted in Western perspectives. It critiques existing Western viewpoints on non-Western women and third-world feminism, questioning and examining the tendency of Western scholars in attributing the challenging conditions of many subaltern women solely to 'Islam.' However, this study disagrees with Oliveira's claims stating that many Islamic feminist scholars do not write in English, French, or other Western languages, as evidence suggests otherwise. Additionally, Moroccan scholars, including Naima Chikhaoui, Abdellah Labdaoui, and Abdessamad Dialmy, have contributed noteworthy articles and works discussing Mernissi's position as an Islamic feminist.⁴²

While most articles and works from Western and Middle Eastern scholars in the West tend to appreciate, diversify, and focus on literary criticism, a noteworthy shift is observed in Malay-Indonesian academic contributions. From 2010 to 2023, there was a surge in studies from Indonesia and Malaysia, offering methodological analyses and critical perspectives of Mernissi's standpoint. These scholars explore Mernissi's hermeneutic approach, re-evaluation of misogynistic *ḥadīths*, and perspectives on women's roles in specific contexts.

Numerous Malay-Indonesian articles and works delve into various facets of Mernissi's arguments, encompassing her views on gender equality, political vision,

⁴¹ Jessica da Silva C. de Oliveira, "Fatema Mernissi's Writings as a Gateway to Postcolonial Islamic Feminisms and Intersectionality in the Maghreb," *REVISTA DEBATES, Porto Alegre* 15, no. 3 (2021): 133–57.

⁴² Naima Chikhaoui, "La Question Des Femmes Vue Par Fatima Mernissi," *Prologues*, 1997; Abdellah Labdaoui, "Mernissi et Le Féminisme Islamique," in *Les Nouveaux Intellectuels Arabes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993); Abdessamad Dialmy, *Sexualité et Discours Au Maroc [Sexuality and Discourse in Morocco]*, *Afrique Orient* (Casablanca, 1988).

women's political participation, the significance of the "*ḥijāb*," and her stance on the feminist movement. While these pieces offer specific analyses of individual works, collectively, they contribute to a comprehensive understanding of Mernissi's feminist endeavours. Khalila Mukaromah,⁴³ Munirah,⁴⁴ and Limmatus Sauda',⁴⁵ along with Fiqih Syamsul Arifin,⁴⁶ explore Mernissi's hermeneutics on *Qur'ānic* and prophetic traditions. Nabilata,⁴⁷ MK Ridwan,⁴⁸ M. Rusydi,⁴⁹ Jamaluddin,⁵⁰ Adinda Novelia Puspita,⁵¹ and Abdullah Hanapi,⁵² focus on potential biases impacting Mernissi's reinterpretation of revealed texts. The theme of "misogyny *ḥadīth*" particularly in her book "Women and Islam: An Historical and Theological Enquiry," are explored by Ahmad Yunus Mohd Noor,⁵³ Limmatus Sauda',⁵⁴ and Dadah.⁵⁵ Noteworthy, Norzi Nasir's master's thesis provides a comprehensive discussion of Mernissi's critics concerning these *ḥadīths*.⁵⁶

Other dimensions of Mernissi's arguments and standpoint are addressed in various articles; Setiawan examines Mernissi's vision of equality in the political sphere,⁵⁷ Muhamad

⁴³ Kholila Mukaromah, "Hermeneutika Hadis Fatima Mernissi," *Universum* 12, no. 1 (2018): 47–61.

⁴⁴ Munirah, "Hermeneutika Hadis Ala Fatima Mernissi," *Ilmu Ushuluddin* 15, no. 1 (2016): 37–47.

⁴⁵ Limmatus Sauda', "Hadis Misoginis Dalam Perspektif Hermeneutika Fatima Mernissi," *Mutawatir* 4, no. 2 (2014): 292–308, <https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2014.4.2.292-308>.

⁴⁶ M. Fiqih Syamsul Arifin, "Tafsir Ideologis Dalam Pemikiran Fatimah Mernissi" (Institut Agama Islam Negeri Jember, 2020).

⁴⁷ Lub Lyna Nabilata, "Hermeneutika Feminis: Kritik Atas Kesetaraan Fatima Mernissi," *Al-Adabiya* 13, no. 2 (2018): 201–22.

⁴⁸ MK Ridwan, "Kontekstualisme Hadis; Analisis Metode Hermeneutika Fatima Mernissi," *Dinamika* 11, no. 21 (2015).

⁴⁹ Muhammad Rusydi, "Perempuan Di Hadapan Tuhan (Pemikiran Feminisme Fatima Mernissi)," *An Nisa'a* 7, no. 2 (2012): 73–86.

⁵⁰ Jamaluddin, "Distorsi Hadits Misogonis Dan Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Perspektif Fatimah Mernissi," *Jurnal Tribakti* 20, no. 2 (2009).

⁵¹ Adinda Novelia Puspita, "Feminism According to Fatima Mernissi's Thinking," *CITIZEN: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Indonesia* 1, no. 1 (2021).

⁵² Abdullah Hanapi, "Pemikiran Hadis Misoginis Fatima Mernissi Sebagai Tawaran Pemahaman Hadis Feminisme Di Media Kontemporer," *Riwayah: Jurnal Studi Hadis* 4, no. 2 (2018).

⁵³ Ahmad Yunus Mohd Noor et al., "Fatima Mernissi and Her Methodology in Dealing with Misogyny Hadith: A Critical Review," *Journal of Critical Reviews* 7, no. 5 (2020): 1059–68, <https://doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.05.211>.

⁵⁴ Sauda', "Hadis Misoginis Dalam Perspektif Hermeneutika Fatima Mernissi."

⁵⁵ Dadah Dadah, "Metode Kritik Matan Hadis Misoginis Menurut Fatimah Mernissi," *Diroyah: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Hadis* 3, no. 1 (2018): 11–18, <https://doi.org/10.15575/diroyah.v3i1.3727>.

⁵⁶ Bin Nasir, "Fatima Mernissi Dalam Timbangan Ilmu Hadith: Kritik Terhadap Pemikiran Dan Dakwaan Hadith-Hadith Misoginis."

⁵⁷ Eko Setiawan, "Studi Pemikiran Fatima Mernissi Tentang Kesetaraan Gender Dan Diskriminasi Terhadap Perempuan Dalam Panggung Politik," *Yinyang: Jurnal Studi Islam Gender Dan Anak* 14, no. 2 (December 10, 2019): 221–44, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24090/yinyang.v14i2.3224>.

Hasan Asyadily,⁵⁸ Adinda Novelia Puspita,⁵⁹ and Sofiana Khairunnisa explore her perspective on the *hijāb* ruling,⁶⁰ Muhammad Taufik analyses her outlook on modernity,⁶¹ Bonita Izwany scrutinizes her stance on the Islamic family institution,⁶² Leon Rohendi,⁶³ and Andri Sutrisno,⁶⁴ analyse her perspective on education, and Widyastini evaluates her outlook on the feminist movement. Some articles and works discuss Mernissi's broader ideas on gender, such as works by Siti Zubaidah,⁶⁵ Ratna Wijayanti,⁶⁶ and Khalif Muammar.⁶⁷

The previously mentioned articles and works primarily focused on specific facets of Mernissi's arguments, standpoint, themes, and contributions. All of these works often adopting a one-dimensional approach that lacked a thorough examination of her nuanced perspective on the concept of gender equality in Islam. Many of these analyses centred on individual works or specific aspects of Mernissi, falling short of fully comprehending the complexities inherent in her evolving ideas and intellectual journey. Despite this limitation, the collective body of research offers valuable insights, contributing to a more comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of Mernissi's perspective on the concept of gender equality in Islam. These varied studies will assist in elucidating how Mernissi's ideas can be applied to address contemporary global challenges in gender equality. In essence, the current study aims to scrutinize Islamic feminism and Fatema

⁵⁸ Muhamad Hasan Asyadily, "Telaah Kritis Pemahaman Hijab Dalam Framework Fatima Mernissi," *Fikrah: Jurnal Ilmu Aqidah Dan Studi Keagamaan* 7, no. 2 (2019): 303–31.

⁵⁹ Puspita, "Feminism According to Fatima Mernissi's Thinking."

⁶⁰ Sofiana Khairunnisa, "Hijāb Dalam Konsep Feminisme Fatima Mernissi" (UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SYARIF HIDAYATULLAH, 2017).

⁶¹ Muhammad Taufik, "Peran Pemikiran Fatima Mernissi Dalam Memahami Islam Dan Kemodernan Di Maroko," *Tashwir: Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Sosial* 10, no. 1 (2022).

⁶² Bonita Izwany, "Keadilan Gender Dalam Rumah Tangga Perspektif Fatima Mernissi," *Tahqiq* 13, no. 2 (2019).

⁶³ Leon Rohendi and Lilly Suzana binti Haji Shamsu, "Gender Dalam Pendidikan Islam: Perspektif Fatima Mernissi," *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* 3, no. 2 (2023): 269–78.

⁶⁴ Andri Sutrisno and Dini Salsabela, "Kesetaraan Gender Perspektif Fatima Mernissi," *Sophist: Jurnal Sosial Politik Kajian Islam Dan Tafsir* 4, no. 2 (2023).

⁶⁵ Siti Zubaidah, *Pemikiran Fatima Mernissi: Tentang Kedudukan Wanita Dalam Islam*, ed. Sulidar (Bandung: Citapustaka Media Perinti, 2010).

⁶⁶ Ratna Wijayanti et al., "Pemikiran Gender Fatima Mernissi Terhadap Peran Perempuan," *MUWAZAH: Jurnal Kajian Gender* 10, no. 1 (August 23, 2018), <http://ejournal.iainpekalongan.ac.id/index.php/Muwazah/article/view/1131>.

⁶⁷ Khalif Muammar A. Harris and Adibah Muhtar, "Konsep Kesetaraan Gender Menurut Perspektif Islam & Barat," *Afkar* 21, no. 2 (2019).

Mernissi's perspective on the Islamic concept of gender equality, encompassing an evaluation of Mernissi's methodology and approach in reinterpreting religious texts on gender rights. The study endeavours to delve into these perspectives and approaches, seeking to comprehend the current global dilemma of gender equality through the lens of Islamic feminism with specific focus on the influential Islamic feminist, Fatema Mernissi.



CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION TO ISLAMIC FEMINISM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A novel academic discipline has surfaced over the last forty years, focusing on the reinterpretation of Islamic sacred texts (the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*) and its interpretive tradition (including exegesis, jurisprudence, *ḥadīth* documentations, and more). This new field of research was mainly driven by the conundrum of gender justice and methodological reform. This body of research forms part of assessments that introspectively reassess and deconstruct dominant religious interpretations that are deemed misogynistic and exploitative against women. The overarching aim of this scholarly endeavour is to produce novel insights that promote gender equality and justice through the lens of Islam. These research projects are being carried out mostly by female Muslim scholars, with some contributions also coming from male Muslim scholars. These experts come from a wide range of academic background and countries. This emerging field of study is now known as "Islamic feminism."

"Islamic feminism" refers to a specific form of feminism that places a strong emphasis on improving the position of women in Islam. The purpose of this movement is to assign Muslim women their rightful theological and societal authority, as well as bringing light on women's involvement and rights in the Muslim community. Islamic feminism has managed to produce a discourse that is very close and attractive to many young Muslim women. Through the discourse, many young Muslim women have been able to confront misogynistic practices and conventions in their communities by arguing that those practices have little to do with Islam and more to do with tradition.

Insisting on 'Islamic' in its term give a sense of religious belonging and camaraderie in upholding this ideology. Islamic feminists have employed a number of strategies in an effort to advocate for a more woman-friendly interpretation of Islamic revealed texts. The results of these efforts have been met with mixed reactions, ranging from enthusiastic

support to deep mistrust. All these varied views on Islamic feminism and their legitimacy in Islam, as well as the continual discussion on the rights of Muslim women and gender equality issues in the modern world, keep their discussions thriving. Achieving a thorough comprehension of Islamic feminism's epistemological and historical background helps to initiate a preliminary understanding of Islamic feminism.

In this chapter, the researcher will examine the definition of Islamic feminism and its objective, its epistemological and historical background, its characteristics and categorisation, and its movements and counter movements. This researcher will also delve briefly into some part of Islamic feminist theory in order to highlight significant similarities shared between all Islamic feminism spectrums and movements. Understanding of these topics will help us in defining what Islamic feminism is and how it came to be, in addition to facilitating a better apprehension of its reception among Muslims.

2.1.1 Definition and Objective

Islamic feminism, theoretically, is a subset of feminism that emphasises the discourse of empowering women's status and position in Islam. Its definition also encompassed a label given to multifaceted movements that seeks to address the status of women within Islam and work towards achieving equality between Muslim men and women in all aspects of society. It is rooted in the principles of women's rights, gender equality, and social justice while maintaining adherence to Islamic teachings and values. Islamic feminists, in their quest for gender equality and justice, draw inspiration from various sources, including Islamic texts, secular feminist discourses, and Western feminist thought.⁶⁸ Western academia has acknowledged the position and importance of Islamic feminism within a larger, global feminist movement.

One of the main objectives of Islamic feminism is to reinterpret the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth* - the primary sources of Islamic teachings, in order to highlight Islam's egalitarian principles. Islamic feminism also aims to address the violation of women's rights in society

⁶⁸ This is the definition and objective that this study could summarize based on commentaries on Islamic feminism that are to be explored after this.

through historical and contextual inquiry and through activism. Activists within the movement seek to raise awareness about the various forms of discrimination and oppression faced by women in Muslim societies and work towards rectifying these injustices. They strive to demonstrate that Islam, at its core, supports gender equality and the empowerment of women. They also call for a critical analysis and rejection of patriarchal interpretations of Islamic revealed texts.⁶⁹

There are diverse definitions and ranging perspective of Islamic feminism and its scope. Some scholars, like Omaima Abou-Bakr, emphasize the significance of the term "Islamic" and advocate for a feminist knowledge project based on the *Qur'ānic* principle of justice and the unique cultural and historical backgrounds of Muslim women.⁷⁰ She argues for the de-homogenization of feminism, acknowledging that there exist multiple forms of feminism that can be deeply rooted in religion. Nonetheless, she observes that Western scholars' usage of the term "Islamic feminism" is very limiting and restrictive, and may become inconspicuous and "hegemonic" in how it generalizes all gender activism of Muslim women under its label.⁷¹

However, not all scholars are comfortable with the term "Islamic feminism". Asma Barlas, who has done persuasive work to 'un-read' patriarchy in the *Qur'ān*, is uncomfortable with the term "Islamic feminism." This is due to the fact that she considers "feminism" to be an intellectual tradition that is intrinsically related to the history of Western colonialism and the othering of non-western Muslim women.⁷² Barlas's resistance to the term "feminism" within Islamic feminism stems not from a rejection of the central premise of gender equality but from two critical considerations. Firstly, she challenges the master narrative of feminism, asserting that her realization of the equality of women and men is rooted not in feminist texts but in her own original reading of the *Qur'ān*.⁷³

⁶⁹ Detail on this is explained on subchapter 2.2 "Brief Exploration into the Islamic Feminist Theory".

⁷⁰ Mulki Al-Sharmani, "Islamic Feminism: Transnational and National Reflections," *Approaching Religion* 4, no. 2 (2014): 84.

⁷¹ Omaima Abou-Bakr, "Islamic Feminism? What's in a Name? Preliminary Reflections," *Middle East Women's Studies Review* 15, no. 16 (2001): 1–4.

⁷² Asma Barlas, "Engaging Islamic Feminism: Provincializing Feminism as Master Narrative," in *Islamic Feminism: Current Perspectives*, ed. Anitta Kynsilehto, vol. Occasional (Finland: Tampere Peace Research Institute, 2008), 15–24.

⁷³ Asma Barlas, "Qur'anic Hermeneutics," in *International Congress on Islamic Feminism* (Barcelona, 2005).

Nevertheless, she acknowledges her debt to Western feminism in how it helped her in theorizing the concept and providing her with necessary tools to recognize and articulate patriarchy in Islam. Secondly, she critiques feminism for secularizing the idea of liberation, positing that feminists often assume religious believers are inherently bound by false consciousness.⁷⁴ On the other hand, Barlas views her endeavour to create new, gender-sensitive religious knowledge as performing her duty to Allāh as a believing woman rather than merely just engaging in feminism.⁷⁵

However, many scholars still agree that the term Islamic feminism - given its foundation in the *Qur'ān* and its commitment to pursue justice and rights for both men and women, can also be used to characterize feminist speech and action expressed within an Islamic framework. In response to Asma Barlas's reservations about the term "Islamic feminism," Margot Badran offers a varying perspective, asserting that feminism is not inherently Western. Badran argues that Egyptian feminism, for example, is distinctly Egyptian and not a derivative of Western origins.⁷⁶ She defines feminism as a mode of analysis encompassing the recognition of gender equality and women's rights embedded in the tenets of a particular religion or culture but often withheld in practice.⁷⁷ Badran's crucial involvement to the supposition of feminism as a confabulation drawing exclusively from an Islamic paradigm and rooted in the *Qur'ān*, has played a pivotal role in fostering acceptance of the label among those,⁷⁸ like Barlas, who had previously rejected it.⁷⁹ While Badran acknowledges the crosspollination of theoretical and methodological approaches within Islamic feminist discourse, she maintains that Islamic feminism speaks from a solely Islamic criterion, recognizing the complexity inherent in this assertion.⁸⁰ This acknowledgment is highlighted by Badran's recognition that scholars in Islamic feminism often employ methodologies from both the human sciences and classical Islamic studies,

⁷⁴ Barlas.

⁷⁵ Barlas, "Engaging Islamic Feminism: Provincializing Feminism as Master Narrative," 15–24.

⁷⁶ Margot Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1999), 243.

⁷⁷ Margot Badran, "Feminism and the Qur'an," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 199.

⁷⁸ Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences*, 242.

⁷⁹ Barlas, "Qur'anic Hermeneutics."

⁸⁰ Badran, "Islamic Feminism: What's in a Name?," 17–23.

further enriching the multifaceted nature of the discourse. Similarly, Nayereh Tohidi considers Islamic feminism as a movement of Muslim women who have pursued women's rights while upholding their religious convictions and attempting to spread Islam's egalitarian ideals by using verses from the *Qur'ān* that favour women.⁸¹ In addition to that, Muslikhati agrees that Islamic feminism in general is a form of historical and contextual inquiry or activism that seeks to address the issue of society's violation of women's rights.⁸²

Ziba Mir-Hosseini, a prominent anthropologist and early author on Islamic feminism, embraces the term despite the discomfort some Muslim women may feel with it. She believes in the importance of positioning women's insistence within a broader political climate connected to global feminist movements.⁸³ For Mir-Hosseini, feminism holds an important position and influence within current twentieth-century politics, and active participation in this global feminist discourse allows Muslim women to simultaneously benefit from it and influence its agenda.⁸⁴ She highlights the growing participation and movement among Iranian women - particularly those associated with “Zanan” since 1992, in engaging in the politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran and proudly identify themselves as feminists, drawing on Western feminist sources without apology. Mir-Hosseini characterizes Islamic feminism as a novel consciousness and gender discourse that, while feminist in its aspirations and demands, remains rooted in Islamic language and sources of legitimacy.⁸⁵ Acknowledging the diverse range of discourses and practices under the umbrella term "Islamic feminism," she underscores its undeniable significance in describing and highlighting various forms of women's activism within an Islamic framework.

Raja Rhouni's perspective on Islamic feminism is grounded in the belief that feminism is not only a Western narrative but rather a collection of essential analytical

⁸¹ Nayereh Tohidi, “The Issues at Hand,” in *Women in Muslim Societies: Diversity Within Unity*, ed. Herbert Bodman and Nayereh Tohidi (Boulder Colo: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 279–92.

⁸² Siti Muslikhati, *Feminisme Dan Pemberdayaan Wanita Dalam Timbangan Islam* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2004), 47, <https://sistersinislam.org/press-statements/>.

⁸³ Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *Islam and Gender: The Religious Debate in Contemporary Iran* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 4.

⁸⁴ Mir-Hosseini, 6–7.

⁸⁵ Ziba Mir-Hosseini, “Muslim Women’s Quest for Equality: Between Islamic Law and Feminism,” *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 4 (2006): 640.

devices.⁸⁶ According to Rhouni, Islamic feminism constitutes a significant contribution to the global epistemological project on women's right in Islam. Its primary objective, as she sees it, is to illuminate the androcentric assumptions embedded within Islamic jurisprudence.⁸⁷ In this view, Islamic feminism emerges as a crucial framework for challenging and reevaluating the prevailing gender norms within Islamic legal traditions, providing a nuanced and culturally sensitive approach to feminist analysis within the context of Islam. Rhouni's endorsement of Islamic feminism positions it as a valuable tool for dissecting and addressing gender biases within the Islamic legal framework, emphasizing its importance within the broader discourse on feminism and global academia.

South African Muslim scholar Fatima Seedat concurs with Barlas and Badran regarding the importance of feminism within the Islamic world. However, as feminism is a "social practice, not merely of personal identity," she wonders if the term "Islamic Feminism" is appropriate and necessary.⁸⁸ Seedat believes that the convergence of Islam and feminism increases conflict and gives "Islamists" more opportunities to interpret or misinterpret the *Qur'ān* in accordance with their political agendas. It is imperative, in her opinion, to analyse and exemplify the presence of feminism within the *Qur'ān*. Ensuring division and separation of these two terms will increase accessibility for all individuals, including Muslims and non-Muslims, men and women to participate in the discourse. Seedat contends that the label "Islamic Feminism" creates a schism and segregation among Muslims, separating them both from the wider feminist movement and the international Muslim community. She emphasizes the importance of teaching the world about Islam's contributions to feminism and avoiding branding oneself as Islamic feminists to maintain Islam's impartiality.⁸⁹ Some Muslim women writers and activists have chosen not to identify as Islamic feminists due to the conviction that Western feminism is inherently excluding Muslim women and women of colour.⁹⁰ Rather than connotating herself with the

⁸⁶ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 31.

⁸⁷ Rhouni, 27.

⁸⁸ Fatima Seedat, "Beyond the Text: Between Islam and Feminism," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 32, no. 2 (2016): 138, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jfemistudreli.32.2.23>.

⁸⁹ Seedat, "Islam, Feminism, and Islamic Feminism: Between Inadequacy and Inevitability," 2013.

⁹⁰ Aysha A. Hidayatullah, *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 12.

term “Islamic feminist”, Azizah al-Hibri, a Muslim scholar of Lebanese and American descent, identifies herself as a "womanist."⁹¹

In summary, Islamic feminism can be defined as a form of feminism rooted in the discourse of Islam, with the *Qur'ān* and Prophetic traditions as its focus of argumentation.⁹² It seeks to achieve complete equality between men and women in both public and private spheres by challenging patriarchal interpretations of Islamic teaching.⁹³ Islamic feminists aim to address the violation of women's rights in society and advocate for social justice and gender equality while upholding their religious convictions.⁹⁴ The term "Islamic feminism" encompasses a diverse range of discourses and practices within the broader feminist movement, emphasizing the intersectionality of gender, religion, and culture.

2.1.2 Epistemological and Historical Background

Islamic feminism, similar with its broader feminist philosophy, engages in questioning and reinterpreting established norms in advocating for women's rights. It distinguishes itself from secular feminism by not outrightly rejecting religion and remains arguably unclear about whether it originated from Islam or emerged as a by-product of feminist influence. The core of Islamic feminism is to challenge patriarchal interpretations within religious knowledge, encouraging a contemporary and scientific approach that empowers women to acquire knowledge and reinterpret Islamic sources through their unique perspective.

This movement urges women to critically examine conventional interpretations of religion, employing modern scientific methods and ethical frameworks.⁹⁵ Rejecting the blind adherence to past scholars, Islamic feminism contends that historical interpretations

⁹¹ Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas, *Deeper Shades of Purple: Womanism in Religion and Society* (Manhattan: NYU Press, 2006), 47.

⁹² Rachele Fawcett, “The Reality and Future of Islamic Feminism,” Al-Jazeera.com, 2013, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2013/3/28/the-reality-and-future-of-islamic-feminism>.

⁹³ Margot Badran, “Islam’s Other Half: What Does Islamic Feminism Have to Offer? Where Does It Come from? Where Is It Going?,” the Guardian, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20171201232847/https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2008/nov/09/islam-women>.

⁹⁴ Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences*, 246; Fawcett, “The Reality and Future of Islamic Feminism.”

⁹⁵ Refer subchapter 2.2 “Brief Exploration into the Islamic Feminist Theory”.

may be influenced by biased and misogynistic traditions. Emphasizing women's intellectual capacity, Islamic feminism asserts that Muslim women should comprehend the history themselves while upholding the egalitarian narrative of Islam and develop their own perspectives on the past. Islamic feminism also shares common analytical tools and nearly similar historical settings with the broader feminist philosophy, creating a foundation that is nearly identical in both philosophical and epistemological aspects.

Margot Badran contends that Islamic feminism is deeply rooted in the historical and epistemological context similar to Western feminism settings. Badran highlighted that Islamic feminism is not an isolated phenomenon but a product of progressing evolution of feminist consciousness in Muslim communities. Her work, such as "Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences," emphasizes the progressing coexistence of what is conventionally deemed 'religious' and 'secular' within the discourse of Islamic feminisms.⁹⁶ Badran traces the origins of this feminist shift to the changing social and political landscapes in postcolonial Muslim societies. Islamic feminism emerged in response to the conservative discourses on women's rights propagated by rising Islamist movements. Countries like Egypt and Iran witnessed the earliest expressions of Islamic feminism in the late post-colonial period, coinciding with the increased influence of political Islam.⁹⁷ This context aligns with the historical backdrop of secular feminism, which, as a facet of Enlightenment philosophy, sought to 'reform' the Western world by challenging the tyrannical and misogynistic views perpetuated by the Church and Christianity.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences*, 5.

⁹⁷ Badran, 302.

⁹⁸ The Church, along with Western political philosophers and socio-political structures, which were characterized by a dogmatic and misogynistic interpretation of the Bible, played a pivotal role in the emergence of feminism. Rooted in the Enlightenment period, which challenged the power of the Church, feminism, in general, tends to be highly critical of religion and its adherents. For better understanding on this topic, see Mohamad Haeqal Ishak, "The Concept of Gender Equality in Feminism: A Critical Analysis From the Qur'anic Perspective" (International Islamic University of Malaysia, 2018), 19–24; Zeenath Kausar, "Zeenath Kausar's Critique of Feminism and Her Reflections on Co-Vicegerency," in *Modern Western Political Ideologies: An Islamic Critique*, ed. Zulaikha Nurain Mudzar (Kuala Lumpur: Pearson Malaysia, 2014), 185–86; Myra Marx Ferree, *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*, ed. Patricia Yancey Martin (Temple University Press, 1995), 37; Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993), 109.

The emergence of Islamic feminism can be traced back to three interrelated determinants: theological, social, and philosophical-historical. The theological determinant arises as response towards misogynist Islamic texts. The social determinant arises as response to the reality of discrimination women faced in diverse Muslim societies. The philosophical-historical determinant explores the converging points between Islamic feminism and secular feminism and the influence of secular feminism over Islamic feminism.⁹⁹ These determinants are interconnected and mutually influence each other.

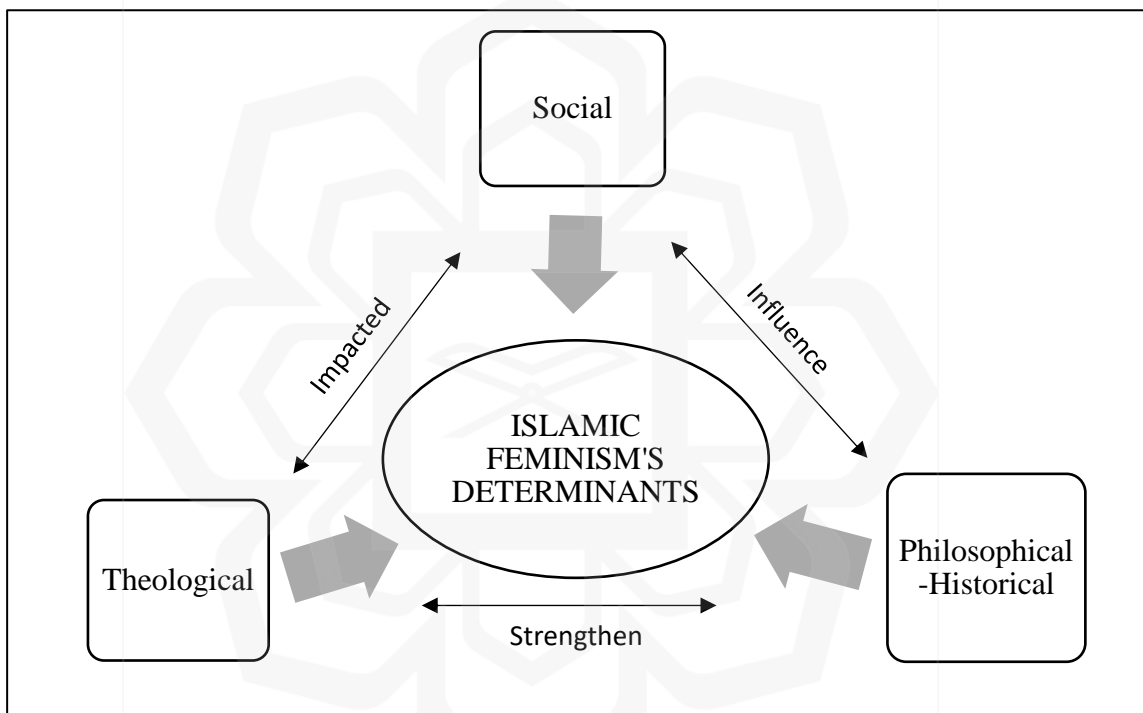


Figure 1 Islamic Feminism Determinant

The theological determinant is evident from certain *hadīths* (Prophetic traditions) that degrade the status of women by portraying them as secondary to men or a source of

⁹⁹ See Jane Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1860* (London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 1985).

temptation and misfortune. These *ḥadīths* often promote women's subservience and obedience to men, even suggesting that a woman's prayers and good deeds are invalid if her husband is upset with her. Such *ḥadīths* reflect a patriarchal interpretation and misogynistic elements in the Islamic texts. Hidayet Tuksal classify misogynistic *ḥadīths* into several themes such as *ḥadīths* on women's origins from Adam's ribs, *ḥadīths* claiming that women as the majority inhabitants of hell, *ḥadīths* that degrade women's religion, intellect, and that women as a source of *fitnah*, *ḥadīths* claiming that women are a bad omen or inauspicious, and *ḥadīths* claiming that women passing in front of a man performing prayer will invalidate his prayer.¹⁰⁰

Most other genres of these *ḥadīths* entirely subordinate women's autonomy and moral agency to men and is identified as the *ḥadīths* of obedience and subservience.¹⁰¹ According to some accounts, a woman's capacity to satisfy her husband may be a prerequisite for her entrance into heaven. The Prophet ﷺ purportedly stated in one *ḥadīth* that if a woman's spouse is displeased with her, then Allāh ﷻ might not recognize her prayers or good deeds.¹⁰² Other *ḥadīths* attributed to the Prophet ﷺ claim that Allāh ﷻ will not gaze upon a woman who is not grateful to her husband, and another *ḥadīth* asserted that the angels will curse a woman who rejects her husband's sexual advances until she concedes to his demands.¹⁰³ There is also “prostration *ḥadīths*” that has been narrated in many variants, nonetheless conveyed the basic idea. It is reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Hidayat Sefkatli Tuksal, “Misogynistic Reports in the Hadith Literature,” in *Muslima Theology: The Voices of Muslim Women Theologian*, ed. Ednan Aslan, Marcia Hermansen, and Elif Medeni, 2013, 133–54.

¹⁰¹ Most of this reports can be found in Muḥammad Ṣadiq Khān Al-Qanūjī, *Ḥusn Al-Uswa Bimā Thabata Min Allāh Wa Rasūlihi Fi Al-Niswa* (Bayrūt: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 1981), 553–62.

¹⁰² Ibn Ḥajar Al-'Asqalānī, *Fath Al-Bārī Fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, vol. 9 (Dar al-Makrifah, 1959), 294.

¹⁰³ Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya, *'Awn Al-Ma'bud Sharḥ Sunan Abi Dawud*, ed. Muhammad 'Uthman Sharaf al-Ḥaq al-'Aḏzhīm 'Abd al-Rahman, 2nd ed., vol. 6 (Madīnah: al-Maktaba al-Salafiyya, 1968), 179; Safiur Rahman Al-Mubarakfuri, *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhi Bi Sharḥ Jami' Al-Tirmidhi*, vol. 4 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.), 283–84.

¹⁰⁴ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kitāb Ahkām Al-Nisā'*, 1997, 208–14; 'Ala' al-Dīn 'Alī al-Muttaqī Al-Hindī, “Kanz Al-'Ummāl Fi Sunan Al-Āqwal Wa Al-Af'āl,” 1985, 337–38; Al-Jawziyya, *'Awn Al-Ma'bud Sharḥ Sunan Abi Dawud*, 6:178; Khaled Abou El Fadl, “Tensions in Tradition: Hadith, Gender, and Reasonable Interpretation,” *UCLA Journal of Islamic and Near Eastern Law* 19, no. 1 (2021): 18.

لا يَصْلُحُ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ، ولو صَلَّحَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ لِأَمْرٍ الْمَرْأَةُ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ
لِرِزْوَجِهَا؛ مِنْ عِظَمِ حَقِّهِ عَلَيْهَا، وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ، لو كَانَ مِنْ قَدَمِهِ إِلَى مَفْرَقِ رَأْسِهِ
فُرْجَةٌ تَنْبَجِسُ بِالْقَيْحِ وَالصَّدِيدِ ثُمَّ تَسْتَقْبِلُهُ تَلْحَسُهَا مَا أَدَّتْ حَقَّهُ

No human may prostrate before another, but if it were permissible for a human to do so, I would have ordered a wife to prostrate before her husband because of the enormity of his rights over her. By God, if there were an ulcer excreting puss from his feet to the top of his head, and she licked it (for him) she would not fulfil his rights.

Different versions of this *hadīth* exclude the reference to ulcers and instead assert that a wife must acquiesce to her husband's sexual desires, even when on a camel.¹⁰⁵ The inherent misogyny within these *hadīths* is subject to varying degrees of elaboration by scholars. Contemporary scholars often refer to these *hadīths* to underscore the belief that wives owe their spouses gratitude, submission, and servitude, especially in matters related to sexuality.¹⁰⁶

The social determinant is reflective from in the reality of discrimination faced by women in diverse Muslim societies. Badran identifies the emergence of Islamic feminism in the late post-colonial period, coinciding with a period of disillusionment over the failure of nation-states to deliver democracy and economic prosperity.¹⁰⁷ This feminist movement gained traction, particularly in regions where political Islam or Islamism was prominently present, such as Egypt and Iran. Additional to that, women in the Middle East, have long encountered challenges such as low literacy rates, restricted labour force participation, and human rights abuses. Certain practices, such as female circumcision, have been inaccurately performed due to cultural influences yet are erroneously associated with religion. The Muslim world, comprising approximately 50 different countries with a diverse array of languages, histories, and cultures, exhibits varied attitudes towards gender equality.¹⁰⁸ For instance, the Middle East, home to the world's most concentrated Muslim

¹⁰⁵ Abou El Fadl, "Tensions in Tradition: Hadith, Gender, and Reasonable Interpretation," 18.

¹⁰⁶ Khaled Abou El Fadl, *And God Knows the Soldiers: The Authoritative and Authoritarian in Islamic Discourses* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2001), 62–66.

¹⁰⁷ Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences*, 302.

¹⁰⁸ The number are based on research by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), see <https://www.worlddata.info/alliances/oic-islamic-cooperation.php>.

population, maintains one of the lowest literacy rates and labour force participation rates among women.¹⁰⁹ It also records one of the poorest human rights records, particularly concerning women.¹¹⁰ Gender inequality in educational attainment is notable among Muslims, with women having an average of 4.9 years of schooling compared to men's 6.4 years on average.¹¹¹ Several practices based on inauthentic *hadīths* has been misunderstood as part of religion contribute to this determinant. For example, the widespread practice of female circumcision in Egypt, among both Muslim and Coptic women, has its roots in Pharaonic times and is common in various African countries like Sudan and Somalia.¹¹² Gender roles in Muslim societies are heavily influenced by cultural norms, often overshadowing the genuine teachings of Islam. Additionally, these norms are frequently reinforced and interpreted by male clergy and scholars.

The philosophical-historical determinant underpinning of Islamic feminist theory bears resemblance to secular feminism, both emerging as responses to dissatisfaction with religious practices in their respective communities. In the case of Islamic feminism, this discontent was triggered by the growing influence of Islamist movements, particularly vocal in Muslim-majority societies from the late 1970s onwards.¹¹³ Similarly, secular feminism evolved as a reaction to the increasingly authoritarian control exerted by the Church.¹¹⁴ A noteworthy parallel lie in the early stages of the feminist movement, where

¹⁰⁹ Data from Statista statistic <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1256220/highest-human-rights-and-rule-of-law-index-by-country/>. See also Whitcher, "The Effects of Western Feminist Ideology on Muslim Feminists," 1.

¹¹⁰ Whitcher, 1.

¹¹¹ Conrad Hackett et al., "Religion and Education Around the World," 2016, 6, <https://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2016/12/21094148/Religion-Education-ONLINE-FINAL.pdf>.

¹¹² Some Islamic scholars and *madhabs* hold differing views on *al-Khāfdu*, or female genital circumcision, viewing it as either obligatory or commendable. However, the interpretation and implementation of this practice vary across regions. For instance, in Malaysia, according to the Perak State Mufti Department, it involves a minor procedure, such as a needle or knife prick, which does not cause harm to women's genitalia. This stands in contrast to the severe female genital circumcision wrongly practiced in many African countries. See "Khatan," Jabatan Mufti Perak, 2021, https://mufti.perak.gov.my/images/minda_mufti/2021/artikel/khatan.pdf; Majlis Agama Islam Selangor, "Soal Jawab Berkaitan Khitan Dalam Islam," *Sinar Islam*, April 26, 2019, <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.mais.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Artikel-Khas-Bil.3.2019-Khitan-Dalam-Islam.pdf>.

¹¹³ Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences*, 302.

¹¹⁴ See my other work on feminism, Mohamad Haeqal Ishak, "The Concept of Gender Equality in Feminism: A Critical Analysis From the Qur'anic Perspective," 19–24.

certain Western-educated Muslim women initially embraced the notion that Islam itself posed a problem.¹¹⁵ Their rationale rested on the observation that rules and regulations perpetuating the subjugation of women were formulated by religious establishments. Furthermore, the exposure of Muslim women, especially those in the upper and middle classes, to foreign ideas and education during Western colonization facilitated the adoption of Western philosophies, including feminism.¹¹⁶ This process of westernization indirectly facilitated the transfer of feminist ideologies into colonized countries. However, as Islamic feminism advanced, it underwent a transformation, distancing itself from Western ideologies and adopting a more independent Islamic approach. Muslim feminists began seeking inspiration from their socio-cultural contexts and indigenous Islamic sources, moving away from reliance on imported ideologies. This shift aligns with broader trends in post-modernism within the realm of philosophy.

In essence, Islamic feminism emerges from the desire to challenge patriarchal interpretations of religion and advocate for women's rights within an Islamic framework. It draws upon the theological, social, and philosophical-historical determinants that highlight the need for reinterpretation of misogynistic Islamic teaching, awareness of discrimination in cultural practices, and examination of Western ideologies. Its origins are deeply rooted in a complex interplay of those factors, encompassing reactions to both internal dynamics within Muslim societies and external influences from Western discourses. Islamic feminism strives to reclaim the rightful position of Muslim women and contribute to a more egalitarian society based on their understanding of the egalitarian principle in Islamic teaching.

2.1.3 Feminism vs Islamic Feminism

While feminism and Islamic feminism share some common beliefs, they diverge significantly in their core principles. Both advocate against the oppression of women, asserting women's rights to own and utilize property, and with some rejecting the fixation

¹¹⁵ Early works of Fatema Mernissi were example of this. For further information, see Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 5.

¹¹⁶ Whitcher, "The Effects of Western Feminist Ideology on Muslim Feminists," 16.

of male attributes to God.¹¹⁷ However, Islamic feminism maintains a distinct stance on religion, disagreeing with feminism's portrayal of religion as an 'absolute' oppressor of women.¹¹⁸

Ziba Mir-Hosseini argues that for those who identify as Muslims, Islam is an integral part of their identity, culture, and values.¹¹⁹ Islamic feminists, unlike mainstream feminists, do not detach themselves from religious motivations and remain rooted in their Islamic identity. The *Qur'ān* serves as their primary source of inspiration, and they critique patriarchal interpretations of Islam while advocating for gender equality within the Islamic framework.¹²⁰ Islamic feminists believe in the subordination to Allāh ﷻ, viewing humans as vicegerents of Allāh ﷻ in this world. In contrast, mainstream feminism, being a modern ideology, separates itself from God and religion, emphasizing human reason, scientific inquiry, and a secular worldview. Many feminist strands, especially radical feminist thought, perceive religion as regressive and an obstacle to women's emancipation, rejecting accountability to a higher entity.¹²¹ In mainstream feminism, the goal is absolute freedom without interference from social customs or gender-specific roles. Equality in Islam, on the other hand, entails the concept of justice that necessitates everything being in its proper place and does not promote absolute equality or female superiority. Unlike Western feminist discourse, Muslim feminism remains deeply religious, continuously engaging with

¹¹⁷ In Islam, God is without gender. Likewise, feminists advocate for a 'gender-neutral' concept of God. See Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 19.

¹¹⁸ While recognizing that there may be variations in the ideas of Islamic feminists/feminists regarding the issues mentioned in this subtopic, this study relies on the prevailing or commonly held beliefs based on responsible research conducted by this study.

¹¹⁹ Mir-Hosseini, *Islam and Gender: The Religious Debate in Contemporary Iran*, 4.

¹²⁰ Margot Badran, "Between Secular and Islamic Feminism/s: Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 1, no. 1 (2005): 6–28, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40326847>; Shahrzad Mojab, "Theorizing the Politics of 'Islamic Feminism,'" *Feminist Review* 69, no. 1 (2001): 69, <https://doi.org/doi:10.1080/01417780110070157>.

¹²¹ Zeenath Kausar, "Zeenath Kausar's Critique of Feminism and Her Reflections on Co-Vicegerency," 190; Nancy Frankenberry, "Feminist Philosophy of Religion," ed. Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2011), <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-religion/#ProbGod>.

Islamic references, reinterpreting *Qur'ānic* texts, critically studying the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet ﷺ, and working to eliminate patriarchal elements through activism and writings.¹²²

Mainstream feminism and Islamic feminism differ in their perspectives on bodily autonomy and authority. Most feminists interpret autonomy based on moral psychology, defining it as freedom from external control, self-governance, and acting on self-reasons and values.¹²³ Feminism advocates for absolute autonomy and authority as prerequisites for true liberation. This is evident in their vocal support for women's freedom in open relationships, prostitution, clothing choices, reproductive rights, and participation in the porn industry.¹²⁴ In contrast, Islamic feminism asserts that bodily autonomy and authority should align with Islamic teachings, where Allāh ﷻ has commanded women to embrace modesty in dressing and preserving their chastity.¹²⁵ However, Islamic feminist understanding of "modesty" may differ somewhat from mainstream Islamic teachings. While feminists often perceive increased choices for women as progress, aligning with the belief that true goodness comes from the free expression and fulfilment of desires, Islam considers true goodness as obedience Allāh ﷻ and conforming their desire to what pleases Allāh ﷻ. In Islam, the virtuous path involves aligning oneself with the divine will.

Feminism, particularly in its radical forms, takes a distinctive stance on familial institutions and motherhood. It views heterosexual family structures and motherhood as socially and politically constructed, advocating for the promotion and legalization of diverse sexualities, including lesbianism, homosexuality, and transsexuality.¹²⁶ Prominent

¹²² Tohidi, "The Issues at Hand," 279–92.

¹²³ Natalie Stoljar, "Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2015), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/feminism-autonomy/>.

¹²⁴ Mohamad Haeqal Ishak, "The Concept of Gender Equality in Feminism: A Critical Analysis From the Qur'anic Perspective," 50–53.

¹²⁵ Sisters in Islam is one of renowned Islamic feminist movements in Malaysia. For their opinion on the Islamic dress code for women, see "Dress and Modesty in Islam," Sisters in Islam, 1997, <https://sistersinislam.org/dress-and-modesty-in-islam/>.

¹²⁶ While most feminists prioritize LGBT issues as integral to women's discourse, some minority feminist group, such as gender-critical feminism or trans-exclusionary radical feminism (TERF), insist on defining womanhood solely based on biological sex. They oppose trans rights, rejecting transgender identities altogether. However, these viewpoints are often labelled as transphobic by other feminists. Terry O'Neill, former president of the American National Organization for Women (NOW), has emphasized that combating

feminists like Alison Jaggar and Nancy Chodorow argue that traditional heterosexual marriage and reproduction contribute to gender inequality and conflict, hindering women's freedom and empowerment.¹²⁷ In contrast, Islamic feminism champions the legitimacy and significance of familial institutions and motherhood. Although some Islamic feminists also oppose traditional familial structures, they mostly focus on addressing misogynistic practices and enhancing the position of women within these realms rather than advocating for a total abolition of the institution.¹²⁸ Their advocacy is centred on elevating and reforming women's roles and status in family life and motherhood.¹²⁹

In feminist literature, the ideal feminist thinker is portrayed as a woman engrossed in her personal experiences. She uses these experiences to unveil the origins of women's oppression, overcoming gender differences through a determined desire unrestricted by patriarchal constraints. Conversely, the ideal of Islamic feminism revolves around closeness to Allāh ﷻ. Social relations are guided by a commitment to obedience to Allāh ﷻ, wherein justice is perceived as maintaining a balanced harmony that aligns with the requirements of moral conscience, social norms, and explicit divine commands.¹³⁰

transphobia is a feminist imperative. For further discussions on TERF, see “NOW Celebrates International Transgender Day of Visibility,” National Organization for Women, 2021, <https://now.org/media-center/press-release/now-celebrates-transgender-day-of-visibility/>; Edie Miller, “Why Is British Media so Transphobic?,” The Outline, 2018, <https://theoutline.com/post/6536/british-feminists-media-transphobic>; Alex Dalbey, “TERF Wars: Why Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminists Have No Place in Feminism,” Daily Dot, 2018, <https://www.dailydot.com/irl/terf-meaning/>; Aleardo Zanghellini, “Philosophical Problems With the Gender-Critical Feminist Argument Against Trans Inclusion,” *SAGE Open* 10, no. 2 (2020): 1, <https://doi.org/215824402092702>; Lisa F. Platt and Spring L. Szoka, “Endorsement of Feminist Beliefs, Openness, and Mindful Acceptance as Predictors of Decreased Transphobia,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 68, no. 2 (2021): 16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1651109>; Sarah E. Conlin, Richard P. Douglass, and Emma H. Moscardini, “Predicting Transphobia among Cisgender Women and Men: The Roles of Feminist Identification and Gender Conformity,” *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health* 25, no. 1 (2021): 11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2020.1780535>.

¹²⁷ Alison Jaggar, “Political Philosophies of Women’s Liberation,” in *Feminism and Philosophy* (New Jersey: Adam & Co., 1977), 13; Nancy J. Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 10.

¹²⁸ Islamic feminists have diverse opinions on the extent of reform needed in the family institution. However, the majority of them do not endorse alternative gender dynamics beyond heterosexuality. The exception to this trend is found among those with more secular views in religion, who would be more accurately categorized as secular feminists rather than Islamic feminists.

¹²⁹ Mulki Al-Sharmani, “Islamic Feminism and Reforming Muslim Family Laws,” 2011, 1–14; Valentine M. Moghadam, “Patriarchy in Transition: Women and the Changing Family in the Middle East,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 35, no. 2 (2004): 137–62.

¹³⁰ Abou El Fadl, “Tensions in Tradition: Hadith, Gender, and Reasonable Interpretation,” 24–27.

Islamic and feminist perspectives clash on fundamental issues including metaphysics, ethics, theology, social and political philosophy. Islamic feminists assert that feminism primarily addresses the lives of affluent Western women, arguing that it tends to either meld them into quasi-men or objectify them. Feminism is also criticized for being 'Eurocentric' and failing to appreciate the diverse issues faced by women across various cultures and religions.¹³¹ While Muslim women work to highlight their crucial roles in motherhood and familial institutions, feminist ideology on the other hand downplays the significance of these roles in its battle against gender stereotypes. Asma Barlas, a Pakistani-American scholar, rejects the association of 'feminism' in 'Islamic feminism' due to its entanglement with the history of Western colonialism and the marginalization of non-Western Muslim women.¹³²

In Islamic countries, feminist movements were predominantly headed by Islamic feminist groups rather than secular feminist groups. Secular feminist organizations faced communal rejection due their negative images in addition to their attempt to entirely separate religion from public life. Margot Badran recognizes secular and Islamic feminism as distinct discourses but emphasizes significant connections between the two.¹³³ Badran, distinctively views Islamic feminism as more potent and radical than its secular counterpart. This is attributed to its pursuit of gender equality and justice rooted in theology, marking it as a powerful force due to its divine motivation. Islamic feminism, as a combination of both 'Islam' and 'Feminism' has a potential to abridge the differences between secular and Islamic perspectives on gender equality issues and resonates better with Muslims and non-Muslims who share concerns about gender justice.

2.1.4 Islamic Feminism Categorisation

Islamic feminism is a complex movement with various dimensions, and its categorization can vary depending on the perspective. For instance, Hoda Salah, a social scientist,

¹³¹ Fatema Mernissi, "'Fatima Mernissi.' Interview by Serge Ménéger," *Le Maghreb Littéraire (The Literary Maghreb)* 2, no. 4 (1996): 101.

¹³² Barlas, "Engaging Islamic Feminism: Provincializing Feminism as Master Narrative," 15–24.

¹³³ Badran, "Between Secular and Islamic Feminism/s: Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond," 6–28.

classifies Islamic feminism into three types: conservative, liberal, and radical.¹³⁴ However, this classification has been criticized by scholars like Sharmani, who argue that the scholars Salah includes do not fit neatly into a unified Islamic feminist framework due to their diverse approaches and ideas.¹³⁵

In contrast, Sharmani offers an alternative classification of Muslim feminist scholarship into two main categories: transnational and national. Both categories feature projects led by Muslim women that aim to challenge patriarchal religious knowledge and provide egalitarian interpretations grounded in Islamic principles.¹³⁶

Transnational projects include works by Muslim female researchers published in English across various academic fields, such as social sciences, humanities, and Islamic studies. National projects, in comparison, originate from countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Morocco, Iran, Egypt, South Africa, and India. These projects often involve hermeneutical studies conducted by female academics in their native languages and focus on reforming gender-based laws.¹³⁷

Additionally, this study introduces an alternative categorization of Islamic feminism by focusing on key areas of activism, which include activism, politics, and scholarship. This approach seeks to provide a more nuanced framework for understanding the diverse manifestations of Islamic feminism by examining how different feminist activities and contributions shape the movement. The proposed categorization is as follows:

¹³⁴ Hoda Salah, "From Ijtihad to Gender Jihad: Islamic Feminists Between Regional Activism and Transnationalism," *Gender Heft* 1 (2010): 47–64.

¹³⁵ Al-Sharmani, "Islamic Feminism: Transnational and National Reflections," 85.

¹³⁶ Al-Sharmani, 86.

¹³⁷ Al-Sharmani, 86.

ISLAMIC FEMINIST

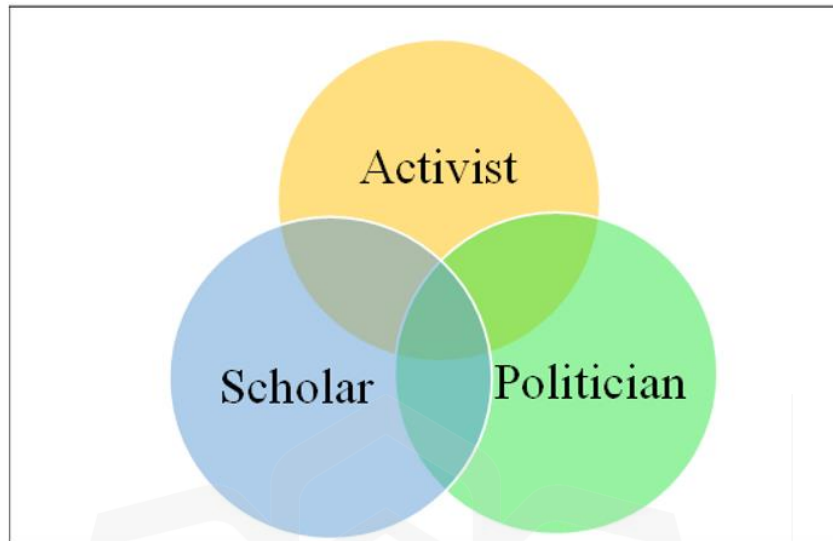


Figure 2 Islamic Feminist

For instance, Malala Yousafzai,¹³⁸ Nawab Faizunnesa,¹³⁹ and Mona Eltahawy,¹⁴⁰ fall under the activist category, known for their dynamic involvement in movements, protests,

¹³⁸ Yousafzai is globally celebrated for her advocacy in education and women's rights. Her fervent support for girls' education, particularly in the face of Taliban oppression, has not only inspired many but also brought global attention to the urgent need for empowering women through education. See Kay Johnson and Asif Shahzad, "Nobel Winner Malala in Tears on Emotional Return to Pakistan," Reuters, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-malala/nobel-winner-malala-in-tears-on-emotional-return-to-pakistan-idUSKBN1H503U>; "Profile: Malala Yousafzai," BBC News, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-23241937>; "Yousafzai, Malala," Who's Who, 2019, <https://www.ukwhoswho.com/display/10.1093/ww/9780199540884.001.0001/ww-9780199540884-e-282567>; "امنستي انټرنېشنل پر ملا له يوسفزې بريد وغانده," BBC Pashto, 2012, https://www.bbc.com/pashto/pashtonkwa/2012/10/121009_ns_malala_yusufzai.

¹³⁹ Nawab Begum Faizunnesa Choudhurani, a 19th-century social reformer, philanthropist, and advocate for female education, founded schools and used her acclaimed novel "Rupjalal" to inspire hope and confidence among Muslims in a challenging colonial period. See Md. Mahmudul Hasan, "Review of Nawab Faizunnesa's Rupjalal," *The Muslim World Book Review* 30, no. 2 (2010); Saydul Karim, "Nawab Faizunnesa Chowdhurani History," Nawab Faizunnesa Government College, accessed March 21, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20131004215725/http://www.nfgc.edu.bd/fouu.html>; "Choudhurani, Nawab Faizunnesa," Banglapedia.org, accessed March 21, 2023, https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Choudhurani,_Nawab_Faizunnesa.

¹⁴⁰ Mona Eltahawy, a renowned Egyptian-American Muslim feminist, journalist, and commentator, is a leading advocate for women's rights and a vocal critic of patriarchal norms. Her impactful work spans diverse issues, featured in publications like *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. See Dhamini Ratnam, "I Complicate the Image of Muslim Women: Mona Eltahawy," *The Wire*, 2017, <https://thewire.in/gender/mona-eltahawy-interview-islam>; Mona Eltahawy, "Opinion | #MosqueMeToo: What Happened When I Was Sexually Assaulted During the Hajj," *The Washington Post*, 2018,

rallies, and awareness campaigns. Their activism centres on themes like women's education, legal rights, and political representation. Moreover, they have contributed to the establishment of organizations, schools, hospitals, and other facilities aimed at empowering women in their respective communities. In the realm of artistic expression and activism, figures such as Deeyah Khan,¹⁴¹ and Ismat Chughtai,¹⁴² use arts and filmography as mediums to convey their feminist activism, placing them under the activist classification as well. On the political front, individuals like Benazir Bhutto,¹⁴³ Fadela Amara,¹⁴⁴ and Ilham Moussaïd,¹⁴⁵ are identified as Muslim feminist politicians who align their political

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2018/02/15/mosquemetoo-what-happened-when-i-was-sexually-assaulted-during-the-hajj/>.

¹⁴¹ Norwegian filmmaker and human rights activist Deeyah Khan, of Punjabi/Pashtun descent, has won two Emmys, two Peabody Awards, and Best Factual Director honours from BAFTA and the Royal Television Society. With seven documentaries on ITV's *Exposure* series, she's a prominent figure in documentary filmmaking. See Victoria Crow, "Emmy-Award Winning Filmmaker Deeyah Khan Launches Online Magazine *Sister-Hood* Aimed at Giving Muslim Women a Voice," *news.com.au*, 2016, <https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/news-life/emmyaward-winning-filmmaker-deeyah-khan-launches-online-magazine-sisterhood-aimed-at-giving-muslim-women-a-voice/news-story/f61efcf5b0650060e3f54cc17f5c291b>; Emine Saner, "The Muslim Director Who Filmed Neo-Nazis: 'I Thought – I'm Not Going to Make It out,'" *The Guardian*, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/dec/04/the-muslim-director-who-filmed-neo-nazis-i-thought-im-not-going-to-make-it-out>; "Deeyah Khan," *Women's Media Center*, accessed October 2, 2023, <https://womensmediacenter.com/profile/deeya-khan>.

¹⁴² Ismat Chughtai, an influential Indian Urdu novelist and filmmaker, can be considered a pioneer for Islamic feminism in India. Her works, delving into themes of female sexuality and challenging societal norms, align with principles of gender equality and justice, despite her not explicitly identifying as an Islamic feminist. See Raza Naeem, "Remembering Ismat Chughtai, Urdu's Wicked Woman," *The Wire*, 2019, <https://thewire.in/books/remembering-ismat-chughtai-urdus-wicked-woman>; Aamer Hussein, "How Long Can a River Be Held Back by a Dam?," *Kindle Magazine*, 2015, <http://kindlemag.in/how-long-can-a-river-be-held-back-by-a-dam/>; "Ismat Chughtai," *SAWNET.org*, accessed March 26, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120107042713/http://www.sawnet.org/books/authors.php?Chughtai+Ismat>.

¹⁴³ Bhutto, the first Muslim woman to lead a democratic government, championed women's rights during her political career. Despite facing criticism for compromises with conservatives, her dedicated efforts and influential role in politics have been crucial in shaping the feminist discourse in Pakistan. See Anna Suvorova, *Benazir Bhutto: A Multidimensional Portrait* (Karachi: Oxford University Press Pakistan, 2015), 61; Shyam Bhatia, *Goodbye Shahzadi: A Political Biography of Benazir Bhutto* (Lotus Collection, 2008), 2; Adele M. Stan, "Benazir Bhutto: An Imperfect Feminist," *The American Prospect*, 2007.

¹⁴⁴ Fadela Amara, a French feminist and politician, began her advocacy for women in marginalized areas and later served as the Secretary of State for Urban Policies. Through her organization *Ni Putes Ni Soumises*, she worked to empower Muslim women and combat sexism, discrimination, and violence. See Steven Erlanger, "Daughter of French Projects Fights for Them in Government," *The New York Times*, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/14/world/14amara.html>.

¹⁴⁵ Ilham Moussaïd, a New Anticapitalist Party (NPA) candidate in Avignon, sparked a national debate by wearing a *hijāb*. As a feminist advocating for gender equality, she defended the *hijāb* as a personal choice, challenging stereotypes and emphasizing individual agency in the Muslim female experience. See Lilian Alemagna, "Tout Voile Dehors," *www.liberation.fr*, 2010, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150218010718/http://www.liberation.fr/politiques/2010/02/18/tout-voile->

campaigns with Islamic feminist ideals. These leaders have been pivotal in amplifying Muslim women's voices, supporting and passing legislation that empowers women, and advocating for women's rights reform. The political category also includes feminists who are advocates and lawyers fighting for the legal rights of women.

Within academia, scholars like Asma Barlas,¹⁴⁶ Amina Wadud,¹⁴⁷ Fatima Mernissi,¹⁴⁸ Riffat Hassan,¹⁴⁹ and Kecia Ali,¹⁵⁰ stand out as prominent figures in the field of Islamic feminism. These scholars contribute significantly to the movement by producing scholarly works on Islamic feminism, enriching its discourse, and advancing its theoretical frameworks. Their academic contributions serve to deepen the understanding of Islamic feminism and provide intellectual foundations for the movement.

It is important to note that categorizations within Islamic feminism can overlap, as many Islamic feminist scholars and politicians are also fervent activists. However,

dehors_610641; Lizzy Davies, "Election Candidate in Headscarf Causes Uproar in France," *The Guardian*, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/feb/10/french-election-headscarf-candidate>; Sophie de Ravinel, "Le NPA Présente Une Candidate Voilée," *Le Figaro*, 2010, <https://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2010/02/02/01002-20100202ARTFIG00688-le-npa-presente-une-candidate-voilee-.php>; Tony Todd, "Far-Left Party Reveals 'Veiled' Female Candidate," *France 24*, 2010; Jim Wolfreys, "Ilham Moussaid: A Proud Tribune of the Oppressed," *Socialist Review*, 2010, <https://web.archive.org/web/20121013092551/http://www.socialistreview.org.uk/article.php?articlenumber=11187>.

¹⁴⁶ Barlas, a Pakistani-American writer and academic, has significantly contributed to comparative politics, Islam, *Qur'ānic* hermeneutics, and women's studies. She is a prominent figure in Islamic feminist scholarship, challenging patriarchal readings of the *Qur'ān*. See Asma Barlas, "Asma Barlas," ITHACA College, accessed March 27, 2023, <https://www.ithaca.edu/faculty/abarlas>.

¹⁴⁷ Amina Wadud, a leading American Muslim theologian, has been crucial in advancing Islamic feminism through her scholarship. Challenging traditional views on women in Islam, she advocates for gender equality in Islamic theology. Her 2005 act leading the mixed-gender Friday prayers sparked controversy around the world. See "ICRS Visiting Professor," ICRS Yogyakarta, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.icrs.or.id/visiting-professor>; "Amina Wadud, Research Scholar," Starr King School for the Ministry, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.sksm.edu/faculty/amina-wadud/>.

¹⁴⁸ The detailed biography of Fatema Mernissi is provided in Chapter 3.1.1, under the heading "Fatema Mernissi: Background and Influences."

¹⁴⁹ Riffat Hassan, a Pakistani-American theologian, is a significant Islamic feminist scholar. She reinterprets the *Qur'ān* through a feminist lens, challenging patriarchal interpretations and advocating for gender equality within Islam. See Susan N. Cahill, *Wise Women: Over Two Thousand Years of Spiritual Writing by Women* (W.W. Norton and Company, 1996), 329.

¹⁵⁰ Kecia Ali, a prominent American scholar of Islam, specializes in Islamic jurisprudence, ethics, women, and gender. Her research challenges conventional interpretations of Islamic legal frameworks, contributing to a nuanced understanding of gender issues within Islam and enriching the discourse on Islamic feminism. See "Meet the Scholar: Snapshots of Intellectual Journeys; Kecia Ali," Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Georgetown University, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://arabic.georgetown.edu/meet-the-scholar-kecia-ali/>.

individuals within this movement often have a primary area that they are most active, whether it be in academia, politics, or direct activism. This multifaceted categorization highlights the diversity and complexity of Islamic feminism, revealing the varied roles and contributions of its proponents across different spheres of influence.

2.1.5 Counter-movements and Opposition

Islamic Feminist movements encounter diverse receptions in the localities and communities they persist in, facing both acceptance and opposition. Particularly in Islamic nations, feminists experience strong hostility from Islamic councils, communities, and governments. This resistance is often termed as anti-feminism, defined by feminist sociologist Michael Flood as disagreement with three core ideas: (1) gender differentiation is a social construct; (2) current social structures favour men over women; and (3) efforts should be made to change these structures for greater equality, akin to achievements in women's suffrage rights.¹⁵¹

Resistance against Islamic feminism manifests in diverse ways, shaped by the temporal and societal context. This opposition may originate from groups, individuals, or those holding positions of authority. This opposition may also be in form of absolute opposition or partial opposition. For example, some Islamists who champion women's rights issues in public arenas, often intentionally overlook the issue of gender discrimination within private domains.¹⁵² Su'ād al-Fātih al-Badwī, an Islamist politician and Sudanese scholar, contends that feminism and *taqwā*, the Islamic concept of devotion, are incompatible, thereby establishing the impossibility of Islam and feminism coexisting.¹⁵³ Another perspective comes from Iranian academic Hakimeh Entesari, who

¹⁵¹ Michael Flood, *International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities*, ed. Michael Flood, Judith K. Gardiner, and Keith Pringle Bob Pease, vol. 1 (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), 21.

¹⁵² Valentine M. Moghadam, "Islamic Feminism and Its Discontents: Toward a Resolution of the Debate," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 4 (2002): 1135–71.

¹⁵³ As Badran reported from her meeting with Su'ād al-Fātih al-Badwī at the International Women's Forum in Khartoum in 1996. See Margot Badran, "Khartoum's Answer to Beijing," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, September 1996, 12.

criticizes Islamic feminists for a perceived detachment from the cultural realities of Islamic societies. She suggests using the term "Muslim feminists" instead of "Islamic feminism."¹⁵⁴

Ahmadian, the director of the Isfahan Institute of Theology, asserts that the term "Islamic Feminism" is a fabricated title aimed at reconciling the perceived conflict between Islam and feminism.¹⁵⁵ He deems it a paradoxical combination, citing inconsistencies with Islamic principles. According to him, Islamic teachings acknowledge differences in the roles and positions of men and women without diminishing the dignity of women. Islamic feminism, according to Seyed Hussein Ishaghi, is better understood as a women-centred understanding of Islam.¹⁵⁶ He highlights the identity crisis faced by a group caught between Islamic and Western cultures. Additionally, he criticizes the group for rejecting religious teachings and promoting materialistic viewpoints by dismissing certain beliefs as superstitious.

Critics of Islamic feminism raise concerns about its perceived weak connections to traditional Islamic religious sciences, both in methodology and epistemology. Yasmin Moll points out that scholars like Omaira Abou-Bakr and Asma Barlas, while emphasizing the significance of *al-ijtihād* (independent thought), reject the notion that this approach is confined to religious scholars meeting stringent requirements in religious knowledge and interpretive expertise.¹⁵⁷ Moll further notes that contemporary Islamic feminists diverge from the methodological tradition of classical Islamic exegetes and scholars, employing innovative methods such as historical, literary, and deconstructionist approaches, which are unconventional in Islamic religious sciences. While Islamic feminism derives legitimacy from the Islamic tradition, it introduces changes to the methodological framework that has historically shaped classical religious knowledge. Critics also argue that Islamic feminism is politically insignificant and possibly counterproductive. Valentine Moghadam, for

¹⁵⁴ Hakimeh Entesari, "How and Why (about) Islamic Feminism," Payam-e-Zan Magazine, 2013, <https://hawzah.net/fa/Magazine/View/3992/8151/107366/چند-و-چون-فمینیسم-اسلامی>.

¹⁵⁵ Hajjatul Islam Ahmadian, "Criticism of the Fake Title 'Islamic Feminism' in the Book 'Feminism and Family,'" Iqna: International Quran News Agency, 2021, <https://isfahan.iqna.ir/fa/news/3980444/نقد-عنوان-جعلی-فمینیسم-اسلامی-در-کتاب-فمینیسم-و-خانواده>.

¹⁵⁶ Seyed Hussein Ishaghi, "The Nature and Goals of Islamic Feminism," Hawzah.net, 2013, <https://hawzah.net/fa/Magazine/View/3992/7678/96652/ماهیت-و-اهداف-فمینیسم-اسلامی>.

¹⁵⁷ Yasmin Moll, "'People like Us' in Pursuit of God and Rights: Islamic Feminist Discourse and Sisters in Islam in Malaysia," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 11, no. 1 (2009): 40–55.

instance, contends that the struggle for gender rights cannot be effectively waged through religious arguments but requires a focus on socioeconomic and political realities.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, some opponents reject Islamic feminism due to its foundation in a religious framework rooted in dogmatic religious truths and doctrines.¹⁵⁹

The early 20th-century feminist movement in Egypt faced significant challenges in their quest for women's empowerment. While navigating difficult terrain, their primary obstacle arose from the government and authorities. Despite also encountering opposing views from Islamic councils and Muslim academics, particularly on issues like the headscarf and the role of women in the household and workplace, the most persistent challenges came from official entities. In response, feminist groups have increasingly turned to independent campaigns and protests, aiming to influence future administrations. This strategic shift is driven by the nation's political instability, frequent changes in government, and a lack of confidence in authorities' commitments to human rights issues.¹⁶⁰ The opposition to feminist initiatives in Egypt has been fuelled by community ignorance of women's rights issues and governmental indifference to the cause.

In Muslim-majority countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, the terms "feminism" and "feminist movements" often carry a negative connotation among the general public, who perceive them as deviant groups. While the definition of feminism itself does not inherently imply a liberal stance, the feminist movements in these countries tend to adopt a liberal and secular perspective, particularly when interpreting Islam. In Malaysia, Sisters in Islam (SIS) is a prominent organization that stands out for its liberal feminist approach, while a similar trend is observed in Indonesia with Jaringan Islam Liberal (JIL).¹⁶¹ However, these liberal feminist groups face opposition from alternative

¹⁵⁸ Moghadam, "Islamic Feminism and Its Discontents: Toward a Resolution of the Debate," 1135–71.

¹⁵⁹ See Nayereh Tohidi, "Women's Rights in the Muslim World: The Universal-Particular Interplay," *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 1, no. 2 (2003): 158–88; Haideh Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Limits of Postmodern Analysis* (New York: Zed Books, 1999), 141.

¹⁶⁰ Sherifa Zuhur, "Women's Quest For Equality In Post-Revolutionary Egypt," in *Women's Movements and Countermovements: The Quest for Gender Equality in Southeast Asia and the Middle East*, ed. Claudia Derichs (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 163.

¹⁶¹ The background information on these feminist organizations will be examined in subchapter 2.3.3 "Islamic Feminism Movements on Global Platform".

women sub-movements and conservative Islamists aligned with major Islamic organizations. These organizations include the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM), Malaysian Muslim Solidarity (ISMA), Pertubuhan Ikram Malaysia (IKRAM), Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah Malaysia (YADIM), and Persatuan Ulama Malaysia (PUM), among others.

Many publications promoting feminism have been outlawed in Malaysia by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), such as Irshad Manji's "Allah, Liberty and Love: The Courage to Reconcile Faith and Freedom."¹⁶² In both Malaysia and Indonesia, Islamic authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the government, stand in opposition to Islamic feminism. Former minister Abdullah Md. Zin advises Muslims to avoid being swayed by liberal concepts such as Islamic feminism, which are seen as conflicting with Islamic principles and values.¹⁶³ The Malaysian government, adhering to Islam as its official religion, maintains a stringent stance in curbing the dissemination of these ideas within the community.

Just as Islamic feminist movements have evolved over the years, anti-Islamic feminist organizations have undergone changes as well. These opposing sides cover a range of topics that offer diverse perspectives on women's rights, especially within different cultural and religious contexts. The arguments and information presented contribute to a better understanding of the challenges women face. Traditional customs imposing restrictions and dogmatic taboos on women have been challenged and, in some cases, eliminated. Additionally, modern theories and conventions have emerged to explore how social and historical factors shape Islamic feminist theories for the benefit of Muslim women. The ongoing discussions and campaigns, despite their contentious nature, may hold a promising outlook for the future of gender equality and justice.

¹⁶² "KDN Haramkan Penerbitan Buku Tulisan Irshad Manji," MStar, 2012, <https://www.mstar.com.my/lokal/semasa/2012/05/24/kdn-haramkan-penerbitan-buku-tulisan-irshad-manji>.

¹⁶³ Anne Muhammad, "PM's Adviser: Liberalism as Much a Threat to Islam as Terrorism," Malaysiakini, 2017, <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/379087>.

2.2 BRIEF EXPLORATION INTO THE ISLAMIC FEMINIST THEORY

Scholars have actively pursued the development of Islamic feminist theory, recognizing its profound epistemic and political significance, not only for Muslim women but also for the reform of religious traditions. They argue that Islamic feminist theory holds the potential to transform these traditions by offering a scholarly feminist interpretation that challenges the prevailing patriarchal views entrenched in Islamic religious literature.¹⁶⁴

Analysing the works of these scholars is crucial, as they present an alternative perspective to the predominantly patriarchal interpretations. Islamic feminists, grounding their understanding in the *Qur'ān*, advocate for gender equality. According to legal expert Azizah al-Hibri, the *Qur'ān* emphasizes the common origin of all people from a single soul, asserting equality among them and dismissing gender-based superiority.¹⁶⁵ This perspective affirms that women have the same rights and freedoms as men, enabling their active participation in public life and contribution to the *ummah*.

The theoretical frameworks employed by Islamic feminist scholars and activists share similarities, contributing to the construction of Islamic feminist theory. This research segment will briefly discuss these theories, such as the equality of genders in the private and public sphere, rights for *ijtihād* and to interpret the revealed text, scepticism of the past scholars, and justification built on the higher objectives of the spirit of *al-Sharī'ah*.

2.2.1 Autonomy in Public Sphere

Islamic feminists strive for the autonomy of Muslim women in public spaces by advocating for the rights to access and engage in public life on an equal footing with men. This advocacy extends to all parts of the public sphere. For example, Islamic feminists argue for

¹⁶⁴ Omaima Abou-Bakr, “Le Féminisme Islamique et La Production de La Connaissance. Perspectives Dans l’Egypte Postrevolutionnaire,” in *Feminismes Islamiques*, ed. Zahra Ali (Paris: Le Fabrique Editions, 2012), 1–10; Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Quran* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002), xi.

¹⁶⁵ Azizah Al-Hibri, “An Introduction to Muslim Women’s Rights,” in *Windows of Faith: Muslim Women Scholar-Activists in North America*, ed. Gisela Webb (Syracuse University Press, 2000), 52–53.

increased political opportunity for women, challenging the notion that Islamic teachings prohibit women from politics in totality. Islamic feminists cite historical examples of *ṣaḥābiyyah* political participation to reinforce their argument.¹⁶⁶ These instances include Umm al-Salamah's ﷺ political insight during the al-Ḥudaybiyyah treaty,¹⁶⁷ Ummu Hānī bint Abī Ṭalib's ﷺ authoritative action in granting asylum to non-combatants,¹⁶⁸ Samrā' bint Nuḥayk's ﷺ meeting with the Prophet ﷺ about promoting what is right and discouraging what is wrong, Al-Shifā' bint 'Abd Allāh al-'Adawiyah's ﷺ responsibility for certain aspects of the market under 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ,¹⁶⁹ and 'Ā'ishah bint Abī Bakr ﷺ leading the Muslim army in the Battle of the Camel in seeking justice for the murder of 'Uthman ibn 'Affān ﷺ.¹⁷⁰ These examples illustrate that women during the time of the Prophet ﷺ were actively involved in running the affairs of the Islamic state in Madinah. Their roles went beyond *da'wah* or missionary work; some women participated in wars, provided medical services to warriors, and assisted in transporting the injured to Madinah.

Islamic feminists also challenge the patriarchal interpretation of gender segregation. Some contested interpretations have led to strict policies, limiting women's access to religious education, leadership, and community participation, especially in mosques. Islamic feminists disagree on this interpretation and advocate for women to pray alongside men without partitions, similar to the practice in Mecca.¹⁷¹ In 2003, Asra Nomani challenged restrictions at her mosque, opposing the segregation of women to a hidden

¹⁶⁶ *Ṣaḥābiyyah* is women companion of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

¹⁶⁷ Muḥammad 'Ibn 'Umar Al-Waqidī, *Al-Maghāzī*, 3rd Editio (Bayrūt: Dār al-'Ālamī, 1989), 613.

¹⁶⁸ 'Abd al-Malik 'ibn Hishām, *Al-Ṣīrah Al-Nabawiyah Li 'Ibn Hishām*, vol. 2 (Miṣr: Sharkah Maktabah Muṣṭafa al-Bābī wa 'Awlādihi, 1955), 411.

¹⁶⁹ Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 82.

¹⁷⁰ Noor Mohammad Osmani, Md. Yousuf Ali, and Abu Umar Faruq Ahmad, "The Political Role of Muslim Women between Traditional Texts and Changing Realities," in *AMSS 38th Annual Conference "Islamic Traditions and Comparative Modernities"* (Virginia, USA, 2009), 6.

¹⁷¹ William Wan and Michael Laris, "Mosque Pray-Ins against Segregation of Sexes Are Springing Up," Washington Post, 2010, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/21/AR2010052104253.html>.

balcony.¹⁷² Nomani argued that this practice was not aligned with Muḥammad's ﷺ teachings and was simply a sexist, man-made rule. Despite facing a trial for expulsion, she persisted in her stance.

In 2010, Fatima Thompson and others organized a "pray-in" at the Islamic Centre of Washington, D.C., protesting against being confined to a designated prayer area for women, referred to as the "penalty box."¹⁷³ Despite threats of arrest, the women continued their protest, describing the designated area as an "overheated, dark back room." Subsequent protests faced police inquiries and threats of arrest, including one at the Dar al-Hijrah mosque in May 2010.¹⁷⁴ However, D.C. police agreed not to intervene in such protests. These actions highlight the ongoing efforts of Islamic feminists to challenge restrictive practices and promote gender equality in public spaces.¹⁷⁵

Islamic feminists also challenge the patriarchal restrictions on women's access to religious leadership. They push for women's inclusion in all aspects of religious life, including leading prayers and giving sermons. A notable example is when Amina Wadud preside over a mixed-gender Friday prayer on March 18, 2005.¹⁷⁶ As a woman imam leading the prayer and delivering the khutbah, Wadud's action sparked controversy within the Muslim community. Despite the backlash, the event became a powerful demonstration of Islamic feminist advocacy, garnering global media coverage and sparking discussions among Muslims worldwide.

Islamic feminists not only challenge gender segregation in religious spaces but also strive to overturn patriarchal norms limiting women's movement and access to public spaces. This involves advocating for women's rights to freely moving anywhere in public without fear of harassment or violence. In some countries, women face restrictions

¹⁷² Nomani, "Let These Women Pray!"

¹⁷³ Emily Esfahani Smith, "Islamic Feminists Storm Some Barricades," *Wall Street Journal*, 2010, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704682604575369472168848914>; Nomani, "Let These Women Pray!"

¹⁷⁴ Wan and Laris, "Mosque Pray-Ins against Segregation of Sexes Are Springing Up."

¹⁷⁵ Bill Myers, "D.C. Police Won't Intervene to Remove Women From Mosques," *Washington Examiner*, 2010, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/dc-police-wont-intervene-to-remove-women-from-mosques>.

¹⁷⁶ Juliane Hammer, *American Muslim Women, Religious Authority, and Activism* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2012), 13–35.

inhibiting their freedom of movement; including travel, employment, and driving.¹⁷⁷ For instance, just in 2017, Saudi Arabia announced the end of its ban on women driving from June 2018 onward.¹⁷⁸ Prior to this, female activists, such as Manal al-Sharif, had protested the prohibition by posting videos of themselves driving on social media.¹⁷⁹ Notably, Loujain al-Hathloul, another Saudi women's rights activist, faced imprisonment for her role in protesting the driving ban.¹⁸⁰

Islamic feminists actively strive to enhance women's access to education and economic opportunities, recognizing these as crucial elements for women empowerment. Their advocacy revolves around ensuring equal opportunities in education and employment, aiming to increase women's independence and autonomy. They challenge restrictive norms, advocating for women's equal access to political and religious leadership, and press for more opportunities for women in education and the workforce. Through these efforts, they seek to create a more just and equitable society.

2.2.2 Rights to Re-Interpret the Islamic Law and Reforming Islamic Teaching

Islamic feminism is a movement within Islam that aims to advance gender equality and justice for women within the Islamic paradigm. One avenue pursued by Islamic feminists is the re-interpretation of Islamic law, or *sharī'ah*, in order to obtain women's rights and agency.

Islamic feminist scholars often identify a major methodological flaw in many contemporary religious perspectives, where the Islamic textual heritage is perceived as a singular, sacred, and unalterable entity. This viewpoint encompasses the *Qur'ān*, *ḥadīth*, prevalent exegetical works, and major *fiqh* schools, collectively forming what is referred

¹⁷⁷ Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, "Toward a Theory of Arab-Muslim Women as Activists in Secular and Religious Movements," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (1993): 87–106.

¹⁷⁸ Ben Hubbard, "Saudi Arabia Agrees to Let Women Drive," *The New York Times*, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-women-drive.html>.

¹⁷⁹ Manal Al-Sharif, "A Saudi Woman Who Dared to Drive," TED, 2013, https://www.ted.com/talks/manal_al_sharif_a_saudi_woman_who_dared_to_drive.

¹⁸⁰ Patrick Wintour, "Saudi Rights Activist Loujain Al-Hathloul Sentenced to Almost Six Years in Jail," *The Guardian*, accessed February 28, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/28/saudi-rights-activist-loujain-al-hathloul-sentenced-to-almost-six-years-in-jail>.

to as the textual tradition. Typically, this tradition is regarded as divine and timeless. To address this limitation, Islamic feminist scholars employ a strategy of deconstruction and demystification, reinterpreting the various layers of the textual tradition.¹⁸¹

Drawing on principles such as *al-ijma'* (consensus) and *al-ijtihād* (independent reasoning), these scholars argue that there is flexibility within Islamic law for reinterpretation and reform. They emphasize that the tradition of Islamic scholars engaging in *ijtihād* has a long history, providing a basis for developing new interpretations of Islamic law that are more inclusive and egalitarian. In essence, this approach challenges the notion of a rigid and unchanging textual tradition, advocating for a dynamic interpretation that aligns with contemporary values of inclusivity and equality.¹⁸²

Islamic feminists advocate for a reinterpretation of Islamic law to promote what they believe as the egalitarian spirit of Islam and deemed more fitting with the contemporary era. Their rationale for this reinterpretation is multifaceted. Primarily, they assert that the *Qur'ān* and the *ḥadīth*, which comprise the sayings and actions of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, embody principles of justice and equality of gender. The crux of their argument is that the foundational texts of Islam are not inherently sexist; instead, patriarchal interpretations have historically been employed to legitimize the subordination of women.¹⁸³

Rhouni succinctly encapsulates this perspective by expressing her belief that the *Qur'ān* did not intend to establish gender inequality but rather aimed to reform such disparities. Even while acknowledging that gender equality is not explicitly outlined in *Qur'ānic* discourse, she perceives it as a trajectory indicated by the *Qur'ān*—an unfinished project of social justice and gender equality within Islam. Consequently, Islamic feminism, in her view, becomes a vital endeavour for disseminating this awareness through knowledge production. This effort, she asserts, combats mystifying discourses, and

¹⁸¹ Al-Sharmani, “Islamic Feminism: Transnational and National Reflections,” 87–88.

¹⁸² Al-Sharmani, 88.

¹⁸³ Whitcher, “The Effects of Western Feminist Ideology on Muslim Feminists,” 21.

reinstates Islam's historicity and dynamism, steering away from contributing to obscuring discussions about Islam.¹⁸⁴

Islamic feminists believe that gender discrimination has its roots in societal factors rather than being inherent in nature or religion. They argue that a reinterpretation project holds the potential to unlock new discourse for gender equality. Sherkat,¹⁸⁵ a prominent Persian feminist author and one of the pioneers of women's rights movement in Iran, highlights the issue of women's right to interpret Islamic law. She contends that this could lead to the development of a non-patriarchal version of Islam, one that aligns with the interests and aspirations of women.¹⁸⁶

A key aspect of how Islamic feminists approach the reinterpretation of Islamic law is by highlighting the significance of context and historical circumstances. They posit that the social, economic, and political conditions during Prophet Muḥammad's ﷺ time were markedly different from the present, necessitating a re-evaluation of how Islamic teachings are applied in today's world. Rhouni articulates this perspective, stating that Islamic feminism should contribute to a radical change in prevailing understandings of Islam by generating scholarly work that reinstates Islam's historical context.¹⁸⁷

As an illustration, they might argue that the Prophet's practice of polygyny was suitable in an era with numerous widows and orphans in need of support. However, in the contemporary context, they contend that it should be viewed as a violation of women's rights.¹⁸⁸ Mernissi's contribution aligns with this approach, as she, like other Islamic feminists, provides a woman-oriented, gender-sensitive interpretation of Islam.

¹⁸⁴ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 16.

¹⁸⁵ Shahla Sherkat founded and published Zanan magazine, addressing a range of issues facing Iranian women, from reform politics to domestic abuse and sexuality. A pivotal Iranian women's journal post-revolution, Zanan was banned after 16 years, leading Sherkat to establish Zanan-e Emruz. See Golnaz Esfandiari, "Iranian Women's Monthly Under Pressure From Hard-Liners," RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 2014, <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-womens-monthly-under-pressure/26561137.html>; "Shahla Sherkat, Iran," International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF), accessed March 18, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090801004839/http://www.iwmf.org/article.aspx?id=541&c=cijwinner>.

¹⁸⁶ Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Feminism in an Islamic Republic: Years in Hardship, Years of Growth," in *Islam, Gender and Social Change in the Muslim World*, ed. Yvonne, Y. Haddad, and John Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 61–67.

¹⁸⁷ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 14.

¹⁸⁸ Keddie, "The Past and Present of Women in the Muslim World," 83, 97.

Amina Wadud,¹⁸⁹ Asma Barlas,¹⁹⁰ and Omaima Abou-Bakr,¹⁹¹ lead a re-examination of Islamic feminist initiatives centred on the *Qur'ān*. They establish a foundation by applying ethical and theological principles derived from the *Qur'ān* to formulate regulations and standards concerning gender within Islamic law. Wadud, a trailblazer in this field, elucidates the *Qur'ānic* ethos governing human interactions with God and each other, emphasizing the unity and oneness of God rooted in the theological principle of *tawhīd*.¹⁹² Four fundamental principles support this ethos: God is just and singular; humans, as viceregents of God on earth, establish vertical relationships with Him through knowledge and worship. Additionally, horizontal human relationships, characterized by inherent equality, take precedence. Any hierarchical or vertical relationships, including patriarchy, are incompatible with the oneness of God and humanity's submission to the Divine. Lastly, as God's word, the *Qur'ān* possesses a hierarchy of meanings guiding individuals toward justice.¹⁹³ Consequently, Muslims bear the responsibility of comprehending the *Qur'ān* in its entirety, extracting its most significant interpretations, and aligning themselves with the pursuit of justice outlined in the *Qur'ān*.¹⁹⁴

Scholars like Ziba Mir-Hosseini and Kecia Ali explore the ethical dimension and its connection to the legal aspects within the realm of Islamic law. These academics critically examine the philosophical, epistemological, and ethical foundations that shaped the concepts of marriage, marital roles, women, men, and inter-gender relationships as formulated by classical jurists. They trace the roots of gender hierarchy and discrimination in Islamic law back to these foundations.¹⁹⁵ From their viewpoint, patriarchy ought to be denounced and eradicated, for it opposes the notion that there is only one God, and all

¹⁸⁹ See Amina Wadud, "Islam Beyond Patriarchy Through Gender Inclusive Qur'anic Analysis," in *Wanted: Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family*, ed. Zainah Anwar (Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2009), 95–112.

¹⁹⁰ See Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Quran*.

¹⁹¹ See Omaima Abou-Bakr, "Turning the Tables: Perspectives on the Construction of "Muslim Manhood"," *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 11, no. 2–3 (2013): 89–107.

¹⁹² Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Women: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, 2nd Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 25–26.

¹⁹³ See Al-Sharmani, "Islamic Feminism: Transnational and National Reflections," 87.

¹⁹⁴ Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Quran*, x.

¹⁹⁵ Al-Sharmani, "Islamic Feminism: Transnational and National Reflections," 87.

actions should solely submit to His will. Moreover, the interpretation of the *Qur'ān* does not prescribe inflexible decrees regarding the application of justice. Instead, the formulation of legal rules is seen as a dynamic and interpretive process influenced by comprehensive and situational interpretations.¹⁹⁶

2.2.3 Scepticism on Past Scholars' Authority

Islamic feminists justify their need to reinterpret Islamic texts by expressing scepticism toward the authority and neutrality of past scholars. Rhouni argues against the previous patriarchal paradigm by employing literary criticism and linguistics to discern the *Qur'ān* as a divine scripture composed in human language that was susceptible to the idiosyncrasies and common sense of its era. The androcentric discourse found in the *Qur'ān*, in her opinion, is not indicative of God's intention but rather stems from the mindset and worldview of the initial recipients of the *Qur'ānic* message.¹⁹⁷

Amina Wadud observes that the female voice in the *Qur'ān* has been marginalized and labelled as "*awrah*," or taboo, within the Islamic intellectual framework.¹⁹⁸ Fatima Mernissi contends that Islam has consistently been defined and interpreted by men. She notes that the theologians and jurists who extensively interpreted the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth* were exclusively men who were primarily focused on upholding patriarchy. Mernissi argues that the manipulation of *ḥadīth* literature, and in some cases, its fabrication, has contributed to the misogynistic aspects of Islam.¹⁹⁹

Mir-Hosseini, a Muslim feminist scholar, argues that early Muslim jurists operated on specific assumptions, particularly the belief that women were created by and for men. These assumptions significantly influenced the development of juristic law.²⁰⁰ In their perspective, women were considered intellectually and morally inferior to men, viewed as

¹⁹⁶ Al-Sharmani, 87.

¹⁹⁷ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 16.

¹⁹⁸ Wadud, *Qur'an and Women: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, 9.

¹⁹⁹ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 49–95.

²⁰⁰ Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "The Construction of Gender in Islamic Legal Thought and Strategies for Reform," *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 1, no. 1 (2003): 1–25.

vulnerable beings in need of male protection. Furthermore, women were perceived as sexually distinct from men, possessing characteristics deemed dangerous and uncontrollable. The jurists' understanding of the marriage contract was rooted in the concept of a purchase, where the husband paid a dower and spousal maintenance in exchange for the right to engage in sexual relations with his wife. This viewpoint reflected the historical and social contexts in which these jurists lived and operated.²⁰¹

Similarly, Kecia Ali argues that the sexist elements within Islamic legal thought stem from the morally questionable perspectives of classical jurists regarding marriage and marital rights. Her research tracks the roots of sexism in Islamic legal theory to the erroneous views held by classical jurists on marriage and marital rights, deviating from the ethical interpretations presented in the *Qur'ān*. Ali posits that classical jurists perceived marriage as a form of ownership, granting the husband authority over sexual activities with his wife—a perspective aligning with the views articulated by Mir-Hosseini.²⁰²

Moreover, Khaled Abou El Fadl highlighted the importance of grounding Islamic law in a "moral vision and ethos" reflective of the greatness of Allāh ﷻ.²⁰³ According to Abou Fadl, Islamic law should align with "absolute moral values" that are timeless and universal, necessitating concerted efforts from both individuals and governmental institutions. Abou Fadl views this as an initial step in the reform process. He emphasizes the essential task of harmonizing legal processes and interpretations with "derivative moral values," crucial for fostering a morally superior society that evolves and progresses over time.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "Justice and Equality and Muslim Family Laws: New Ideas, New Prospects," in *Gender and Equality in Muslim Family Law, Justice, and Ethics in the Islamic Legal Tradition*, ed. Ziba Mir-Hosseini et al. (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 7–34.

²⁰² Kecia Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2012), 6.

²⁰³ Khaled Abou El Fadl, a respected professor at UCLA Law, is known for his expertise in Islamic law and human rights. He is famous for his moral take on Islam, founding the Usuli Institute to promote Islamic intellectual tradition. His influence extends globally through teaching, writing, and media appearances, earning him spots on lists of influential Arabs and Muslims. See "Khaled M. Abou El Fadl," UCLA School of Law, accessed May 5, 2024, <https://law.ucla.edu/faculty/faculty-profiles/khaled-m-abou-el-fadl>.

²⁰⁴ Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Search for Beauty in Islam: A Conference of the Books* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 118–19.

2.2.4 The Spirit of *al-Sharī'ah*: A Feminist Justification

All the preceding Islamic feminist theories and arguments share a common foundation rooted in the belief that gender equality and justice are inherent principles in Islam. Muslim feminists' commitment to reform and to reinterpret Islamic law, are driven by their belief that they are preserving the original teachings of Islam. They are convinced that equality is inherent in the spirit of *Sharī'ah*, and their mission is to restore an authentic Islamic teaching and narrative in the current Muslim context. They perceive current Muslim practices as tainted by patriarchal influences and misogyny. Rhouni, discussing Islam's mission, expresses a firm belief that the *Qur'ān* did not intend to establish gender inequality but rather aimed to reform such a situation.²⁰⁵

Rhouni emphasizes the inherent values of justice and equality in Islam when exploring the dual nature of the *Qur'ān*. However, she acknowledges the objective reality of the utilization of androcentric language in the *Qur'ān*. She also admitted the intricate concept of 'revelation', which has brought conflict and disagreement among Muslim theologians towards the ages.²⁰⁶ She argues that addressing the androcentric aspect of the *Qur'ānic* discourse does not invalidate nor weakens the discussion on women's rights in Islam; on the contrary, it has the potential to strengthen it. She argues that recognizing the androcentric nature of the *Qur'ānic* discourse could fortify the struggle for women's rights in Islam rather than diminish it. Wadud, in her examination of the theological concept of *tawhīd* staunchly maintains that Islam embodies a system of justice and equality. According to her, any notion of a vertical or hierarchical relationship of submission to the creation, such as submission to men in a patriarchal system, contradicts the idea of absolute submission of humans to Allāh ﷻ.²⁰⁷

In addition, Mernissi contends that the subordination of women in the Islamic world does not originate from Islam itself but from patriarchal interpretations of Islamic principles and beliefs.²⁰⁸ She argues that equality and justice are integral in Islamic ideals. Her efforts

²⁰⁵ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 16.

²⁰⁶ Rhouni, 13.

²⁰⁷ Wadud, *Qur'an and Women: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, 25–26.

²⁰⁸ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 49–95.

to highlight notable female figures in Islam and illuminate instances of women's subordination aim to increase awareness of the varying treatment and condition of women in both historical and contemporary Islamic contexts.²⁰⁹ She also believes that gender equality is a vital aspect of the Prophet's ﷺ vision and represents a fundamental element of justice in the *shari'ah*. However, she acknowledges that the Prophet ﷺ faced significant challenges in fully manifesting these ideals due to strong resistance from the misogynistic Arabic community of his time.²¹⁰

2.3 ISLAMIC FEMINISM: WORKS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Islamic feminism is a dynamic movement that has emerged in the Islamic world to bridge the gap between feminist perspectives and methodologies with Islamic teachings. This movement challenges traditional patriarchal interpretations of Islam, advocating for gender equality and women's rights. Islamic feminists have significantly impacted the discourse on women's right in Islam through the analysis of religious texts, legal reforms, promotion of women's education, and reshaping the narrative around Islamic history. In this discussion, we will delve into the background and accomplishments of Islamic feminism, shedding light on influential Muslim feminists and movements worldwide.²¹¹ The focus will be on its transformative influence in Muslim-majority societies and its commitment to achieving social justice.

2.3.1 Muslim Feminist Personas around the Globe and Their Contributions

The emergence of Muslim feminist figures on the global stage signals a growing subset of activism and discourse within the broader feminist movement. These individuals, who identify as Muslim feminists, strive to challenge, and reinterpret established gender roles and patriarchal systems within the context of religious and cultural traditions. They engage

²⁰⁹ Fatima Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, trans. Mary Jo Lakeland (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 88–115.

²¹⁰ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 141–61.

²¹¹ Muslim feminism and Islamic feminism are interchangeable terms used to describe individuals who adhere to Islamic feminist positions or ideology.

in discussions on various women-centric issues, including but not limited to education, political participation, reproductive rights, gender-based violence, inheritance laws, and marital rights. They actively work against discriminatory practices, cultural norms, and social conventions that disadvantage women.

They actively participated in a variety of advocacy and activism endeavours, both at local and global levels. This involvement includes conducting academic research, producing publications, organizing conferences and workshops, participating in social media campaigns, and collaborating with individuals and organizations who share similar perspectives. Their overarching objective is to empower women within the framework of Islam. They encounter distinctive challenges and frequently face opposition from conservative elements within their communities. Accusations of deviating from religious traditions and succumbing to Western ideologies are common. Despite this, they persevere in challenging stereotypes, fostering dialogue, and promoting their feministic understanding of Islam.

It is essential to acknowledge the diversity among Muslim feminist figures and movements, as they embody a wide range of perspectives and approaches influenced by their cultural, national, and religious backgrounds. Despite these variations, they are united by a shared determination to advocate for gender equality within the Islamic framework. This subchapter will examine notable Muslim feminists from various countries and continents.²¹² This study will focus on their overall accomplishments and ideas in their respective localities.

2.3.1.1 Western Countries

Muslim feminist figures in Western countries constitute a significant and expanding segment within the broader Muslim feminist movement. Navigating the intersection of their Muslim and feminist identities in Western societies, they encounter a distinctive array of

²¹² This section will not cover every country with Islamic feminist figures. Instead, it focuses on selected countries that have notable Islamic feminist influence, providing a broad overview of Islamic feminist work and achievements worldwide.

challenges and opportunities. These individuals actively challenge misconceptions and stereotypes surrounding Islam and Muslim women, seeking to dispel the notion that Islam is inherently oppressive to women. Their advocacy revolves around promoting gender equality and women's rights, drawing inspiration from both Islamic teachings and feminist principles. Engaging in grassroots activism, community organizing, and advocacy efforts, they address issues such as Islamophobia, gender-based violence, discrimination, and the multifaceted challenges faced by Muslim women, including racism, xenophobia, and religious intolerance. Actively participating in social justice movements, they collaborate with diverse feminist and interfaith organizations to champion inclusivity and confront systemic barriers.

In France, Muslim feminists such as Fadela Amara,²¹³ Ilham Moussaïd,²¹⁴ and Rama Yade,²¹⁵ play a crucial role in challenging gender inequalities and advocating for women's rights within their communities. By embracing intersectionality and actively participating in public discourse, these women contribute to reshaping societal perceptions, empowering Muslim women, and promoting a more inclusive and equitable French society. In Germany, Muslim feminists like Seyran Ateş,²¹⁶ and Sineb El Masrar,²¹⁷ have played pivotal roles in

²¹³ See *supra* note 136.

²¹⁴ See *supra* note 137.

²¹⁵ Rama Yade, a French politician of Senegalese origin, actively promoting human rights and gender equality as the French Secretary of Human Rights and later as the Secretary of Sports. Her presidential campaign aimed to amplify marginalized voices, emphasizing the interconnected nature of feminism, social justice, and minority representation. See “Rama Yade,” London Speaker Bureau, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://londonspeakerbureau.com/speaker-profile/rama-yade/>; L’invité Politique, “Rama Yade : ‘Le Front National n’est Pas Un Parti Républicain,’” Les Echos, 2016, <https://videos.lesechos.fr/radioclassique/invite-politique/rama-yade-le-front-national-nest-pas-un-parti-republicain/lvr85z>; “Rama Yade Candidate ^{‘azza} l’élection Présidentielle de 2017,” L’Express, 2016, https://www.lexpress.fr/politique/rama-yade-candidate-a-l-election-presidentielle-de-2017_1785190.html; “4 Vérités - Rama Yade Veut Représenter ‘La France Des Oubliés,’” France TV Info, 2016, https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/revolte-en-syrie/4-verites-rama-yade-veut-representer-la-france-des-oublies_1976667.html.

²¹⁶ Seyran Ateş, a German lawyer and Muslim feminist, gained fame for founding the Ibn Ruschd-Goethe mosque in Berlin in 2017. This liberal and inclusive mosque is unique in Germany, allowing men and women to pray together and even permitting women to lead prayers. Ateş provided a platform for Muslims seeking a more liberal and egalitarian religious setting. See Susanne Beyer and Henryk M. Broder, “Islam Needs a Sexual Revolution,” Der Spiegel, 2009, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/german-turkish-author-seyran-ates-islam-needs-a-sexual-revolution-a-654704.html>.

²¹⁷ Sineb El Masrar, a Moroccan-German author, journalist, and Islamic feminist, has played a crucial role in fostering intercultural understanding and feminist discussions in the German Muslim community. Through Gazelle magazine, she provides a platform for Muslim women to share stories and explore the intersection of feminism and Islam. See Von Marcus Weber, “Zeitschrift Für Migrantinnen,” Deutschlandfunk Kultur, 2007, <https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/zeitschrift-fuer-migrantinnen-100.html>.

challenging traditional norms and fostering inclusivity within the Islamic community. Through the establishment of progressive initiatives, facilitating open dialogue, and amplifying marginalized voices, they have contributed to a more diverse and inclusive interpretation of Islam.

Islamic feminist movements in the United States have emerged as a significant voice within the broader Islamic feminist discourse. Figures like Saleemah Abdul-Ghafur,²¹⁸ Kecia Ali,²¹⁹ Linda Sarsour,²²⁰ and Amina Wadud,²²¹ represent prominent Muslim feminists in the country. Together, they have played a key role in the growth and visibility of Islamic feminism in the United States. Islamic feminism in the United Kingdom has been significantly influenced by individuals like Haleh Afshar,²²² Nazir

²¹⁸ Saleemah Abdul-Ghafur, an author and activist, blends faith and gender equality in Islam through initiatives with organizations like Malaria No More. She actively contributes to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, challenges patriarchal norms, and promotes women's empowerment across various organizations. See Saleemah Abdul-Ghafur, *Living Islam Out Loud: American Muslim Women Speak* (Massachusetts: Beacon Pres, 2012); "Saleemah Abdul-Ghafur," Muslims for Progressive Values, accessed March 11, 2023, <https://www.mpvusa.org/saleemah-abdul-ghafur>; "Saleemah Abdul-Ghafur Appointed Director, Chief of Staff for Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation," Muslim Journal, 2020, <https://muslimjournal.net/saleemah-abdul-ghafur-appointed-director-chief-of-staff-for-bill-and-melinda-gates-foundation/>.

²¹⁹ See *supra* note 116.

²²⁰ Linda Sarsour, a prominent American political activist, champions civil rights causes including feminism, police brutality, immigration policy, and mass incarceration. As a Palestinian-American Muslim, she raises awareness about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, amplifying the voices of Muslim women within feminist movements amid both praise and criticism. See Siddhartha Mitter, "Linda Sarsour's Rising Profile Reflects New Generation of Muslim Activists," Al Jazeera America, 2015, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/5/9/linda-sarsours-rising-profile-reflects-new-generation-of-muslim-activists.html>; Farah Stockman, "Three Leaders of Women's March Group Step Down After Controversies," The New York Times, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/16/us/womens-march-anti-semitism.html>.

²²¹ See *supra* note 113.

²²² Baroness Afshar, a British life peer and professor at University of York, dedicated her life to advancing women's rights and challenging patriarchal interpretations of Islam. Her scholarly contributions aimed to promote gender equality within the Muslim community and raise awareness about the rights of Muslim women. See Janet Veitch, "Lady Afshar Obituary," The Guardian, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/19/lady-afshar-obituary>.

Afzal,²²³ and Sadiq Khan.²²⁴ Through their dedicated work and advocacy, they have established platforms for dialogue, increased awareness, and influenced policy changes to support the empowerment of Muslim women in the UK.

In Canada, Irshad Manji,²²⁵ a lesbian Muslim feminist, is well-known for her reformist and controversial interpretation of Islam, as well as her particular critique of literalist readings of the *Qur'ān*. Similarly, in Australia, Susan Janet Carland plays a crucial role in promoting Islamic feminism.²²⁶ Additionally, Kadra Yusuf gained fame for her

²²³ Nazir Afzal, a British solicitor, has made significant contributions to women's rights, particularly against forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and honour killings. As the former Chief Crown Prosecutor for Northwest England, he prioritizes justice and protection for women, especially those from marginalized communities. See Nazir Afzal, "Chapter 1," in *The Prosecutor* (Random House, 2020); "Our Chief Crown Prosecutor and Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutors," Government of the United Kingdom, 2013, https://web.archive.org/web/20130531022036/http://www.cps.gov.uk/northwest/who_we_are/our_chief_crown_prosecutor_and_deputy_chief_crown_prosecutors/; "Police Chief Nazir Afzal Quit to Appear on Question Time," BBC News, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-40101558>; "Nazir Afzal Is The University of Manchester's New Chancellor," The University of Manchester, 2022, <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/nazir-afzal-is-the-university-of-manchesters-new-chancellor/>.

²²⁴ Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London since 2016, actively promotes inclusivity, women's rights, and diversity. His policies focus on improving transportation, reducing pollution, and enhancing safety, while supporting initiatives like the People's Vote to advance women's rights in the UK. See Michael R. Bloomberg, "Sadiq Khan: The World's 100 Most Influential People," *Time* 100, 2018, <https://time.com/collection/most-influential-people-2018/5217530/sadiq-khan/>; Alexandra Rogers, "Sadiq Khan's Ulez Charge Cuts Polluting Vehicles by over a Third and Bags TfL £51m," *CityAM*, 2019, <https://www.cityam.com/sadiq-khans-ulez-charge-cuts-polluting-vehicles-by-over-a-third-and-bags-tfl-51m/>.

²²⁵ Irshad Manji, a Canadian educator from Uganda, is a Muslim feminist known for her controversial works, including "The Trouble with Islam Today" and "Allah, Liberty and Love." Through writings, lectures, and documentaries, Manji actively contributes to the discourse on gender equality and social justice within the Muslim community in Canada and beyond. See Geraldine Bedell, "Interview: 'I Cringed When They Compared Me to Martin Luther,'" *The Guardian*, 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/aug/03/women>; AFP News Agency, "Muslim Gay Canadian Launches Book in Malaysia Despite 'Ban,'" *Al Arabiya News*, 2012, <https://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012%2F05%2F19%2F215087>; Center on Communication Leadership & Policy, "Irshad Manji," USC Annenberg, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20200222222806/https://communicationleadership.usc.edu/fellows/senior/irshad-manji/>; Irshad Manji, "Hating the 'Hateful,'" *Persuasion*, 2020, <https://www.persuasion.community/p/hating-the-hateful/>; "Fellows," Oxford Initiative for Global Ethics and Human Rights, accessed March 5, 2023, <https://www.oxfordglobalethics.org/fellows>.

²²⁶ Susan Janet Carland is an Australian academic, author, and TV presenter. Specializing in women in Islam, she challenges stereotypes and raises awareness about diverse Muslim women's experiences through advocacy, fostering greater understanding and dialogue in Australia on gender, Islam, and feminism. See Q&A, "Panellist: Susan Carland," Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC Television), accessed March 5, 2023, https://discover.abc.net.au/index.html/?query=susan-carland&page=1&refinementList%5Bsite.title%5D=&configure%5BgetRankingInfo%5D=true&configure%5BclickAnalytics%5D=true&configure%5BuserToken%5D=ABC_SEARCH_USER&configure%5BhitsPerPage%5D=10.

undercover investigation into female genital cutting practices within the Somali community in Norway.²²⁷ Despite potential resistance and backlash from conservative elements within their Muslim communities or encountering Islamophobic sentiments in wider society, these Muslim feminist figures in Western countries persist in their advocacy for social change. They have made significant contributions to Islamic feminism in their respective nations. Through activism, writings, and public engagement, they challenge traditional norms, advocate for gender equality, and initiate conversations on the rights and empowerment of Muslim women based on their degree of understanding of Islam.

2.3.1.2 Middle East

Islamic feminism in the Middle East exists within a complex landscape shaped by cultural, social, and political factors. The emergence of Islamic feminist movements in the region is a response to patriarchal interpretations of Islam and discriminatory practices marginalizing women. Activists in the Islamic feminist movement in the Middle East focus on challenging gender inequalities in various areas, including marriage, divorce, inheritance, and domestic violence.

In the complex landscape of the Middle East, Afghanistan has long faced significant challenges in terms of women's rights activism and advocacies. Despite grappling with issues such as Islamic extremism and persistent war and conflict, courageous Muslim feminists have persistently emerged, committing themselves to improving the status and rights of Afghan women. Notable figures of Afghan Muslim feminism include Sitara

²²⁷ Kadra Yusuf, is a Somali-Norwegian and Islamic feminist activist in Norway. She addressed the issue of female genital cutting in the Somali community, playing a key role in ongoing discussions about women's rights in the Muslim community. See Knut Fjeldstad, "Kadra Attacked in Public," Aftenposten, 2007, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070416111546/http://www.aftenposten.no/english/local/article1734869.ece>.

Achakzai,²²⁸ Jamila Afghani,²²⁹ Safia Ahmed-jan,²³⁰ Shukria Barakzai,²³¹ Meena Keshwar Kamal,²³² Fawzia Koofi,²³³ and Nilofar Sakhi.²³⁴ The lives and contributions of these

²²⁸ Sitara Achakzai, a women's rights activist in Afghanistan and a Kandahar regional parliament member, was tragically assassinated by the Taliban in 2009 for her unwavering commitment to gender equality. See Jon Boone, "Taliban Shoot Dead Afghan Politician Who Championed Women's Rights," *The Guardian*, 2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/apr/13/taliban-afghanistan-kandahar-achakzai-womens-rights>; Anthony Reinhart, "'She Was a Warrior' Family Members Reflect on Sitara Achakzai's Life and the Afghanistan They Once Knew," *Globe and Mail*, 2009, <https://archive.ph/20090417073910/http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20090414.AFGHANFAMILY14ART2245/TPStory/National#selection-915.13-2726.0>; "Afghanistan: Wicczorek-Zeul Verurteilt Mord an Sitara Atschikzai," *Entwicklungspolitik*, 2009, https://www.epo.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4884.

²²⁹ Jamila Afghani, a Kabul native feminist, advocates for women's rights and education in Afghanistan. As the founder of Noor Educational and Capacity Development Organization (NECDO), she plays a crucial role in advancing education and empowering women, fostering collective action and solidarity through her involvement with the Afghan Women's Network (AWN). See Joyce S. Dubensky, *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles in Religious Peacebuilding*, vol. 2 (New York: Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, 2007), 250.

²³⁰ Safia Ahmed-jan, a significant women's rights activist in Afghanistan, defied the Taliban by secretly teaching girls during their regime. Later, as the provincial director for the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Kandahar, she opened vocational colleges, empowering women through skills training. Tragically assassinated in 2006, her story highlights the risks faced by those challenging patriarchal norms. See "Afghan Women's Official Shot Dead," *BBC News*, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/5376968.stm; Declan Walsh, "Taliban Kill Top Afghan Woman," *The Guardian*, 2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/sep/26/afghanistan.gender>; Boone, "Taliban Shoot Dead Afghan Politician Who Championed Women's Rights"; Isobel Coleman, *Paradise Beneath Her Feet: How Women Are Transforming the Middle East*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 2010); "Senior Afghan Women's Affairs Official Killed," *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*, 2006, <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/senior-afghan-womens-affairs-official-killed>.

²³¹ Shukria Barakzai, a prominent Muslim feminist, has excelled as both an Afghan politician and journalist. Serving as the Ambassador of Afghanistan to Norway and receiving the International Editor of the Year Award, she actively represents the interests of Afghan women internationally. See Gabriel Gatehouse, "Afghanistan: Shukria Barakzai's Whispered Voice Notes and Dramatic Escape," *BBC Newsnight*, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58345901>.

²³² Meena Keshwar Kamal, founder of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), was a pioneering figure in Afghan feminism. Her revolutionary activism and dedication to women's rights gained global recognition. Assassinated in 1987, her legacy continues to inspire future generations of Afghan feminists. See "A Short Biography of Martyred Meena Founding Leader of RAWA," *RAWA*, accessed March 13, 2023, <http://www.rawa.org/meena.html>.

²³³ Fawzia Koofi, a prominent women's rights activist and politician in Afghanistan, played a crucial role in negotiating peace with the Taliban. Her tenure as Vice President of the National Assembly highlights her dedication to advancing gender equality through legislative channels. See Fawzia Koofi, "The Favored Daughter," *fawziakoofi.org*, accessed March 13, 2023, https://fawziakoofi.org/?page_id=35/; Chris Lombardi, "'Favored Daughter': Fawzia Koofi on Making Women's History in Afghanistan," *Women's Voice for Change*, 2012, <https://womensvoicesforchange.org/favored-daughter-fawzia-koofi-on-making-womens-history-in-afghanistan.htm>.

²³⁴ Nilofar Sakhi, a key figure in peace and human rights development in Afghanistan, held significant roles at the American University of Afghanistan and Open Society Foundation-Afghanistan. As the founder of the Women Activities and Social Services Association (WASSA), she focuses on women's grassroots empowerment. See "Dr. Nilofar Sakhi," *Al Jazeera: Centre for Studies*, accessed March 13, 2023, <https://studies.aljazeera.net/en/profile/dr-nilofar-sakhi>; "Nilofar Sakhi," *Atlantic Council*, accessed March 13, 2023, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/expert/nilofar-sakhi/>.

individuals serve as powerful examples of the courage and resilience demonstrated by Afghan women in the face of immense challenges. Islamic feminism in Egypt refers to the collective efforts of Muslim individuals, both men and women, striving to harmonize Islamic teachings with the advocacy for gender equality and women's rights. The focal points of Islamic feminists in Egypt encompass crucial issues such as women's access to education, employment opportunities, reproductive rights, gender-based violence, family laws, and cultural practices that sustain gender inequality. This movement draws inspiration from influential figures like Qasim Amin,²³⁵ Aisha Taymur,²³⁶ Eugénie Le Brun,²³⁷ Malak

²³⁵ Qasim Amin, an Egyptian jurist and Islamic modernist, is recognized as one of the earliest feminists in the Arab world. In "The Liberation of Women," he criticized practices like veiling, seclusion, early marriage, and restricted education for Muslim women, sparking important conversations about women's issues. See Charles Kurzman, "The Emancipation of Woman and the New Woman," in *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 61–90; Mervat F. Hatem, "The Nineteenth Century Discursive Roots of the Continuing Debate on the Social-Sexual Contract in Today's Egypt," *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 2, no. 1 (2004): 64–66; John L. Esposito, "Amin, Qasim," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Menahem Mansoor, *Political and Diplomatic History of the Arab World, 1900-1967: A Chronological Study* (NCR Microcard Editions, 1972).

²³⁶ Aisha Taymur, a 19th-century figure, was a social activist, poet, novelist, and feminist in Egypt. Through her fiction, social commentary, and poetry, she expanded the concept of nation-building to include women from diverse backgrounds. Taymur emphasized the importance of education and actively advocated for women's empowerment in Egyptian society. See "Aisha Taymur (1840 – 1902)," State Information Service Egypt, accessed March 14, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120321015646/http://www.sis.gov.eg/vr/figures/english/html/Aisha.htm>; M. Booth, "Locating Women's Autobiographical Writing in Colonial Egypt," *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 2 (2013): 36–60, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2013.0019>; Mervat Faye Hatem, "Literature, Gender, and Nation-Building in Nineteenth-Century Egypt: The Life and Works of 'A'isha Taymur," in *Literatures and Cultures of the Islamic World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 8.

²³⁷ Eugénie Le Brun, aka Madame Rushdi, a French-born feminist, shaped Islamic feminism in Egypt. After converting to Islam, she challenged social norms like seclusion and veiling, asserting that Islam grants women individual rights. Le Brun promoted women's education and established a weekly salon for intellectual and political discussions. See Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), 15, 37, 131; Ahdaf Soueif, *The Map of Love* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012), 206; Amal Amireh and Lisa Suhair Majaj, *Going Global: The Transnational Reception of Third World Women Writers* (London: Psychology Press, 2000), 158.

Hifni Nasif,²³⁸ Alifa Rifaat,²³⁹ Huda Sha'arawi²⁴⁰ Saiza Nabarawi,²⁴¹ Leila Ahmed,²⁴² and Mona Eltahawy.²⁴³ These personas have significantly contributed to the discourse on

²³⁸ Malak Hifni Nasif, a feminist writer and thinker in Egypt, presented a unique perspective on women's rights by blending westernization with Islamic traditions for women's empowerment. Addressing topics like veiling, marriage, and education, Nasif made significant contributions to the early 20th-century discourse on women's rights. See Emily; Golson, Loubna; Youssef, and Amanda Fields, *Toward, Around, and Away from Tahrir: Tracking Emerging Expressions of Egyptian Identity* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 78; Margot Badran, "The Feminist Vision in the Writings of Three Turn-of-the-Century Egyptian Women," *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)* 15, no. 1–2 (1988), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530198808705469>; Reina Yousef, "Malak Hifni Nasif: Negotiations of a Feminist Agenda between the European and the Colonial," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 7, no. 1 (2011): 73, <https://doi.org/10.2979/jmiddeastwomstud.2011.7.1.70>; Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt*, 54; Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, 784.

²³⁹ Alifa Rifaat, an Egyptian author, delved into female sexuality and relationships in rural Egyptian culture through provocative short stories. Her narratives highlighted women's struggles in a patriarchal society, emphasizing the significance to the adherence of religious teachings promoting compassionate treatment of women. See Liya Li, "'My World of the Unknown': A Catharsis for the Sexual Awakening of an Egyptian Woman Writer," *Community Review* 17 (1999): 71; Robert B. Campbell, "Fatimah Rifat," in *Crosshatching in Global Culture: A Dictionary of Modern Arab Writers (An Updated English Version of R.B. Campbell's "Contemporary Arab Writers.")*, ed. John J Donohue Leslie Tramontini, vol. 2 (Lebanon: Orient-Institut der DMG Beirut, 2004), 937.

²⁴⁰ Huda Sha'arawi, a pioneering Egyptian feminist, defied societal norms, organized lectures, founded women's societies, and established a girls' school. Her iconic act of removing her *hijāb* in 1922 inspired Muslim feminists. She later founded the Egyptian Feminist Union and worked to reform restrictive laws on women's freedoms. See Sania Sharawi Lanfranchi, *Castling off the Veil: The Life of Huda Shaarawi, Egypt's First Feminist* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014); Keri Engel, "Huda Shaarawi, Egyptian Feminist & Activist," *Amazing Women In History*, 2012, <https://amazingwomeninhistory.com/huda-shaarawi-egyptian-feminist/>; Jo Bell, Tania Hershman, and Ailsa Holland, *On This Day She: Putting Women Back Into History One Day at a Time* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), 2; Hudá Sha'arawī, *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist (1879-1924)*, trans. Margot Badran (New York: Feminist Press at CUNY, 1987).

²⁴¹ Saiza Nabarawi, a key figure in the Egyptian Feminist Union, dedicated her life to feminist activism, advocating for political rights and challenging traditional practices. As editor of *L'Egyptienne*, she shaped the conversation on women's issues and engaged in global feminist conferences. See Karen O'Connor, *Gender and Women's Leadership: A Reference Handbook* (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2010), 37; Beth Baron, *Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender, and Politics*, 1st ed. (University of California Press, 2005), 150, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ppc6z>.

²⁴² Leila Ahmed, an Egyptian-American scholar of Islam, has significantly contributed to understanding women's roles in Arab Muslim societies. In her influential book "Women and Gender in Islam," she conducted a profound historical analysis, challenging stereotypes and promoting the recognition of veiling as a personal choice for women. See Isabella Steer and Mehran Kamrava, eds., *The New Voices of Islam: Rethinking Politics and Modernity—A Reader* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 177; Theodore Gabriel and Rabiha Hannna, eds., *Islam and the Veil: Theoretical and Regional Contexts*, NIPPOD edi (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 83; "Leila Ahmed," Harvard Divinity School, accessed March 14, 2023, <https://hds.harvard.edu/people/leila-ahmed>; "Ahmed's Analysis of Increased 'Veiling' Wins Religion Prize," The Grawemeyer Awards, accessed March 14, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20141031081416/http://grawemeyer.org/news-updates/ahmed2019s-analysis-of-increased-2018veiling2019-wins-religion-prize>.

²⁴³ See *supra* note 133.

women's rights in Egypt by challenging conventional interpretations and presenting alternative perspectives on women's roles within Islam.

In the late 20th century, Islamic feminism took root in Iran as a response to both patriarchal interpretations of Islam and the restrictive policies imposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is important to note that Islamic feminism in Iran is not a monolithic movement; rather, it encompasses diverse perspectives and fronts. Some Iranian feminists advocate for a reinterpretation of Islamic texts, while others place emphasis on the lived experiences and social realities of women. Furthermore, Islamic feminism in Iran intersects and interact with other activist movements, including secular feminist activists, human rights advocates, and social justice movements. This collaboration and intersectionality contribute to a multifaceted approach in addressing women's issues within the larger societal context. Notable figures in the realm of Islamic feminism in Iran include Mahnaz Afkhami,²⁴⁴ Shirin Ebadi,²⁴⁵ Zahra Eshraghi,²⁴⁶ Fatemeh Haghighatjoo,²⁴⁷ Noushin Ahmadi

²⁴⁴ Mahnaz Afkhami, an Iranian women's rights activist, founded the Women's Learning Partnership (WLP) and led various global NGOs dedicated to advancing women's rights. See Mary Ann Hill, "International Women's Rights Advocate Mahnaz Afkhami to Speak at Wellesley College April 6," Wellesley College Office for Public Affairs, 2005, <http://web.wellesley.edu/PublicAffairs/Releases/2005/040505.html>; "Mahnaz Afkhami – Iran," World Citizenship, 2006, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170728213459/http://word.world-citizenship.org/wp-archive/494>; Nikki Jecks, "I Was Iran's Last Woman Minister," BBC World Service, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8207371.stm.

²⁴⁵ Shirin Ebadi, a lawyer, former judge, and human rights activist, champions democracy and human rights focusing on women, children, and refugees. She founded the Defenders of Human Rights Center in Iran, earning the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003. Despite living in exile in London, Ebadi persists in her advocacy work. See Jérôme Citron and Shirin Ebadi, *Je Porte La Voix de Mon Peuple*, *CFDT Magazine*, vol. 427, 2016, <https://www.syndicalismehebdo.fr/article/shirin-ebadi-je-porte-la-voix-de-mon-peuple>.

²⁴⁶ Zahra Eshraghi, Ayatollah Khomeini's granddaughter, is an Iranian activist committed to feminism and human rights. She advocates for the ending of mandatory headscarves ruling and pushing for constitutional amendments to eliminate gender-based discrimination. See Golnaz Esfandiari, "Khomeini's Granddaughter On Iran's 'Critical Situation,' Sanctions, Facebook," Radio Free Europe, 2013, <https://www.rferl.org/a/khomeini-granddaughter-iran-critical-situation-/24824197.html>; Colin Freeman, "If I Want to Breathe I Must Have Permission from My Husband," The Telegraph, 2005, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/1492391/If-I-want-to-breathe-I-must-have-permission-from-my-husband.html>.

²⁴⁷ Fatemeh Haghighatjoo, an Iranian scholar and former parliamentarian, is dedicated to advancing democratic values and human rights. Based in the United States, she is the CEO and co-founder of the Nonviolent Initiative for Democracy (NID), promoting nonviolent methods for fostering democracy. See Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "Fatemeh Haqiqatjoo and the Sixth Majles: A Woman in Her Own Right," *Middle East Report*, 2004, <https://merip.org/magazine/233/>; Valentine M. Moghadam and Fatemeh Haghighatjoo, "Women and Political Leadership in an Authoritarian Context: A Case Study of the Sixth Parliament in the Islamic Republic of Iran," *The Women and Politics Research Section of the American Political Science Association*

Khorasani,²⁴⁸ Farideh Mashini,²⁴⁹ Ziba Mir-Hosseini,²⁵⁰ Fakhrossadat Mohtashamipour,²⁵¹ Shahla Sherkat,²⁵² and Nasrin Sotoudeh.²⁵³

12, no. 1 (2016): 168–97, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X15000598>; Daniel; Brumberg and Farideh Farhi, *Power and Change in Iran: Politics of Contention and Conciliation*, Indiana Se (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 307.

²⁴⁸ Noushin Ahmadi Khorasani, a notable author, translator, and women's rights activist, was a key figure in the One Million Signatures campaign for gender equality in Iranian laws. Co-authoring a book on Mehrangiz Manouchehrian, Iran's first female lawyer, Khorasani has played a vital role in raising awareness and empowering women in Iran. See "Iranian Women Campaign to End Discriminatory Laws against Them," Voice of America (VOA), 2009, <https://www.voanews.com/a/iranian-women-campaign-to-end-discriminatory-laws-against-them-79052162/368918.html>; Doug Ireland, "Tehran: 2 Women's Rights Activists Charged with 'National Security' Violations," Ireland, 2006, <https://direland.typepad.com/direland/2006/06/index.html>; Maryam Dastgir, "Interrogations of Women Continue/Maryam Dastgir," Cyrus News Agency, 2006, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110708220635/http://www.cyrusnews.com/news/en/?mi=6&ni=442>.

²⁴⁹ Farideh Mashini, an Islamic feminist and member of the Islamic Iran Participation Front, actively participated in groups like the Women's Participation Front and Iran's Women's Study Center. She dedicated herself to promoting women's rights until her passing in 2012. See "Statement by Iranian Women for International Women's Day," Womensphere, 2010, <https://womensphere.wordpress.com/2010/03/08/statement-by-iranian-women-for-international-womens-day/>; "فریده ماشینی فعال زنان درگذشت," Iranian Labour News Agency (ILNA), 2012, <https://archive.ph/20120802010303/http://www.ilna.ir/newstext.aspx?ID=269276>.

²⁵⁰ Ziba Mir-Hosseini, an Iranian-born legal anthropologist, delves into Islamic law and gender studies in her academic pursuits. Through extensive research and publications, she has significantly contributed to a deeper understanding of women's rights in Islam. See Haleh Afshar, *Women and Politics in the Third World* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis, 1996), 144; Nikki R. Keddie, *Women in the Middle East: Past and Present* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), 260; Shahnaz R. Nadjmabadi, *Conceptualizing Iranian Anthropology: Past and Present Perspectives* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 189.

²⁵¹ Fakhrossadat Mohtashamipour, a leading reformist activist in Iran, held key roles in women's affairs at the Ministry of Interior. Engaging with various NGOs for women's rights, she significantly contributed to women's empowerment through leadership positions in organizations like the Association of Women Entrepreneurs and the Association of History and Women Researchers. See Miranda Eeles, "Iran's Disappointed Women," BBC News, 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3500565.stm; Ariabarzan Mohammadighalehtaki, "Organisational Change in Political Parties in Iran after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. With Special Reference to the Islamic Republic Party (IRP) and the Islamic Iran Participation Front Party (Mosharekat)" (Durham University, 2012), http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/3507/1/PhD_Ariabarzan_Mohammadighalehtaki.pdf?DDD35+; Tara Povey, *Social Movements in Egypt and Iran* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 85.

²⁵² See *supra* note 151.

²⁵³ Nasrin Sotoudeh, a vocal human rights lawyer and activist in Iran, defends women against compulsory *hijāb* laws. Despite persecution, she remains dedicated to advocating legal reforms and the rights of women, children, and minorities, earning her international recognition for her courage. See "Nasrin Sotoudeh: Iran Lawyer Who Defended Headscarf Protesters Jailed," BBC News, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-47531312>; Shirin Ebadi, "Nasrin Sotoudeh: The 100 Most Influential People of 2021," TIME, 2021, <https://time.com/collection/100-most-influential-people-2021/6096096/nasrin-sotoudeh/>; "Iran Opposition Lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh Detained," BBC News, 2010, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11243683>.

In Turkey, Islamic feminism finds representation through influential figures like Fatma Aliye Topuz,²⁵⁴ Konca Kuriş,²⁵⁵ and Hidayet Şefkatli Tuksal.²⁵⁶ These Islamic feminists highlight the significance of women's involvement in both public and political spheres. Their advocacy extends to encouraging women to actively pursue professional careers, take on leadership roles, and engage in society, all while preserving and embracing their religious identities. In Saudi Arabia, Islamic feminism has emerged in response to the conservative nature of the society and the strict enforcement of interpretations of Islamic law on women. Islamic feminism in Saudi Arabia is primarily focused on challenging the restrictive male guardianship system, addressing limitations on women's mobility, and advocating for increased access to certain public spaces and opportunities for women. Prominent Muslim feminist figures in Saudi Arabia, such as Hissa Hilal,²⁵⁷ Manal al-

²⁵⁴ Fatma Aliye Topuz, the first female novelist in Turkish and Islamic literature, fearlessly questioned societal norms through her writings. As a columnist, essayist, women's rights activist, and humanitarian, she played a crucial role in empowering women in Turkey. See Ayşe Çamkara, "Zafer Hanim'in Aşk-I Vatan Romani," Hece, accessed March 21, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120226070431/http://www.hece.com.tr/hece.131.ozel.7.htm>; "Fatma Aliye'nin Gölgesinde Kalan Kardeşi," haber7.com, 2009, <https://www.haber7.com/kitap/haber/386620-fatma-alienenin-golgesinde-kalan-kardesi>; "50 Lira Edebiyat Dünyasını İkiye Böldü," Hurriyet, 2009, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/50-lira-edebiyat-dunyasini-ikiye-boldu-10847367>.

²⁵⁵ Konca Kuriş, a Turkish feminist writer, left an enduring impact on the women's rights advocacy and empowerment. Despite the tragic circumstances of her murder in 1999, her activism and writings persist as a source of inspiration, continuing to shape and bolster the feminist movement in Turkey. See "Biografien, Frauenporträts: Konca Kuris," Meinhard, accessed March 21, 2023, https://web.archive.org/web/20130707162048/http://www.meinhard.privat.t-online.de/frauen/konka_kuris.html; Selcan Hacaoglu, "Turkey Arresting Islamic Militants," AP News, 2000, <https://apnews.com/article/f794f5318e5e7569ef7bd2523efb40ed>.

²⁵⁶ Hidayet Şefkatli Tuksal, a Turkish human rights activist and Islamic feminist, champions the rights of religious women in secular contexts, raising awareness about discrimination and promoting gender equality within Islamic discourse. See Jeffrey Haynes, *Development Studies* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2008), 183–84; Sibel Hurtas, "Islamic Feminist Challenges Orthodoxy from Within," Al-Monitor, 2015, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2015/03/women-in-middle-east-tuksal.html>; Zeynep Akbulut, "The Headscarf Ban and Muslim Women's Rights Discourse in Turkey," in *Contesting Feminisms: Gender and Islam in Asia* (New York: SUNY Press, 2015).

²⁵⁷ Hissa Hilal, a celebrated Saudi Arabian poet, gained global recognition on the Emirati show Million's Poet, where she made history as the first woman to reach the finals. Her powerful poem against *fatwās* challenged societal norms, shedding light on women's issues in Saudi Arabia. See Robin Wright, *Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion Across the Islamic World with a New Concluding* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 160–68; "Rimiya's Poetry Book Published," Gulf News, 2010, <https://gulfnews.com/uae/rimiyas-poetry-book--published-1.614240#>; Ahmed Al-Sharif, "Kuwaiti Poet Wins Million's Poet First Prize," Al-Arabiya News, 2010, <https://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2010/04/08/105288>.

Sharif,²⁵⁸ Samar Badawi,²⁵⁹ and Nassima al-Sadah,²⁶⁰ have played noteworthy roles in pushing for gender equality and challenging societal norms.

In Lebanon, Islamic feminism is embodied by figures like Zaynab Fawwaz,²⁶¹ Anbara Salam Khalidi,²⁶² and Nazira Zain al-Dine.²⁶³ They recognize the diverse makeup

²⁵⁸ Manal al-Sharif played a pivotal role in the Saudi women's rights movement when she launched the 2011 right-to-drive campaign. Her courageous act of recording herself driving and sharing it on social media led to her detention, drawing widespread attention to the issue globally. See Al-Sharif, "A Saudi Woman Who Dared to Drive"; Abdullah Al-Shihri, "Manal Al-Sherif, Saudi Woman, Detained For Defying Driving Ban," Huffington Post, 2011, https://web.archive.org/web/20110523152848/http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/05/21/manal-al-sherif-saudi-arabia-driving-ban_n_865120.html; Neil MacFarquhar, "Saudis Arrest Woman Leading Right-to-Drive Campaign," The New York Times, 2011, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/24/world/middleeast/24saudi.html>.

²⁵⁹ Samar Badawi, a brave human rights activist, stood against Saudi Arabia's male guardianship system by challenging her father in court. Despite obstacles, she secured a favourable ruling for her right to marry and actively supported the women's driving campaign. See "2012 International Women of Courage Award Winners," US Department of State, 2012, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120308231128/http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/programs/iwoc/2012/bio/index.htm>; "Saudi Women Launch Legal Fight Against Driving Ban," The Telegraph, 2012, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/saudi-arabia/9062995/Saudi-women-launch-legal-fight-against-driving-ban.html>; "October 18, 2010 Human Rights First Society (HRFS) Statement," Human Rights First Society, 2010, http://hrfssaudi-arabia.org/?page_id=1541; "Saudi Woman Jailed for Disobeying Father Freed," Emirates 24/7, 2010, <https://www.emirates247.com/news/region/saudi-woman-jailed-for-disobeying-father-freed-2010-10-26-1.309163>.

²⁶⁰ Nassima al-Sadah, a *Shī'ah* human rights activist in Saudi Arabia, advocated for civil and women's rights, and *Shī'ah* minority rights in Qatif. Despite facing disqualification in the 2015 elections and arrest during a 2018 crackdown on activists, she remained dedicated to her cause. See "نسيمة السادة," ALQST Organization for Supporting Human Rights, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://www.alqst.org/ar/prisonersofconscience/nassima-al-sadah>; "Two Disqualified as First Saudi Women Begin Campaign for Election," The Guardian, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/29/first-saudi-arabia-women-stand-election-begin-campaigning>; "Saudi Arabia: Two More Women Human Rights Activists Arrested in Unrelenting Crackdown," Amnesty International, 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/08/saudi-arabia-two-more-women-human-rights-activists-arrested-in-unrelenting-crackdown/>.

²⁶¹ Zaynab Fawwaz, a Lebanese advocate for women's rights, made history as the first Arabic female novelist and playwright. Her works challenged traditional norms, and she frequently engaged in debates against influential male writers in Egypt on women's empowerment. See Radwa Ashour, *Arab Women Writers: A Critical Reference Guide, 1873–1999* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2008), 146–49; Joseph T. Zeidan, *Arab Women Novelists: The Formative Years and Beyond* (Albany: State University of New York Press (SUNY), 1995), 66–67; "زينب فواز," هنداوي, accessed March 18, 2023, <https://www.hindawi.org/contributors/15862507/>.

²⁶² Anbara Salam Khalidi, a notable Lebanese feminist, author, and translator, made significant contributions to Arab women's liberation. Focused on advocating for women's education and liberation, she played a crucial role in advancing women's rights and challenging gender inequalities in Lebanon and the Arab world. See Hussain Abdul-Hussain, "Why Lebanon Matters," Now Lebanon, 2013, <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/commentaryanalysis/why-lebanon-matters>.

²⁶³ Nazira Zain al-Dine, a Lebanese Druze scholar, boldly challenged traditional gender norms and advocated for women's rights. She openly criticized practices, including the full veil and seclusion of Muslim women,

of Muslim communities and strives to amplify the voices and experiences of marginalized women, encompassing different sects, socio-economic backgrounds, and ethnicities.

In Iraq, Islamic feminism has emerged as a multifaceted movement in response to the intersection of gender inequality and religious conservatism. Despite the ongoing political instability and security challenges in the country, Muslim feminist activists, including figures like Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi,²⁶⁴ and Zainab Salbi,²⁶⁵ continue to organize and advocate for gender equality. Their commitment to this mission remains steadfast despite the challenging circumstances.

Islamic feminism in Azerbaijan, Jordan, Kuwait, Syria, and Yemen faces distinct contexts and challenges as it seeks to reform traditional gender roles and societal norms that constrain women's access to education and opportunities. In these countries, Islamic feminists often prioritize several key issues, including combating violence against women, promoting women's political participation, and advocating for their educational and economic empowerment. Recognizing the interconnectedness of various forms of discrimination, they work towards a comprehensive approach to achieve gender equality within their respective societies. Notable figures in these countries include Hamida

contributing significantly to raising awareness and challenging societal expectations around women's roles and freedoms. See Margot Badran, *Opening the Gates, Second Edition: An Anthology of Arab Feminist Writing*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 270–79; Miriam Cooke, *Nazira Zeineddine: A Pioneer of Islamic Feminism* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2010).

²⁶⁴ Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi, an esteemed Iraqi poet and philosopher, played a crucial role in promoting gender equality. His literary works challenge societal norms that restricted women's rights and opportunities, and emphasized the importance of women's empowerment. See Noga Efrati, "The Other 'Awakening' in Iraq: The Women's Movement in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 31, no. 2 (2004): 153–73, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4145506>; Mohammed Yusif Najim, ed., *Al-Divān Jamīl Al-Ṣiddīqī Al-Zahrāwī*, vol. 1 (Bayrūt: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1971); Stephen Schwartz, "A Model for Moderate Muslims," *The Huffington Post*, 2016, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/a-model-for-moderate-musl_b_7256662.

²⁶⁵ Zainab Salbi, an Iraqi American women's rights activist, founded Women for Women International to empower survivors of war. Through education and media programs like "Through Her Eyes" and "#Me Too, Now What?," she amplifies women's voices and contributes significantly to women's agendas in Iraq. See Lloyd Grove, "The Daughter of Saddam's Pilot Is the Oprah of the Arab World," *The Daily Beast*, 2017, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-daughter-of-saddams-pilot-is-the-oprah-of-the-arab-world?ref=scroll>; Homa Khaleeli, "Meet Zainab Salbi – from Aid Worker to Talkshow Revolutionary," *The Guardian*, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/nov/09/zainab-salbi-nidaa-show>; Veronique Mistiaen, "My Uncle, the Tyrant," *New Internationalist*, 2011, <https://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2011/03/02/my-uncle-the-tyrant>.

Javanshir in Azerbaijan,²⁶⁶ Queen Noor and Queen Rania in Jordan,²⁶⁷ Hidaya Sultan al-Salem in Kuwait,²⁶⁸ Mohja Kahf in Syria,²⁶⁹ and Ramziya al-Iryani in Yemen.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ Hamida Javanshir, a wife to famous writer Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, was renowned for her philanthropy and role in the Azerbaijan Writers' Union. She played a significant role in advancing women's rights and contributed significantly to Azerbaijan's cultural and intellectual development. See Hamideh Khanum Javanshir, *Awake: A Moslem Woman's Rare Memoir of Her Life and Partnership with the Editor of Molla Nasreddin, the Most Influential Satirical Journal of the Caucasus and Iran, 1907-1931*, trans. Hasan Javadi and Willem M. Floor (Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 2016).

²⁶⁷ Queen Noor, born Lisa Najeeb Halaby in 1951, was Jordan's Queen from 1978 to 1999, recognized for her humanitarian work. Queen Rania Al-Yassin, born in 1970, is the current Jordanian Queen since marrying King Abdullah II in 1993. She is recognized for her strong advocacy for social causes, education, and women's rights, earning a place among the 500 most influential Muslims globally. See "Queen Noor of Jordan Biography," [biography.com](https://www.biography.com), accessed March 18, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110610020305/http://www.biography.com/articles/Queen-Noor-of-Jordan-9542217?part=0>; Brielle Urciuoli, "Queen Noor of Jordan Receives Woodrow Wilson Award at Princeton's 100th Alumni Day," [NJ.com](https://www.nj.com), 2015, https://www.nj.com/mercer/2015/02/queen_noor_of_jordan_reieved_woodrow_wilson_award.html; Abdallah Schleifer and Tarek Elgawhary, eds., *The Muslim 500: The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims 2023* (Amman: The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, 2023), 156, <https://rissc.jo/docs/muslim500-1M-lowres3.pdf>.

²⁶⁸ Hidaya Sultan al-Salem, Kuwait's first female editor, campaigned against corruption and advancement of women's rights through *al-Majālis* magazine. Tragically, she became the first journalist to lose her life in Kuwait since 1992, as recorded by the Committee to Protect Journalists. See Khalid al Mubarak, "Obituary: Hidaya Sultan Al-Salem," [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com), 2001, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/apr/02/guardianobituaries>; "Hidaya Sultan Al-Salem Killed," Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 2001, <https://cpj.org/data/people/hidaya-sultan-al-salem/>; Stephen M. Walt, "Arab Secularism and Its Discontents," *Foreign Policy Magazine*, 2012, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/07/01/arab-secularism-and-its-discontents/>.

²⁶⁹ Born in 1967 in Damascus, Mohja Kahf is a well-known Syrian-American poet and novelist. Her book "Hagar Poems" received an honourable mention in the 2017 Arab American National Museum Book Awards. Focusing on themes of identity and feminism, Kahf's work explores the lived experiences of Muslim women and her efforts has earned her prestigious awards, including the Pushcart Prize. See Richard Drake, "A Conversation with Mohja Kahf," *Arkansas Times*, 2010, <https://arktimes.com/street-jazz/2010/12/15/a-conversation-with-mohja-kahf-2>; Neil Macfarquhar, "She Carries Weapons; They Are Called Words," *The New York Times*, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/12/books/12veil.html>.

²⁷⁰ Born in 1954, Ramziya al-Iryani was a pioneering Yemeni novelist, diplomat, and feminist. In 1980, she became Yemen's first female diplomat, later leading the Yemeni Women's Union and advocating for feminism. In her 2012 International Women's Day address, she urged women to engage in politics and pursue equal rights. She passed away during surgery in Berlin in 2013. See "رمزية-الإيراني," *Kataranovels*, accessed March 21, 2023, <https://kataranovels.com/novelist/رمزية-الإيراني/>; Yahya Hassan Al-Wadhaf, "A Critical Reading to a Short Story by Ramzia Al-Eryani," *Majallah Al-Dirāsāt Al-Ijtīmā'īah* 20, no. 41 (2014): 7–26, file:///C:/Users/Asus-PC.DESKTOP-

HM1SUT4/Downloads/A_Critical_Reading_to_a_Short_Story_by_R.pdf; A. M. A. Al-Mutawakel, *Gender and the Writing of Yemeni Women Writers* (Amsterdam: Dutch University, 2005).

2.3.1.3 India Subcontinent

Islamic feminism in the Indian subcontinent is a nuanced and diverse movement that strives to harmonize Islamic teachings with the pursuit of gender equality and women's rights within the rich cultural and religious tapestry of the region. It encompasses a spectrum of perspectives and approaches, reflecting the intricate interplay of religion, culture, and social dynamics in the Indian subcontinent.

In Bangladesh, Islamic feminism has been shaped by the magnanimous contributions of various Muslim feminists such as Nawab Faizunnesa,²⁷¹ Iffat Ara,²⁷² Hameeda Hossain,²⁷³ Sufia Kamal,²⁷⁴ Shamsunnahar Mahmud,²⁷⁵ Begum Rokeya,²⁷⁶ and

²⁷¹ See *supra* note 132.

²⁷² Iffat Ara, a prominent Bangladeshi writer, social activist, and literary organizer. Commencing her literary endeavours in the late 1950s, she has been pivotal in advocating for women's voices through both her written works and her active involvement in literary pursuits. Aminul Islam, "Iffat Ara: Writing from the Margins," *Star Insight*, 2007, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070210013808/http://www.thedailystar.net/starinsight/2007/02/01/she.htm>.

²⁷³ Hameeda Hossain, a prominent human rights advocate and scholar, has made significant contributions to human rights and women's issues in Bangladesh. As a co-founder of Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), she actively promotes democracy, economic reforms, and women's empowerment within Bangladesh and globally. See "Hameeda Hossain," *South Asia Citizens Web*, accessed March 25, 2023, <http://www.sacw.net/auteur489.html>; Hameeda Hossain, "Sobhan, Salma," *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, 2012, https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Sobhan,_Salma.

²⁷⁴ Begum Sufia Kamal, a celebrated poet, feminist, and political activist, played a crucial role in the Bengali nationalist movement and is a significant figure in independent Bangladesh. As the first woman to receive a state funeral, she led feminist advocacy as the president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad. See Zeenat Rezwana Chowdhury, "Begum Sufia Kamal, as I Knew Her," *The Daily Star*, 2019, <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/tribute/news/begum-sufia-kamalas-i-knew-her-1759429>; Ahmad Kabir, "Kamal, Begum Sufia," *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, 2012, https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Kamal,_Begum_Sufia.

²⁷⁵ Shamsunnahar Mahmud, a writer, politician, and educator in Bengal during the early 20th century, played a significant role in the women's rights movement led by Begum Rokeya. In recognition of her contributions to women's empowerment and education, the University of Dhaka named Shamsunnahar Hall after her. See U. A. B. Razia Akter Banu, "Chapter VIII Islam and Women in Bangladesh," in *Islam in Bangladesh* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1992), 135, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004478046_011; AKM Saifuzzaman, "Mahmud, Shamsunnahar," *Banglapedia: the National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, 2012, https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Mahmud,_Shamsunnahar.

²⁷⁶ Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, a pioneering feminist in India and Bangladesh, emphasized women's rights and education. Founder of a school for Muslim girls in Kolkata and the Muslim Women's Association, her writings, including the novella "Sultana's Dream," challenge the societal norms and advocates for women's liberation. See Niaz Zaman, "A Feminist Foremother: Critical Essays on Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain," *The Daily Star*, 2017, <https://www.thedailystar.net/book-reviews/feminist-foremother-critical-essays-rokeya-sakhawat-hossain-1462744>; Shahida Akhter, "Hossain, Roquiah Sakhawat," *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, 2012, https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Hossain,_Roquiah_Sakhawat; Siuli Sarkar, *Gender Disparity in India: Unheard Whimpers* (PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd., 2016), 73.

Salma Sobhan.²⁷⁷ These Muslim feminists in Bangladesh have made substantial strides in promoting gender equality, women's education, social reform, and human rights. Their dedicated efforts have played a pivotal role in challenging traditional patriarchal structures in Bangladesh.

In India and Pakistan, Islamic feminists advocate for women's economic empowerment and challenge cultural practices such as honour killings and forced marriages. Both Islamic feminist figures in India like Ismat Chughtai,²⁷⁸ and Asra Nomani,²⁷⁹ challenge oppressive norms and promote women's rights within their specific contexts. Islamic feminist figures in Pakistan such as Zaib-un-Nissa Hamidullah,²⁸⁰ Farzana

²⁷⁷ Salma Sobhan, the first woman barrister in Pakistan, co-established Ain-O-Salish Kendra (ASK), a national human rights organization in Bangladesh. As a distinguished lawyer, academic, and human rights activist, Sobhan played a crucial role in advocating for human rights and women's rights in the country. See "Eminent HR Activist Barrister Salma Sobhan Passes Away," *The Daily Star*, 2003, <https://archive.thedailystar.net/2003/12/31/d31231011616.htm>; Hossain, "Sobhan, Salma."

²⁷⁸ See *supra* note 108.

²⁷⁹ Asra Nomani, American author and former Georgetown University professor, advocates for Islamic feminism, critiques Islamism, and actively challenges gender-based discrimination in Muslim communities. See Asra Q. Nomani, *Standing Alone in Mecca: A Pilgrimage into the Heart of Islam* (Haryana: HarperCollins India, 2013); "The Mosque in Morgantown," *America at a Crossroads*, accessed March 26, 2023, https://www.pbs.org/weta/crossroads/about/show_mosque.html; "GU Class to Investigate Murder of WSJ Reporter," Georgetown University, accessed March 26, 2023, https://web.archive.org/web/20090213125401/http://www12.georgetown.edu/scs/event_pages/event_pearl_project.cfm.

²⁸⁰ Hamidullah was a trailblazer for feminism in Pakistan. As the country's inaugural female editor and publisher, she played a pivotal role in propelling women's rights forward. Through her contributions to journalism and literature, she actively challenged prevailing gender norms and advocated for feminist ideals. See M.H. Askari, "Zaibunissa Hamidullah Passes Away," *Dawn*, 2000, <https://web.archive.org/web/20020225122550/http://www.dawn.com/2000/09/12/nat10.htm>; "Begum Zaibunissa Hamidullah," *Dawn*, 2004, <https://web.archive.org/web/20041201155957/http://www.dawn.com/2000/09/12/ed.htm#2>.

Bari,²⁸¹ Asma Barlas,²⁸² Benazir Bhutto,²⁸³ Riffat Hassan,²⁸⁴ Mukhtār Mā'ī,²⁸⁵ Raheel Raza,²⁸⁶ and Malala Yousafzai,²⁸⁷ raise awareness about gender-based violence and advocate for laws and policies safeguarding women's rights and safety.

2.3.1.4 Africa

Islamic feminism in Africa addresses a broad spectrum of issues encompassing education, economic empowerment, political participation, and social justice. They actively confront discriminatory laws, practices, and social norms that impede women's rights and opportunities. They are dedicated to reshaping cultural and social norms that sustain gender inequality such as female genital mutilation, child marriage, and domestic violence.

²⁸¹ Bari is a Pakistani feminist, human rights activist, and academic. Serving as the director of the Gender Studies Department at Quaid-i-Azam University, she has played a crucial role in advancing feminist scholarship and activism in Pakistan. See Naveed Siddiqui, "Kohistan Video Case: Girls Declared Alive by SC Had Actually Been Killed, Says Bari," Dawn, 2016, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1291398>; "Discrimination: For Women in Rural Areas, Healthcare Not a Basic Right," The Express Tribune, 2013, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/573754/discrimination-for-women-in-rural-areas-healthcare-not-a-basic-right>; Shamil Shams, "Young Pakistani Girls Learn to Speak Up for Their Rights," DW.com, 2011, <https://www.dw.com/en/young-pakistani-girls-learn-to-speak-up-for-their-rights/a-6656122>.

²⁸² See *supra* note 112.

²⁸³ See *supra* note 109.

²⁸⁴ See *supra* note 141.

²⁸⁵ Mā'ī's bold activism has shed light on the pervasive problem of gender-based violence and women's rights in Pakistan. Following her survival of a traumatic gang rape, she took legal action against her assailants, emphasizing the urgency of justice and bringing attention to the broader issues of women's rights and gender equality. See Zofeen Ebrahim, "Pakistan: A Marriage of Convenience?," Inter Press Service, 2009, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090813082508/http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=46465>; Akbar S. Ahmed, *Journey Into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization* (Brookings Institution Press, 2007), 99.

²⁸⁶ Raza, a journalist, author, and human rights activist of Pakistani-Canadian descent, is recognized for her efforts in advocating Islamic feminism. Despite facing criticism for her controversial connections with anti-Muslim groups, Raza's work actively fosters dialogue and confronts practices that impact Muslim women. See Christopher White, *Seismic Shifts: Leading in Times of Change* (United Church Publishing, 2006), 49; Donna Sinclair and Christopher White, *Emmaus Road: Churches Making Their Way Forward* (Wood Lake Publishing Inc., 2003), 54; Meena Sharify-Funk, *Encountering the Transnational: Women, Islam and the Politics of Interpretation* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008), 55; Charles McGregor, "Speaker Looks to Be No. 1 on World Hate List," DurhamRegion.com, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110718042624/http://newsdurhamregion.com/news/durham/article/94029>; Giles Tremlett, "Muslim Women Launch International 'Gender Jihad,'" The Guardian, 2005, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/oct/31/gender.religion>; Jerome Taylor, "First Woman to Lead Friday Prayers in UK," Independent.co.uk., 2010, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/first-woman-to-lead-friday-prayers-in-uk-1996228.html>.

²⁸⁷ See *supra* note 104.

In Morocco, Islamic feminism has been profoundly influenced by figures like Soumaya Naamane Guessous,²⁸⁸ Asma Lamrabet,²⁸⁹ and Fatema Mernissi.²⁹⁰ Together, these Moroccan Islamic feminists have actively contested patriarchal norms by critically interpreting Islamic texts and advocating for women's rights and equality within the Moroccan context. Their impactful contributions have not only initiated crucial discussions but have also played a pivotal role in advancing progress, addressing gender disparities, and promoting gender justice in Morocco.

South African Muslim feminists similarly advocate for women's empowerment, equal access to education, economic opportunities, and involvement in decision-making processes within their communities. Engaging in critical interpretations of Islamic texts, they emphasize the *Qur'ānic* principles of justice, compassion, and equality as applicable to all aspects of life. Notable figures in this context include Na'eem Jeenah,²⁹¹ and Shamima Shaikh.²⁹²

²⁸⁸ Sociologist and women's rights champion, Soumaya Naamane Guessous, gained prominence with her 1988 book "Au-delà de toute pudeur" (Beyond All Decency). Her advocacy played a pivotal role in the 2007 amendment of the Civil Code, enabling Moroccan citizenship transmission through the mother. See "La Legion d'Honneur Pour Trois Marocaine," *Medias* 24, 2015, la-legion-dhonneur-pour-trois-marocaine; Naamane Guessous Soumaya, "Une Page Nouvelle Dans l'Histoire Du Maroc, Un Espoir Fou Dans Le Coeur Des Femmes," *Maghreb Canada Express*, December 2003, <http://sisyphe.org/IMG/pdf/doc-486.pdf>; "Interview Du Pr Soumaya Naâmane Guessous, Sociologue Marocaine : La Virginité Joue Un Rôle Capital," *Par L'Economiste*, 1994, https://www-leconomiste-com.translate.google/article/interview-du-pr-soumaya-naamane-guessous-sociologue-marocaine-la-virginite-joue-un-role-capi?_x_tr_sl=auto&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=wapp.

²⁸⁹ As an Islamic feminist and scholar, Asma Lamrabet has been instrumental in fostering a new female Muslim consciousness. As the director of the Studies and Research Center on Women's Issues in Islam, she organizes international seminars uniting women from various Abrahamic religions. Her work involves revisiting sacred Islamic texts and challenging patriarchal interpretations. See "Asma Lamrabet," Asma Lamrabet: Biography, accessed March 28, 2023, <http://asma-lamrabet.com/biographie/anglais/>; "Meet Asma Lamrabet, Morocco's Feminist Polymath," *Your Middle East*, 2017, <https://yourmiddleeast.com/2017/01/12/meet-asma-lamrabet-moroccos-feminist-polymath/>.

²⁹⁰ See *supra* note 114.

²⁹¹ Na'eem Jeenah, a notable academic and leader in South Africa, is recognized for his engagement in the Muslim community, active participation in anti-capitalist and anti-war movements, and advocacy for social justice. His wife, Shamima Shaikh, held prominence as an Islamic feminist in South Africa. See Fatime Seedat, "Islam, Feminism, and Islamic Feminism: Between Inadequacy and Inevitability," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29, no. 2 (2013): 27, 37; Na'eem Jeenah and Shamima Shaikh, *Journey of Discovery: A South African Hajj* (Cape Town: Full Moon Press, 2000), 11–23.

²⁹² Shamima Shaikh, a prominent women's rights activist, Islamic feminist, and journalist in South Africa, dedicated her life to championing women's rights within Islam through writings and activism. See Jeenah and Shaikh, *Journey of Discovery: A South African Hajj*, 11–23.

In Ghana, Nigeria, Sudan, and Tunisia, Islamic feminism manifests as diverse movements with a shared goal of promoting gender equality and challenging patriarchal interpretations of Islam. While specific approaches may differ, these movements collectively advocate for women's rights and address issues such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, advocating for legal reforms, women's empowerment, and gender equality within religious and secular spheres. Notable figures include Mariam Alhassan Alolo of Ghana,²⁹³ Bilkisu Yusuf of Nigeria,²⁹⁴ Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim and Lubna al-Hussein of Sudan,²⁹⁵ and Tahar Haddad of Tunisia.²⁹⁶

2.3.1.5 Central and Southeast Asia

In recent years, Islamic feminism has been gaining ground in Central Asia and Southeast Asia. Despite having a large Muslim population, particularly in Central Asia, traditional patriarchal norms have often restricted women's rights and limited their societal roles. In

²⁹³ Mariam Alhassan Alolo, born in 1957, is a renowned Ghanaian businesswoman and Islamic missionary. In 1981, she established the Mariam Islamic Center in Sabonjida, focused on training women preachers and promoting empowerment in the Ghanaian Muslim community. See Pade Badru and Brigid M. Sackey, *Islam in Africa South of the Sahara: Essays in Gender Relations and Political Reform* (Scarecrow Press, 2013), 428.

²⁹⁴ Hajiya Bilkisu Yusuf, the first woman to lead a national newspaper in Nigeria, was a distinguished journalist and advocator for an inclusive society. She played a key role in founding organizations like Women in Nigeria (WIN) and the Federation of Muslim Women's Association (FOMWAN). See Joyce Hackel, "Lost in the Hajj Stampede Was a Pioneering Journalist Who United Christians and Muslim," *The World*, 2015, <https://theworld.org/stories/2015-09-29/lost-hajj-stampede-was-pioneering-journalist-who-united-christians-and-muslims>; Chesa Chesa, Juliet Oyoyo, and Gbenga Faturoti, "Female Editor, Bilkisu; El-Miskeen, 4 Others Die In Hajj Stampede," *Dailyindependentnig.com*, 2015, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150930023056/http://dailyindependentnig.com/2015/09/female-editor-bilikisu-el-miskeen-4-others-die-in-hajj-stampede/>.

²⁹⁵ Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim, a Sudanese writer and women's rights activist, is a prominent advocator for gender equality in Sudan. Lubna Ahmed al-Hussein, a media professional and activist, gained global recognition for challenging dress code restrictions, symbolizing resistance against gender-based clothing rules in Islam. See "Fatima Ahmed Retires from Sudanese Communist Party, Parliament," *Sudan Tribune*, 2007, <https://sudantribune.com/article21218/>; Amro Hassan, "Sudan: Female Journalist Faces 40 Lashes for Choice of Clothes," *Los Angeles Times*, 2009, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/blogs/babylon-beyond/story/2009-07-12/sudan-female-journalist-faces-40-lashes-for-choice-of-clothes>.

²⁹⁶ Tahar Haddad, a Tunisian author and labour activist, is known for his significant engagement with the early Tunisian labour movement. He also boldly challenged patriarchal interpretations of Islam and promotes women's empowerment in his 1930 book. See Safwan M. Masri, *Tunisia: An Arab Anomaly* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), xxxi; Richard H. Curtiss, "Women's Rights an Affair of State for Tunisia," 1993, 50; Martina Sabra, "The Tunisian Islamic Scholar and Activist Tahar Haddad: A Rebel Loyal to the Koran," *Qantara.de*, accessed March 29, 2023, <https://en.qantara.de/content/the-tunisian-islamic-scholar-and-activist-tahar-haddad-a-rebel-loyal-to-the-koran>.

Uzbekistan, incidents such as those experienced by figures like Nurkhon Yuldasheva serve as stark reminders of the challenges faced by Muslim feminists in traditional societies, highlighting their steadfast commitment to fighting for women's rights and gender equality.²⁹⁷

In Indonesia, influential figures like Raden Adjeng Kartini,²⁹⁸ Rasuna Said,²⁹⁹ Kamala Chandrakirana,³⁰⁰ and Musdah Mulia,³⁰¹ have ignited conversations on gender

²⁹⁷ Nurkhon Yuldashkhojayeva, or Nurkhon Yuldasheva, was one of the first Uzbek women to dance publicly without wearing a paranja veil. Born in 1913 in Margilan, a city in Fergana Province, she was killed in 1929 due to an honour killing. See Victor Vitkovich, *A Tour of Soviet Uzbekistan* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), 98; “Birinchil Jild,” in *National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan (O‘zME)* (Tashkent: National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan State Scientific Publishing House, 2000), 348.

²⁹⁸ Raden Adjeng Kartini, an Indonesian feminist, was a brave advocator for women's rights and education, leaving a lasting legacy celebrated on Kartini Day. Her posthumous letters shed light on the challenges faced by women in Indonesian society, with schools named in her honour emphasizing her impact on education and gender equality. See Silvia Mayasari-Hoffert, “R. A. Kartini and the Many Faces of Colonial Female Subject,” in *A Space of Their Own* (Routledge, 2023), 143–57; Dimas Hary, “RA. Kartini,” *Guratan Pena*, 2006, http://guratanpena.blogspot.com/2006_04_01_guratanpena_archive.html; Sanderson Beck, “Indonesia and the Dutch 1800-1950,” *World Peace Communications*, 2007, <https://www.san.beck.org/20-11-Indonesia1800-1950.html>.

²⁹⁹ Rasuna Said, a fervent advocate for Indonesian independence and women's rights, actively engaged in politics. She tirelessly campaigned for women's education and increased representation in politics, ultimately earning her the esteemed status of an Indonesian national heroine. See Sally White, “Rasuna Said: Lioness of the Indonesian Independence Movement,” in *Women in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements*, ed. Susan Blackburn and Ting Ting (Singapore: NUS Press, 2013), 98–123; “HR Rasuna Said, Sang Orator Ulung,” *Republika*, 2014, <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/koran/dialog-jumat/14/10/03/ncur88-hr-rasuna-said-sang-orator-ulung>.

³⁰⁰ Kamala Chandrakirana, a co-founder of Musawah, has been pivotal in advancing women's rights in Indonesia. As a member of the UN Working Group on discrimination against women, she actively works on combating violence against women and promoting gender equality globally. See “Kamala Chandrakirana,” Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs, 2003, <https://worldfellows.yale.edu/person/kamala-chandrakirana>; “Working Group on the Issue of Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice - Members,” Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), accessed March 29, 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-women-and-girls/members>.

³⁰¹ Musdah Mulia is a renowned Indonesian women's rights activist and the first female research professor at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences. She actively promotes interfaith dialogue and gender equality through organizations like the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace. See “Secretary’s International Women of Courage Award (Honoree),” U.S. Department Of State, 2007, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/g/wi/iwoc/c21757.htm>; “Speakers: Prof. Dr. Siti Musdah Mulia,” Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions, accessed March 29, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140419070229/http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=27&sn=60>; Hera Diani, “In the Land Where Everyone’s God: Interview with Musdah Mulia,” *Magdalene.co*, 2014, <https://magdalene.co/story/in-the-land-where-everyones-god-interview-with-musdah-mulia>.

equality. Similarly in Malaysia, figures such as Shamsiah Fakeh,³⁰² and Zainah Anwar,³⁰³ have contributed to the development and advancement of Islamic feminism in their countries. They challenged patriarchal norms and advocated for women's rights within an Islamic framework. Their contributions have played a pivotal role in empowering women and reshaping societal perceptions of gender roles in Southeast Asia.

These activists have been at the forefront of advocating for women's rights, challenging discriminatory practices and laws against women by offering alternative interpretations of Islamic teachings. They address issues such as polygyny, child marriage, and women's inheritance rights, seeking to align these practices with principles of gender equality and justice. Engaging in critical analysis of religious texts, they challenge traditional interpretations that perpetuate gender-based inequalities.

2.3.2 Islamic Feminism Movements on Global Platform

Islamic feminist movements have made a significant impact on the global stage. They have been instrumental in reshaping public discourse, influencing policies, and inspiring individuals across various cultures. Their advocacy for legal reforms, education, and political participation has influenced national and global policies as well as shaping public opinion on modern Muslim women. These movements have also facilitated dialogue between different religious and feminist groups, promoting understanding and collaboration.

³⁰² Shamsiah Fakeh, a prominent Malaysian nationalist and feminist leader, led Angkatan Wanita Sedar (AWAS) and played a key role in the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM). Her activism emphasized the importance and intersectionality of gender in the liberation and independence of Malaysia. See Shamsiah Fakeh, *Memoir Shamsiah Fakeh: Dari AWAS Ke Rejimen Ke-10* (Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2004), 138; Roslan SMS, "Shamsiah Fakeh Srikandi Malaya," Ummah Online, 2004, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090527085235/http://www.geocities.com/ummahonline/telaahbuku/041230r-oslamsms-fakeh.htm>.

³⁰³ Zainah Anwar, a prominent Malaysian Muslim feminist, led Sisters in Islam for over two decades. Internationally recognized, she was named one of the 10 most influential Muslim women in 2013. Anwar's impactful work centres on challenging patriarchal interpretations of Islam and promoting gender equality. See Carla Power, "Muslim Women Demand End to Oppressive Laws," TIME, 2009, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090221002428/http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1879864,00.html>; "Sisters in Islam's Zainah Anwar among 10 Most Influential Muslim Women," The Star, 2013, <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2013/12/31/muslim-women-award-zainab-anwar/>.

Islamic feminist movements have been organising gatherings and conferences on women's issue in Islam in their localities and on the global scale. These conferences played a pivotal role in the development of the movement, providing platforms for global dialogue, networking, and activism. For example, the International Conferences on Islamic Feminism in Barcelona in 2005, organized by Catalan Junta Islamica, have covered various themes, including religious interpretation, women's leadership, legal reforms, social justice, and education.³⁰⁴

The various programmes, conferences, and workshop they organised have raised awareness about the challenges faced by Muslim women, influencing policy debates at national and international levels and calling for legal reforms aligned with principles of gender equality and justice. Moreover, these conferences have fostered global solidarity and collaboration, leading to the development of collective initiatives aimed at promoting women's rights and empowerment.

In general, Islamic feminist movements encompass diverse perspectives and approaches shaped by cultural, national, and religious backgrounds. Despite these variations, a common thread unites them—a shared determination to advocate for gender equality within the Islamic framework. This subchapter will explore notable Islamic feminist movements from different countries and continents, highlighting their achievements and ideas specific to their respective localities.

2.3.2.1 The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)

The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) is a women's organization based in Kabul, Afghanistan, that was established in 1977 by Afghan student activist Meena Keshwar Kamal.³⁰⁵ Dedicated to championing women's rights, RAWA operates with a commitment to non-violent strategies and advocating for a secular

³⁰⁴ Margot Badran, "An Historical Overview of Conferences on Islamic Feminism: Circulations and New Challenges," *Revue Des Mondes Musulmans et de La Méditerranée* 128 (2010): 10, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4000/remmm.6824>.

³⁰⁵ See *supra* note 196.

democracy. Tragically, the organization's founder, Meena Keshwar Kamal, was assassinated in 1987 due to her political campaign.³⁰⁶

Originally headquartered in Kabul, RAWA relocated to Pakistan in the early 1980s due to the challenging political environment. The organization's core objective is to increase participations of Afghan women in political and social activities. It aimed at empowering human rights and challenging the misogynistic administrative practices of the Afghan government. This challenge is rooted in democratic and secular principles. Emphasizing the full participation of women in all facets of society, RAWA strives to empower Afghan women politically and socially.³⁰⁷

RAWA consistently stands in opposition to various government systems in Afghanistan, including the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (1978-1992), the Islamic State of Afghanistan (1992-1996), the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (1996-2001), the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2001-2021), and the current Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan since 2021. The organization also advocates for multilateral disarmament, reflecting its commitment to peace and stability in Afghanistan.³⁰⁸

Despite facing significant challenges and threats, RAWA persists in its mission to empower Afghan women, to raise awareness about their rights, and to promote a vision of democratic Afghanistan that upholds gender equality and individual freedom. The organization stands as an influential force in advocating for women's rights and secular democracy in Afghanistan.

2.3.2.1 Sisters in Islam (SIS)

Sisters in Islam (SIS) is a Malaysian civil society organization founded in 1988 with official NGO registration stamped in 1993. SIS actively organise discourse on women's rights and

³⁰⁶ Polly Toynbee, "Behind the Burka," *The Guardian*, accessed March 30, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/28/religion.afghanistan>.

³⁰⁷ "About RAWA...," RAWA, accessed March 30, 2023, <http://www.rawa.org/rawa.html>.

³⁰⁸ "RAWA Testimony to the Congressional Human Rights Caucus Briefing," U.S. Congressional Human Rights Caucus, 2001, <https://web.archive.org/web/20070628022728/http://lantos.house.gov/HoR/CA12/Human+Rights+Caucus/Briefing+Testimonies/Fahima+Vorgetts.htm>.

advocates for women empowerment within the Islamic framework. It emphasizes the importance of complying with the universal human rights declarations agreed in the international conference and conventions. This organization tackles various issues related to the Islamic family and *Shari'ah* laws, such as polygyny,³⁰⁹ child marriage,³¹⁰ moral policing,³¹¹ Islamic legal theory, *hijab* and modesty,³¹² violence against women, and *hudud*.³¹³ It places a particular emphasis on challenging discriminatory policies and laws in Malaysia that are justified using the name of Islam.

This organization's mission is to promote gender equality, justice, freedom, and the dignity of women within the Islamic context. SIS aims to empower women and advocate for change, working toward a vision of Islam that respects women's experiences and perspectives. By challenging mindsets perpetuating gender inequality, SIS seeks to eliminate injustices faced by women and reform laws and policies in line with principles of justice and equality in Islam.³¹⁴

Comprising professional Muslim women dedicated to women's rights, SIS's prominent members include Zainah Anwar and its co-founder Amina Wadud.³¹⁵ Originally named Puteri Islam, this organization later adopted the name Sisters in Islam to signify its global outreach and commitment. Established due to the founders' sense of responsibility to address women's issues when no existing organization fulfilled that role, SIS aims to

³⁰⁹ Nik Noriani Nik Badli Shah, "Polygamy Not a God-given Right to Muslims," *MalaysiaKini*, 2010, <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/132369>.

³¹⁰ "Syariah Court Fails to Protect and Safeguard Muslim Girls - Sisters in Islam," *The Malaysian Insider*, 2012, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140714201933/http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/sideviews/article/syariah-court-fails-to-protect-and-safeguard-muslim-girls-sisters-in-islam>.

³¹¹ "State Must Refrain from Moral Policing, Says SIS," *The Star Online*, 2006, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140714180102/http://www.thestar.com.my/story.aspx?file=%2F2006%2F12%2F17%2Fnation%2F16348692&sec=nation>.

³¹² "Dress and Modesty in Islam."

³¹³ "Press Statement: Sisters in Islam Remains Firmly Opposed to the Implementation of Hudud Law for Malaysia," *Sisters in Islam*, 2011, <https://sistersinislam.org/press-statement-sisters-in-islam-remains-firmly-opposed-to-the-implementation-of-hudud-law-for-malaysia/>.

³¹⁴ "Sisters In Islam: Mission Statement and Objectives," *Sisters in Islam*, accessed March 30, 2023, <https://sistersinislam.org/mission-and-vision/>.

³¹⁵ Hibba Abugideiri, "Wadud, Amina," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Women*, 2013, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref:oiso/9780199764464.001.0001/acref-9780199764464-e-0382?rskey=amawKW&result=359>; Power, "Muslim Women Demand End to Oppressive Laws."

develop a framework of women's rights in Islam, challenge practices reinforcing gender inequality, and advocate for legal reforms emphasizing equality, justice, freedom, dignity, and democracy within Islam.³¹⁶

2.3.2.1 MUSAWAH

Musawah is a global movement established in 2009 by twelve Muslim women from different countries and backgrounds aiming to promote feminist interpretations of the Islamic texts. The name "Musawah," meaning "equality" in Arabic, reflects its core mission. Inspired by Sisters in Islam, Musawah aims to challenge and transform the understanding of Islamic teachings on gender equality and justice, bridging the gap between scholarship and activism in its approach. It calls on nations to adhere to international human rights standards as outlined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).³¹⁷

Bringing together Muslim women scholars and activists from various countries, Musawah engages in knowledge-building efforts. Prominent figures in its leadership include Ziba Mir-Hosseini, a prominent Iranian anthropologist, and Zainah Anwar, the former executive director of Sisters in Islam. The movement collaborates with scholars from various nations and background such as Amina Wadud, Asma Lamrabet, Sa'diyya Shaikh, Muhammed Khaled Masud, Omaima Abou-Bakr, and many others.³¹⁸

While Musawah faces criticism from secular feminists who reject religious texts as a foundation for a feminist theory, they persist in their mission and boldly embrace the term "Islamic feminist". Despite debates and challenges, Musawah continues to generate new knowledge, empower activists, and promote women's rights all around the world. Musawah

³¹⁶ Shadiya Abbas, "Peranan Sisters in Islam Dalam Membela Kaum Wanita: Satu Tinjauan Dari Sudut Akidah" (Universiti Malaya, 2003), 38.

³¹⁷ "About Us," Musawah.org, accessed October 15, 2023, <https://www.musawah.org/about/>.

³¹⁸ Al-Sharmani, "Islamic Feminism: Transnational and National Reflections," 83.

contributes to global discussions and efforts towards achieving gender equality and justice in Muslim contexts.³¹⁹

2.3.2.1 Sister-hood

Sister-hood is an international platform founded in 2007 by Norwegian filmmaker and human rights activist Deeyah Khan and was initially operated under her media and arts production company, Fuuse. In 2016, it was relaunched as a global online magazine and live events platform dedicated to amplifying the voices of women of Muslim ancestry.³²⁰

Providing a space for women to share stories, opinions, and artistic expressions, Sister-hood fosters dialogue and discussion on various topics related to Muslim women. The magazine features articles, interviews, personal narratives, and creative works, offering a diverse representation of Muslim women's voices. Notably, the platform has a group of influential ambassadors from various countries, enriching the platform with diverse perspectives.³²¹

By challenging stereotypes and engage in critical conversations, Sister-hood strives to create a supportive and inclusive community where Muslim women's voices are heard, valued, and respected. Its commitment in providing a platform for diverse voices contributes to a broader understanding of the experiences and realities of Muslim women with different backgrounds. Through this magazine, Sister-hood plays a significant role in empowering women and fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity among women of Muslim heritage globally.³²²

³¹⁹ Elizabeth Segran, "The Rise of the Islamic Feminists," *The Nation*, December 4, 2013, <https://www.thenation.com/article/rise-islamic-feminists/>.

³²⁰ Craw, "Emmy-Award Winning Filmmaker Deeyah Khan Launches Online Magazine Sister-Hood Aimed at Giving Muslim Women a Voice."

³²¹ Deeyah Khan, "Welcome to Sister-Hood," *sister-hood.com*, accessed October 15, 2023, <https://sister-hood.com/deeyah-khan/welcome-to-sister-hood/>.

³²² Anealla Safdar, "Magazine about Muslim Women Aims to Highlight Diversity," *Aljazeera*, 2016, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2016/5/18/magazine-about-muslim-women-aims-to-highlight-diversity>.

2.3.2.1 Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)

Founded in 1984, Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) is an international solidarity network headquartered in London, dedicated to advocating for the rights of women in regions governed by Islamic law. This organization conducts research on women's rights within Islamic law and engages in advocacy to address challenges and discrimination faced by women within Islamic legal systems. WLUML serves as a platform for information exchange, networking, and support among activists, scholars, and organizations working on Muslim women's rights activism. It aims to challenge patriarchal rulings and address diverse forms of discrimination, violence, and inequalities experienced by women in these countries.³²³

Through several research initiatives, WLUML seeks to generate knowledge and understanding of how Islamic laws and practices impact women's lives. This research illuminates the complex dynamics between religious interpretations, cultural norms, and women's conditions, fostering informed discussions and debates. In addition to research, WLUML engages in advocacy and activism to promote women's rights within the framework of Islamic law. This organization works to raise awareness about gender-based discrimination and violence, challenging laws, policies, and practices that infringe upon women's rights and impede their empowerment.³²⁴

WLUML's international solidarity network serves as a platform for collaboration and collective action, bringing together individuals and organizations committed to advancing women's rights in Muslim contexts. By fostering connections and facilitating dialogue, WLUML strengthens the global movement for gender equality and social justice. Overall, Women Living Under Muslim Laws plays a crucial role in advocating for the rights and well-being of women within states governed by Islamic law. Through research,

³²³ Farida Shaheed, "Controlled or Autonomous: Identity and the Experience of the Network, Women Living under Muslim Laws," *Signs* 19, no. 4 (1994): 997–1019.

³²⁴ Terrence McCoy, "In Pakistan, 1,000 Women Die in 'honor Killings' Annually. Why Is This Happening?," *Washington Post*, 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/05/28/in-pakistan-honor-killings-claim-1000-womens-lives-annually-why-is-this-still-happening/?noredirect=on>.

advocacy, and solidarity, the organization strives to create positive change and promote gender equality within diverse cultural and religious contexts.³²⁵

2.3.2.1 Muslim Women's Quest for Equality

Muslim Women's Quest for Equality, an activist group based in India, has been a leading force in advocating for women's rights within the framework of Muslim personal laws. Their prominence came to light in September 2016 when they filed a petition with the Supreme Court of India, challenging practices such as *ṭalāq al-bid'ah* (triple talaq),³²⁶ *nikāḥ ḥalālāh* (taḥlīl marriage),³²⁷ and polygyny. Their activists argued that these practices were not only discriminatory but also violated the principles of equality and justice enshrined in the Indian Constitution. They contended that such practices allows arbitrary and unilateral dissolution of marriages, subjected women to repeated divorces and re-marriages, and facilitated polygamous marriages without proper consent.³²⁸

Through their petition to the Supreme Court, Muslim Women's Quest for Equality emphasize the urgent need for legal reforms to safeguard the rights and dignity of Muslim women in India. Their efforts sought to challenge and eliminate practices deemed illegal and unconstitutional, while also working towards promoting gender equality within the Muslim community. The case garnered widespread public attention and initiated a national debate on women's rights and personal laws in India. Ultimately, in August 2017, the Supreme Court of India declared the practice of *ṭalāq al-bid'ah* (triple talaq)

³²⁵ "Who We Are," Women Living Under Muslim Laws, accessed October 15, 2023, <https://www.wluml.org/whoweare/>.

³²⁶ The definition of "*Ṭalāq al-Bid'ah*" here is the pronouncement of triple divorce at once or the husband's repeated utterance of divorce (three times) within one gathering. See 'Abd al-Raḥman Tāj, *Al-Sharī'ah Al-Islāmiyyah Fī Al-Aḥwāl Al-Shakṣiyyah* (Miṣr: Dār al-Ta'lif, 1952), 259; Abū Zahrah, *Al-Aḥwāl Al-Shakṣiyyah* (Miṣr: Dār al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1950), 304–6; 'Abd al-Waḥḥāb Khallāf, *Aḥkām Al-Aḥwāl Al-Shakṣiyyah Fī Al-Sharī'ah Al-Islāmiyyah* (Qatar: Dār al-Qalam, 1990), 137.

³²⁷ This marriage is a practice where a woman, who has undergone a divorce through triple talaq, enters into a marriage with another man. This marriage is consummated, and subsequently, she undergoes another divorce. The purpose of this practice is to enable her to remarry her former husband. See Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Fiqh Al-Islāmī Wa 'Adillatuhu*, vol. 9 (Damshiq: Dār al-Fikr, 1997), 7001.

³²⁸ Satya Prakash, "Muslim Women's Group Demands Complete Ban on Shariah Courts," Hindustan Times, 2016, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/muslim-women-s-group-demands-complete-ban-on-shariah-courts/story-kgNMV7LwDSgEaMRAOIecfl.html>.

unconstitutional and invalid, marking a significant victory for the activists and women's rights advocates involved in the campaign.³²⁹

Muslim Women's Quest for Equality played a pivotal role in shedding light on the challenges faced by Muslim women due to discriminatory practices within personal laws. Their activism and legal advocacy contributed to a landmark legal decision that upheld the rights and dignity of Muslim women, representing a significant stride towards gender equality and justice within India's legal framework.

2.3.2.1 Ni Putes Ni Soumises (NPNS)

Ni Putes Ni Soumises (NPNS), translates to "Neither Whores nor Submissives," is an organization of French feminists established by Samira Bellil and a collective of young African women. This organization endeavours to address the issue of sexual and physical violence experienced by Muslim women, with the objective of confronting oppressive practices and system that are pervasive in predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods in France.³³⁰

NPNS focuses on raising awareness about the specific challenges women encounter in these neighbourhoods, where patriarchal norms and cultural expectations often restrict their freedoms, leading to various forms of violence and subordination. The organization rejects the labels of "whores" or "submissives" and advocates for gender equality, autonomy, and respect. Empowering women is a primary goal of NPNS, providing a platform for them to share experiences, express concerns, and demand change. Through public demonstrations, campaigns, and grassroots initiatives, NPNS works to break the silence surrounding issues like forced marriages, domestic violence, and street harassment.³³¹

³²⁹ Krishnadas Rajagopal, "Supreme Court Admits Muslim Woman's Plea to Declare Triple Talaq Illegal," *The Hindu*, 2016, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/SC-admits-Muslim-womans-plea-to-declare-triple-talaq-illegal/article60527020.ece>.

³³⁰ Rose George, "Obituary: Samira Bellil," *The Guardian*, 2004, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2004/sep/13/guardianobituaries.france>.

³³¹ Susan Ireland, "Textualizing Trauma in Samira Bellil's *Dans l'enfer Des Tournantes* and Fabrice G nestal's *La Squal*," *Dalhousie French Studies* 81 (2007): 131–141.

NPNS engages in dialogue with policymakers, community leaders, and the broader public to highlight the interconnected issues of gender, culture, and violence. By challenging stereotypes and advocating for women's rights within Muslim communities, NPNS aims to dismantle harmful practices and promote a more inclusive and equitable society. The work of NPNS has raised awareness on the experiences of women in marginalized communities, sparking important conversations on gender equality and cultural diversity in France. NPNS continues to be an influential force, advocating for women's rights, challenging harmful narratives, and promoting social change.³³²

2.3.2.1 Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE)

Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE), also known as WISE Muslim Women, is an international organization headquartered in New York. It is committed to promoting women's rights, social justice, and equality, led by Muslim women. The organization operates on the belief that it is patriarchal culture, rather than Islam itself, that often deprives women of their rights. WISE seeks to create a space where Muslims can reconcile their faith with their pursuit of equality and justice.³³³

WISE functions as a platform for Muslims worldwide to engage in discussions on *Qur'ānic* interpretation, challenge harmful traditions and biases, and raise awareness on women's experiences within Islam. Through fostering dialogue and forums, the organization aims to empower women and promote a more inclusive understanding of Islam that respects gender equality. In its activities, WISE actively confronts patriarchal practices that hinder women's rights and advocates for necessary reforms. The organization provides support to Muslim women in their personal and spiritual journeys, offering them the opportunity to reclaim agency and challenge oppressive norms within their communities.³³⁴

³³² "History of the Association," Ni Putes Ni Soumises, accessed October 15, 2023, <https://npns.eu/en/history-of-the-association/>.

³³³ Sumbul Ali-Karamali, "WISE Muslim Women Standing Up," The Huffington Post, 2015, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/wise-muslim-women-standin_b_314643.

³³⁴ Kathleen Moore, "American Muslim Associational Life From 1950 to the Present," in *Routledge Handbook of Islam in the West*, ed. Roberto Tottoli (New York: Routledge, 2015), 149.

Operating as an international movement, WISE attracts individuals from diverse backgrounds who are committed to women's rights and social progress. The organization's efforts have been recognized for their potential to strengthen the authority of Arab women and drive transformative changes in patriarchal practices. In summary, Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (WISE) plays a vital role in challenging patriarchal norms, fostering dialogue, and empowering Muslim women to reconcile their religious beliefs with their pursuit of gender equality and social justice. By promoting awareness and advocating for change, WISE contributes to the ongoing journey toward a more inclusive and equitable Islamic understanding.

2.3.3 Conclusion

In summary, the Islamic feminist movements that have emerged globally are a reflection of the diverse experiences and aspirations of Muslim women. These movements aim to harmonize Islamic principles with gender equality, challenging patriarchal interpretations and advocating for women's rights within the Islamic framework. Ranging from grassroots organizations to global platforms, these movements have played a crucial role in promoting women's empowerment, increasing awareness of women's experiences in Islam, and advocating for social justice. Through critical interpretations of religious texts, opposition to discriminatory practices, and the push for legal and social reforms, Islamic feminist movements contribute to the ongoing transformation and desolation of patriarchal norms, working towards more inclusive and equitable societies. While each movement has its unique approach and priorities, they share a common commitment in promoting gender equality, justice, and dignity for all. Despite that, they also received a negative reception from various Muslim authorities, communities, and Islamic organizations. Nevertheless, ongoing criticism and dialogues are essential to ensure their constant adherence to Islamic teachings.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Islamic feminism is a diverse movement which aims to address gender inequalities within Islam's framework. It holds that Islam inherently upholds principles of justice, equality, and dignity for both men and women. Islamic feminists seek to reinterpret and reclaim Islamic teachings in order to challenge patriarchal interpretations and discriminatory practices that have marginalized women.

The goal of Islamic feminism is to advance gender equality, justice, and women's empowerment within Muslim-majority societies and global Muslim communities. It strives to challenge and transform structures and norms perpetuating gender-based discrimination, such as restrictive interpretations of religious texts, discriminatory laws, and societal attitudes limiting women's rights.

Islamic feminism incorporates various theories and approaches, including reinterpretation of religious texts, critical engagement with Islamic jurisprudence, and intersectional analysis recognizing multiple dimensions of oppression and subordination. By integrating these frameworks, Islamic feminists aim to construct a more inclusive and equitable understanding of Islam while simultaneously acknowledging and valuing the diverse experiences and needs of Muslim women.

Islamic feminism has achieved significant works milestones. Advocating for legal reforms, challenging discriminatory practices like female genital mutilation and child marriage, and addressing inequality in Islamic family law are the main goals of their campaigns and activism. They have made notable contributions in the advocacy of women's right for education, political participation, and combating gender-based violence on women.

Moreover, Islamic feminists have established organizations and platforms providing support, resources, and spaces for dialogue and activism. They have initiated discussions on gender issues within religious institutions, engaged in critical interpretations of texts, challenged traditional patriarchal views, and opened new avenues for gender equality.

Despite encountering obstacles and criticism, the influence of Islamic feminism is indisputable. It has shaped societal norms, heightened awareness, and encouraged a more inclusive interpretation of Islam. Islamic feminism persists in evolving, adjusting, and motivating individuals and communities to pursue justice, equality, and the fulfilment of women's rights within their own interpretations of Islamic principles.



CHAPTER THREE

THE CONCEPT OF GENDER EQUALITY IN ISLAM: MERNISSI'S PERSPECTIVE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Given the focus on religious reinterpretation, scholar-activists are crucial within the realm of Muslim feminism. This group is diverse, with significant differences in ideological frameworks, educational backgrounds, gender, and contextual factors. Historically, many scholar-activists have made impactful contributions and continue to influence contemporary Islamic women's activism. One of the most prominent figures is Moroccan sociologist Fatema Mernissi, whose work remains highly influential among Muslim feminists.

Despite being Moroccan, Mernissi's concern extended to the broader Arab world, where she examined the role of women within dynamic Muslim communities. She navigated Islam's global context to both assert her identity as a "Muslim Woman" and champion feminist perspectives. Mernissi dedicated her research to the historical experiences of women in early Islamic history, particularly post-Prophet ﷺ, and critically assessed misogynistic *ḥadīths* and their narrators. Her feminist approach has significantly shaped the work of subsequent Islamic feminist scholar-activists.

This chapter will cover Mernissi's background, including her education, career, family, childhood, and adulthood, alongside a summary of her works. It will explore her influence on Islamic feminist figures and movements, as well as her contributions to Islamic feminist theory. Additionally, the chapter will analyse Mernissi's views on gender equality in Islam, her methodology in addressing gender issues, and her motivations and methods in critiquing Islamic gender equality.

3.2 FATEMA MERNISSI: A MUSLIM AND A FEMINIST

Fatima Mernissi, a prominent Arab feminist, has left an indelible mark on third world feminism, addressing crucial issues such as colonial occupation, orientalist representation of Arab women, identity politics, intersectionality, and freedom of speech. Despite her significant contributions to feminist thought, Mernissi's personal identification with feminism has been a subject of contention and argument over the years.

Mernissi was known to have adamantly refused the feminist label in the early 1980s, a stance potentially fuelled by conflicts with conservatives and dogmatic Marxists during that period. According to Margot Badran, Mernissi stands out as one of the pioneers in expressing Islamic feminism while deliberately avoiding the adoption of an explicit Islamic feminist identity.³³⁵ However, as the 1980s progressed into the 1990s, a noticeable shift was observed in Mernissi's attitude towards feminism. This transformation coincided with a redirection of her feminist writings along a more indigenous path—what can be termed as the Islamic feminist trajectory.

Rhouni observes that Mernissi's changing stance towards the feminist label is rooted in her growing confidence.³³⁶ Mernissi anchored her feminist expression in a more original and autochthonous form, mitigating allegations of cultural detachment or disloyalty and avoiding the perception of interposing a discourse incompatible with Islam. This newfound confidence is evident in her retrospective discussions about her interactions with American feminists in the 1970s and her subsequent engagement in revising feminist narratives.

Despite her initial reluctance to embrace the label, Mernissi's stand is unmistakably feminist. Her writings and activities undeniably align with a feminist project for her society. Even her earliest work, "Beyond the Veil," can be described as 'ultra-feminist,' reflecting a commitment to a certain feminist essentialism and secularism.³³⁷ Her feminist character becomes perspicuous in her later works, such as "Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory," where she openly acknowledges her enduring commitment to challenging

³³⁵ Badran, "Islamic Feminism: What's in a Name?," 17–23.

³³⁶ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 119–21.

³³⁷ Mernissi, *Beyond The Veil: Male-Female Dynamics In Modern Muslim Society*.

misogyny in the Arab world.³³⁸ The pivotal moment in Mernissi's evolving relationship with feminism is marked by the announcement of her introductory Islamic feminist book, "L'Amour dans les pays musulmans," in 1986.³³⁹ This work represents a shift in trajectory and sets the stage for a more confident and overtly feminist articulation of her scholarly endeavours.

Hence, this subchapter will explore the life of Fatema Mernissi, her educational background and the influences of her upbringing with her feminist persona. It will examine her experience upon her life period in the city of Fez, the harem community, and her struggles with her family members. This subchapter will also discuss her contributions to Islamic feminism theory from the reading of her works and writings on the subject of women's empowerment.

3.2.1 Fatema Mernissi: Background and Influences

Fatima Mernissi, a globally recognized sociologist and author, has emerged as a leading advocate for gender equality and women's rights. Born in Morocco, on 27 September 1940, Mernissi has dedicated her life and scholarly pursuits to challenging the normative foundations of Muslim society, particularly regarding its treatment of women.³⁴⁰ Her sharp and unconventional critiques have garnered widespread acclaim, positioning her as one of today's most innovative thinkers on gender dynamics in Islam.³⁴¹

Mernissi's educational journey has played a crucial role in shaping her worldview. She began her studies at Muhammad V University in Rabat, then continued at the Sorbonne in Paris and Brandeis University in Massachusetts, where she gained a wide range of knowledge and perspectives. This academic background has provided her with the tools to

³³⁸ Fatima Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory* (London and Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books, 1996).

³³⁹ Fatima Mernissi, *L'Amour Dans Les Pays Musulmans* (Casablanca: Editions Maghrébines / Le Fennec, 1986).

³⁴⁰ F. El-Manssoury, "Review of *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women* by Fatima Mernissi," *Africa Spectrum* 24, no. 3 (1989): 358.

³⁴¹ Marilyn Booth, "Review of *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World* by Fatima Mernissi," trans. Mary Jo Lakeland, *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 29, no. 1 (1995): 56.

dissect and analyse the complexities of gender dynamics and relations in the Arab Islamic world.³⁴²

Mernissi's *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Muslim Society*, originally her PhD thesis, was subsequently published as a book.³⁴³ It explores the influence of Muslim women within the framework of Islamic faith. Mernissi, widely recognized for her critical perspectives on gender and sexuality in Moroccan and broader Muslim societies, was a leading Islamic feminist scholar. Her extensive contributions as a public intellectual, educator, author, and sociologist solidified her prominent status. Mernissi passed away in Rabat on November 30, 2015.³⁴⁴ Mernissi's life can be summarized as follows:

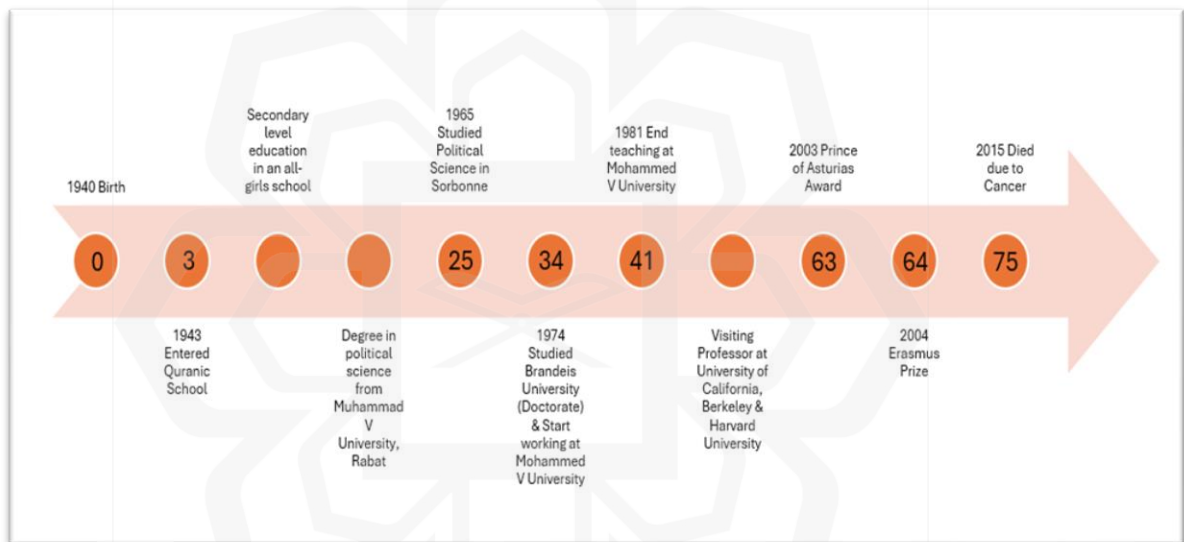


Figure 3 Fatema Mernissi's Life

As a Moroccan feminist, Mernissi's work has been influential in shedding light on the discrepancies between Islamic ideology and the reality of women's lives. She challenges

³⁴² Hildred Geertz, "Review of *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* by Fatima Mernissi," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 11, no. 1 (1977): 49.

³⁴³

³⁴⁴ Margalit Fox, "Fatema Mernissi, a Founder of Islamic Feminism, Dies at 75," *The New York Times*, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/10/world/middleeast/fatema-mernissi-a-founder-of-islamic-feminism-dies-at-75.html>.

the prevalent attitudes and practices that subordinate women, striving to dismantle the barriers that restrict their rights and agency. By engaging in lively discussions and employing a blend of personal reminiscence, political commentary, and exegesis, Mernissi has succeeded in reaching a broad audience and igniting meaningful conversations with her audience.³⁴⁵

At the core of Mernissi's thesis is the contention that the established interpretation of Islam diverges from the fundamental principles of gender equality. She asserts that the Prophetic mission aimed at ensuring equality, yet societal norms often cast women as dangerous, sexually active, and potentially cunning. This prevailing perception resulted in the subjugation of women within Islamic law, with institutions deliberately crafted to curtail their influence. Notably, Mernissi underscores that the contemporary forces of modernization and social change are actively challenging these entrenched traditional structures.³⁴⁶

Throughout her career, Mernissi has demonstrated a commitment in contributing to the dynamization of Arab thought on the question of sexual equality. By challenging deeply ingrained beliefs and advocating for change, she has become a beacon of hope, revisionism, and action for Muslim feminists. Her writings have resonated with a wide audience, transcending cultural and geographic boundaries.³⁴⁷

This section of the study will explore the educational and historical background of Fatima Mernissi and connect it with her achievements in her career and body of academic work. Additionally, this research will delve into her intricate relationship with her family and her moments of identity crisis throughout the different phases of her life. The study will also investigate how these different aspects of her life have influenced the development of her feminist persona.

³⁴⁵ Booth, "Review of Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World by Fatima Mernissi," 56.

³⁴⁶ Suad Joseph, "Review of Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society by Fatima Mernissi," *American Anthropologist* 79, no. 2 (1977): 468, [internal-pdf://209.155.79.243/Joseph-1977-American_Anthropologist.pdf](https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1977.79.2.0468).

³⁴⁷ El-Manssoury, "Review of Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women by Fatima Mernissi," 358.

3.1.1.1 Educational and Career Background

Fatima Mernissi's educational journey is nothing short of inspiring. Her initial exposure to education in a *Qur'ānic* primary school, set up by Moroccan nationalists, not only provided her with a strong Islamic foundation but also marked the beginning of her intellectual growth. The decision to allow girls into national schools during the nationalist movement by the Moroccan leadership was a turning point, allowing Mernissi to explore a more modern and expansive education.

Moving from there, Mernissi's thirst for knowledge led her to an all-girls school funded by the French Protectorate. However, it was her pursuit of higher education that truly defined her path.³⁴⁸ At Muhammad V University in Rabat, Morocco, she delved into political science and sociology, setting the stage for her future as a feminist scholar. This academic foundation equipped her with the theoretical and analytical tools necessary for her later work.³⁴⁹

Taking her academic pursuits further, Mernissi pursued a doctoral degree in sociology, a journey that took her to prestigious institutions like Sorbonne University in Paris and Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. Her doctoral thesis, "The Effects of Modernization on the Male-Female Dynamics in a Muslim Society," reflected her deep engagement with the sociological impact of modernization on gender dynamics in Muslim societies.³⁵⁰

While at Sorbonne, Mernissi did not just confine herself to academia; she also worked as a journalist.³⁵¹ This dual experience added a practical dimension to her understanding of societal structures and dynamics. Her extensive educational background, culminating in a doctorate, laid the groundwork for her future as a leading feminist scholar.

³⁴⁸ Wilaela, "Wanita-Wanita Haremku: Telaah Pengalaman Wanita Oleh Wanita Dengan Pendekatan Sejarah Peradaban Islam," *Jurnal Wanita, Agama Dan Gender (Marwah)* IV, no. 8 (2005): 22.

³⁴⁹ Fatima Mernissi, *Ratu-Ratu Islam Yang Terlupakan*, trans. Rahmani Astuti and Erna Hadi (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), 4.

³⁵⁰ Wilaela, "Wanita-Wanita Haremku: Telaah Pengalaman Wanita Oleh Wanita Dengan Pendekatan Sejarah Peradaban Islam," 22.

³⁵¹ "About Fatema Mernissi," fatemamernissi.com, accessed October 26, 2023, <https://fatemamernissi.com/about-us>.

Her career as a feminist scholar took off in 1974 when she joined the Faculté des Lettres of the University of Muhammad V in Rabat as a lecturer and professor of sociology.³⁵² Beyond the classroom, Mernissi actively engaged in research collaborations, further contributing to the understanding of gender, Islam, and society. Her international recognition as a sociologist of Arab feminism was marked by her contributions as a visiting professor at esteemed institutions like the University of California at Berkeley and Harvard University.³⁵³

Mernissi's influence extended beyond academia. Her reputation as a writer and scholar in the field of the *Qur'ān* and Islamic studies gained global recognition. Awards such as the Prince of Asturias Award in 2003 and the Erasmus Prize in 2004 highlighted her significant sociocultural contributions.³⁵⁴ The establishment of the Fatema Mernissi Book Award in 2017 by The Middle East Studies Association further underscored her lasting impact on the field.³⁵⁵ Mernissi passed away in 2015 at the age of 75 from cancer.³⁵⁶

3.1.1.2 Fez in Mernissi's Time

Born in Fez, Morocco, Fatema Mernissi, was profoundly influenced by her early life in a harem,³⁵⁷ shaping her perceptions of gender inequality and propelling her as a fervent

³⁵² Fatima Mernissi, *Pemberontakan Wanita, Peran Intelektual Kaum Wanita Dalam Sejarah Muslim*, trans. Rahmani Astuti, 1st ed. (Bandu: Mizan, 1999), 4; Moha Ennaji, "Mernissi's Impact on Islamic Feminism: A Critique of the Religious Approach," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 4 (2020): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2020.1840963>.

³⁵³ Mohd Noor et al., "Fatima Mernissi and Her Methodology in Dealing with Misogyny Hadith: A Critical Review"; Wilaela, "Wanita-Wanita Haremku: Telaah Pengalaman Wanita Oleh Wanita Dengan Pendekatan Sejarah Peradaban Islam."

³⁵⁴ "Fatema Mernissi and Susan Sontag | Laureates," Princess of Asturias Awards, 2003, <https://www.fpa.es/en/princess-of-asturias-awards/laureates/2003-fatema-mernissi-susan-sontag.html?texto=trayectoria&especifica=0>; Alfred Marseille, "Erasmus Prize Awarded to Islamic Thinkers," http://www.powerofculture.nl/en/current/2004/november/religion_modernity.html, 2004, http://www.powerofculture.nl/en/current/2004/november/religion_modernity.html.

³⁵⁵ "Fatema Mernissi Book Award," Middle East Studies Association, 2023, <https://mesana.org/awards/category/fatema-mernissi-book-award>.

³⁵⁶ Fox, "Fatema Mernissi, a Founder of Islamic Feminism, Dies at 75."

³⁵⁷ The term "harem" or "*ḥarīm*" is a subtle deviation from "*ḥarām*," denoting what is forbidden, in contrast to "*ḥalāl*," signifying what is permitted. A harem serves as a sanctuary where a man safeguards his family, encompassing one or multiple wives, children, and female relatives. Additionally, the term "harem" is employed to describe a residence, indicating both the physical space and the individuals who inhabit it. See

advocate for women's rights. To comprehend Mernissi's life and the societal shifts in Morocco during her era, exploring the historical context of Fez becomes imperative.

Fez, an ancient Moroccan city with a history spanning centuries, emerged from the fusion of two provinces nestled along a small river. Noteworthy within this cityscape is the tomb of Moulay Idris, the city's founder, and the grandeur of the *Al-Qarawiyyīn* Grand Mosque and University, a masterpiece of Islamic architecture crafted by the *Murābiṭūn* dynasty with collaboration from Andalusian engineers.³⁵⁸ Beyond its role as a place of worship, the mosque housed educational institutions, contributing to Fez's reputation as a centre of learning. The city thrived on vibrant markets offering a diverse array of goods—spices, gold, silver, metalware, and distinctive local clothing and footwear—a spectacle guarded by gates ensuring security during the night.³⁵⁹

In Mernissi's formative years, Morocco was under the sway of French colonial rule. Fez, however, emerged as a pivotal hub for the nationalist movement resisting French colonization. Its geographical position, strategically situated between Mecca and Madrid, rendered it a significant location for both Spanish and French armies. The division of Morocco into two provinces along the "Arbaoua" border saw the Spanish army in the north and the French army in the south.³⁶⁰

At the time of Mernissi's birth, Moroccan nationalists were fervently working towards reclaiming the country's autonomy from French colonial control. This movement envisioned a new Moroccan state that guaranteed equal rights for all segments of society. Of particular significance was the focus on women's rights, leading to transformative

Nausheen Ishaque, "Empowerment through Disempowerment: Harem and the Covert Female Resistance in Fatima Mernissi's *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*," *Cultural Dynamics* 30, no. 4 (2018): 286–87, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0921374019828855>.

³⁵⁸ Bin Nasir, "Fatima Mernissi Dalam Timbangan Ilmu Hadith: Kritik Terhadap Pemikiran Dan Dakwaan Hadith-Hadith Misoginis," 50.

³⁵⁹ Wilaela, "Wanita-Wanita Haremku: Telaah Pengalaman Wanita Oleh Wanita Dengan Pendekatan Sejarah Peradaban Islam," 23.

³⁶⁰ Albert Haurani, *Sejarah Bangsa-Bangsa Muslim*, trans. Irfan Abu Bakar, *Mizan* (Bandung, 2004), 261.

changes that abolished polygyny—a prevalent practice in Moroccan households—and granted women the right to education and other fundamental rights.³⁶¹

Growing up within a harem, Mernissi keenly recognized the societal transformations around her. Her birth coincided with the upsurge of the nationalist movement and subsequent reforms aimed at empowering women. Mernissi's personal experience of receiving an education, a privilege denied to previous generations of Moroccan women, fuelled her determination to challenge gender norms and champion women's rights throughout her life.³⁶²

Fatema Mernissi's birth in Fez at this critical juncture allowed her to bear witness and contribute to the transformative changes in Moroccan society. Fez, with its rich cultural heritage and historical significance, played a pivotal role in the nationalist movement against French colonialism. The fight for independence culminated in the establishment of a new Moroccan state championing equal rights for all, including women. Mernissi's upbringing in a harem and her subsequent achievements as a feminist scholar underscored the profound impact of these changes on individuals and their aspirations for a more just and equitable society.

3.1.1.3 Mernissi and the Harem

The concept of the harem, deeply entrenched in Middle Eastern and Islamic culture, unfolds as a complex institution with a rich history of diverse interpretations and practices. Fatema Mernissi casts a revealing light on the harem, drawing from her personal experiences and the societal norms prevalent in Morocco. Through her insightful works, Mernissi dismantles romanticized notions, unravelling the general concept of the harem in Islam in general and Morocco in particular, encompassing its historical development, variations, and profound impact on women's lives.

³⁶¹ Bin Nasir, "Fatima Mernissi Dalam Timbangan Ilmu Hadith: Kritik Terhadap Pemikiran Dan Dakwaan Hadith-Hadith Misoginis," 51.

³⁶² Fatima Mernissi, *Teras Terlarang*, trans. Aḥmad Bayqūnī, 1st ed. (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), 72.

Wilaela's categorization distinguishes two types of harems: the government or imperial harem linked to the elite class, and the common harem found in domestic settings.³⁶³ Flourishing during the Umayyad and 'Abbāsid dynasties, the imperial harem declined with the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Mernissi challenges Western romanticization of elite harems, emphasizing their cessation after the First World War and subsequent prohibition by Western rulers.³⁶⁴

Mernissi's firsthand experience within a common *harem* informs her understanding of this institution in general. In contrast to grand palaces, the *harem* of her birth was a substantial house with towering walls, embodying the tradition of segregating men and women. Each corner of the house bore its own limits and rules, restricting women's freedom and autonomy compared to men.³⁶⁵ The term "harem" in Mernissi's oeuvre functions as a parable for the divide or frontiers between the world of men and women, representing the patriarchal discourse constructing this division.³⁶⁶

Muslim feminist scholar raises crucial questions about gendered restrictions within the harem, highlighting unequal rights and limitations on women's movement. Men enjoyed privileges of engagement with the external world, conducting business deals, and accessing information, while women were confined to the *harem*. Mernissi's observations highlighted

³⁶³ The governmental harem refers to the harem maintained by a king or sultan, consisting of a diverse group of individuals such as wives, servants (including both female slaves and eunuchs), female relatives, and concubines associated with the king or sultan. This harem occupied a secluded area within the imperial residence known as the *seraglio*. An exemplary instance is the Imperial Harem of the Ottoman Empire, which held significant social and political roles within the Ottoman court. During the Sultanate of Women, a period characterized by the influence and power of female members within the harem, this *harem* wielded considerable political authority. The women of the *harem* left a lasting impact on Ottoman affairs, influencing matters of governance, succession, and the decisions of the sultan. This form of governmental harem highlights the unique dynamics and complexities of the Empire, where the *harem* evolved into an institution that not only addressed the personal needs of the sultan but also played a crucial role in the functioning and politics of the empire. See "Harem," Merriam-Webster, Inc., accessed June 27, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/harem>; Murat Iyigun, "Lessons from the Ottoman Harem on Culture, Religion, and Wars," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 61, no. 4 (2013): 693–730, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1086/670376.harem>

³⁶⁴ Wilaela, "Wanita-Wanita Haremku: Telaah Pengalaman Wanita Oleh Wanita Dengan Pendekatan Sejarah Peradaban Islam," 28.

³⁶⁵ Wilaela, 30.

³⁶⁶ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 132.

the yearning of harem women to explore the world beyond their gates, emphasizing the disparities created by such separation.³⁶⁷

During Mernissi's era, the harem was deeply rooted itself in Moroccan culture, symbolizing Morocco's long tradition and identity. It also simultaneously serves as an exclusive space for women to gather and do their activities. Mernissi's exploration of harem life differentiates between the urban harem in Fez and the rural harem outside the city.³⁶⁸

In the city of Fez, harem women faced limitations imposed by high walls and gates, restricting interactions with society. Within these confines, urban harem women focused on self-adornment, engaging in activities like dressing up, nail care, and modern beauty treatments. Entertainment provided an outlet, with radio, storytelling, and theatrical performances offering respite. Mernissi's grandmother, Lalla Mani, epitomized the urban harem, emphasizing respect, elegance, and adherence to *hijāb* as symbols of social status and proper attire to be worn during periods of mourning.³⁶⁹

In contrast, harem women outside of Fez enjoyed greater freedom to explore their surroundings, engaging in agricultural and animal farming activities unrestricted by the imposing walls of urban harems. The wearing of *hijāb* was not mandatory for these women, showcasing the diversity in harem practices. Mernissi's mother, raised in a rural harem, felt constrained when marrying into an urban harem, highlighting power dynamics inherent in Moroccan culture.³⁷⁰

The concept of the harem in Islam and Morocco, as explored by Fatema Mernissi, encapsulates a multifaceted institution that has evolved over time. Her writings dispel romanticized notions propagated by the Western world, revealing a harem characterized by separation and gendered restrictions. The harem institution played a significant role in Moroccan society as a symbol of tradition, identity, and inequality. By exploring the experiences of harem women in both urban and rural settings, Mernissi offers a nuanced

³⁶⁷ Mernissi, *Teras Terlarang*, 4.

³⁶⁸ Wilaela, "Wanita-Wanita Haremku: Telaah Pengalaman Wanita Oleh Wanita Dengan Pendekatan Sejarah Peradaban Islam," 28.

³⁶⁹ Wilaela, 37–39.

³⁷⁰ Wilaela, 37–39.

perspective on the complexities surrounding the harem institution, stimulating crucial conversations about gender, power, and social change.

3.1.1.4 Childhood, Adolescence and Adulthood

Mernissi's childhood was marked by the strict boundaries set by her family and the harem in which she lived. The front door acted as the first boundary, separating the living room from the main courtyard. Mernissi was not allowed to go outside until her mother woke up and the morning was shining. During this time, she would play alone in the courtyard from six to eight in the morning. Despite being free to sit in front of the door, she was not allowed to play with her older cousins who were already playing. Her mother believed that Mernissi did not know how to take care of herself because playing was seen as war.³⁷¹

Mernissi grew up in a harem with her mother, grandmother, and other sisters. Polygyny was practiced in her family, and her mother, Mrs. Mernissi, was illiterate due to spending her time in the harem. Nonetheless, her mother always reminded and taught her how to act and defend herself as a woman. Mernissi's childhood revolved around the harem and the restrictions placed on women within it. Mernissi was exposed to the struggles of thought from a young age and often questioned the boundaries between men and women.³⁷² She was also strongly inspired with wise and clever female characters from the stories in the book "A Thousand and One Nights."³⁷³

³⁷¹ Mernissi, *Teras Terlarang*, 4.

³⁷² Bin Nasir, "Fatima Mernissi Dalam Timbangan Ilmu Hadith: Kritik Terhadap Pemikiran Dan Dakwaan Hadith-Hadith Misoginis," 54.

³⁷³ "A Thousand and One Nights" unfolds a tale of a sultan consumed by hatred for women due to his queen's infidelity. He vows to marry and execute a woman each night, leading to numerous innocent victims. However, Shahrazad, a young woman with exceptional storytelling skills, challenges his cruelty. Shahrazad uses her gift to captivate the sultan's heart, introducing a new tale each night and leaving it unfinished. Her captivating storytelling postpones her execution as the sultan eagerly awaits the conclusion. Through a tapestry of enchanting tales spanning adventure, romance, fantasy, and moral lessons, Shahrazad not only entertains but also softens the sultan's heart. As nights pass, the sultan is intrigued by Shahrazad's wit and intelligence, realizing the depth of his love for her. Ultimately, her storytelling prowess saves her life, transforming the sultan's cruel nature into one touched by love and understanding. See Ulrich Marzolph, "Arabian Nights," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. Kate Fleet; et al., 3rd Editio, 2007, 138, https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_002.

Even in her childhood, Mernissi had a curious mind and questioned the boundaries placed between men and women. Her father taught her that God had created a clear separation between men and women, and that peace could only exist if everyone respected these boundaries.³⁷⁴ However, Mernissi wondered why it was that women that should be limited - and not men - if there was actually a differences or limitation between genders. When she posed this question to Lalla Yasmina, one of her grandfather's wives, Lalla Yasmina could not answer, considering the topic too dangerous.³⁷⁵

Mernissi's experiences with religion were divisive. At the age of three, she was sent to a *Qur'ānic* school where she had arduous acceptance of the teachings she received. The teachers emphasized memorizing the *Qur'ān* without explaining its meaning, and any mispronunciations resulted in reprimands or beatings. This harsh treatment led Mernissi to see religion as something terrible. However, through her encounters with Lalla Yasmina, she discovered the beauty of religion and the teachings of Islam, especially through stories of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.³⁷⁶

Lalla Yasmina played a significant role in Mernissi's life, providing valuable and reassuring guidance. She shared beautiful historical stories, particularly about the life of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the teachings of Islam, which were filled with love. Lalla Yasmina's stories expanded Mernissi's horizons about the traditions and rules that excluded many women in society. Mernissi was inspired by Lalla Yasmina's enthusiastic tales of her pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, which ignited her dream to also set foot in those holy cities.³⁷⁷

Mernissi developed a dualistic attitude towards the sacred texts of the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth*. She believed that one's perspective and acceptance of these texts determined whether they served as a gateway to self-preservation or transformed into an

³⁷⁴ Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*, ed. Ruth V. Ward (Reading, MA.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994), 1–2; Tamyiz Burhanuddin, *Fatima Mernissi: Menggugat Ketidakadilan Gender Dalam Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: Jendela, 2003), 129.

³⁷⁵ Bin Nasir, “Fatima Mernissi Dalam Timbangan Ilmu Hadith: Kritik Terhadap Pemikiran Dan Dakwaan Hadith-Hadith Misoginis,” 55.

³⁷⁶ Fatima Mernissi, *Women and Islam: A Historical and Theological Enquiry*, trans. Mary Jo Lakeland (Oxford, United Kingdom: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 62.

³⁷⁷ Mernissi, 62.

insurmountable obstacle. She recognized the potential for the scriptures to drive dreams or bring about feelings of depression, depending on one's response to them.³⁷⁸

During adolescence, Mernissi's exposure to religious education and *ḥadīth* in her high school further troubled her. Some of the *ḥadīths*, such as the one stating that dogs, donkeys, and women would cancel a person's prayer when passing in front of them, deeply offended her. She questioned how the beloved Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ could say something that hurt the heart of young girls like her, especially considering that the Prophet ﷺ himself was very gentle and full of affection for his young wife, 'Ā'isha ؓ.³⁷⁹

As Mernissi grew into adulthood, her spirit of criticism towards the *ḥadīths* and the limitations they placed on women became more evident. Her experiences in the market, where the *ḥadīths* were used to justify women's exclusion from leadership roles, deeply affected her. Mernissi realized that misogynistic *ḥadīths* had penetrated the minds of Muslims, including the surrounding community. This motivated her to unravel and reinterpret these *ḥadīths* in providing alternative interpretations that aligned with the modern setting.³⁸⁰

Based on her family setting and personal experiences, Mernissi became determined to understand the issues surrounding *ḥadīths* and *Qur'ānic* texts. She embarked on lifelong research to better comprehend realistic problems in society, particularly related to gender, social politics, and the status of women. Mernissi's determination led her to pursue education in sociology and politics at the highest level.

3.2.2 Works of Fatema Mernissi

Fatema Mernissi, as a prominent Moroccan feminist and sociologist, has made substantial contributions to the comprehension of women's rights and gender dynamics in Muslim societies through her insightful body of work. Her writings critically engage with traditional norms and provide illumination on the intricate experiences of women in Islamic cultures.

³⁷⁸ Mernissi, 64.

³⁷⁹ Mernissi, 64.

³⁸⁰ Mernissi, 1.

Addressing a broad spectrum of topics, Mernissi's work encompasses discussions on the veil, women's societal roles, historical interpretations, and the intersection of Islam with democracy.

It is crucial to recognize the dual phases or positions that Mernissi held as a writer—both as a secular feminist and as an Islamic feminist.³⁸¹ For example, her approach in "Beyond the Veil" aligns more with a secular feminist perspective, whereas "The Veil and the Male Elite" presents her Islamic feminist viewpoint. Treating these two works as continuous may lead to misconceptions and perceived contradictions in Mernissi's body of work. An example of this is highlighted by Zayzafoon's argument, suggesting that Mernissi currently believes that Islam condemns love, a perspective that she observes from Mernissi's "Beyond the Veil."³⁸² However, "The Veil and the Male Elite" offers an antithetical thesis, portraying the Prophet ﷺ as a lover who sought his wives' advice in all matters. Later in 1986, Mernissi also published "L'Amour dans les pays musulmans", a work that further strengthens her position as an Islamic feminist. This work highlights that love is integral to Islam though often repressed or forgotten.³⁸³

Mernissi's works undergo a continuous evolution, marked by shifts in style and interest. Her scholarly contributions on gender in Islam ceased in the late 1990s, following the publication of her Islamic feminism trilogy: "Le Harem politique" (The Veil and the Male Elite) in 1987, "Sultanes oubliées: femmes chefs d'état en Islam" (The Forgotten Queens of Islam) in 1990, and "La Peur-modernité: conflit Islam démocratie" (Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World) in 1992. Subsequently, Mernissi transitioned from scholarly works to fiction, publishing her first novel, "Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood," in 1994. Later notable works include a study on a model NGO in the High Atlas region titled "Les Ait débrouille: Haut Atlas" and "Scheherazade Goes West", exploring Western constructions of the harem, influenced by the reception of her novel "Dreams of Trespass" in the West.

³⁸¹ Raja Rhouni's book provides a detailed exploration of Mernissi's two positions. See Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*.

³⁸² Zayzafoon, *The Production of the Muslim Woman: Negotiating Text, History, and Ideology*, 2.

³⁸³ Mernissi, *L'Amour Dans Les Pays Musulmans*.

In the later stages of her life, Mernissi focused on civil society, aiming to strengthen civic initiatives by fostering networking and collaboration among leaders, as evident from the biography written on her website. This subchapter provides an overview of Mernissi's diverse works, setting the stage for a detailed exploration of her written contributions. Among the significant works authored by Mernissi are as follows:

3.1.2.1 Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in the Modern Muslim Society (1975)

Fatema Mernissi's seminal work, "Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in the Modern Muslim Society" (1975), is a groundbreaking exploration of women's experiences within Islam, challenging prevalent stereotypes and establishing her as a leading Arab feminist scholar.³⁸⁴ Originating as Mernissi's doctoral dissertation at Brandeis University between 1970 and 1973, the book conscientiously addresses Western readers, scrutinizing women's rights in Muslim societies.³⁸⁵

The book embodies a dual critique characterizing Mernissi's broader writings—it criticizes and confronts patriarchal Islam while equally challenging the colonial West, particularly the prevailing myth that Western colonization, notably by France, propelled "Moroccan women's emancipation." Mernissi demystifies the assumption that France served as a 'modernizing' force and contests the idea that native women's emancipation naturally aligns with the scheme of modernity initiated by the French Protectorate. Notably, she dispels the notion that the colonial government promoted the education of young native women.³⁸⁶

Mernissi also defines "Beyond the Veil" as a study of sexual space boundaries, exploring how Islam designs and projects a specific vision of female sexuality into mundane space. It emphasizes Islam's materialistic worldview, encompassing terrestrial power and access to worldly pleasures. Contrary to typical perspective and commentary on

³⁸⁴ Malik, "Towards a Feminist Interpretation of Islam: Faith and Gender in the Work of Fatima Mernissi," 25.

³⁸⁵ Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (Cambridge & New York: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1975), 5; Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 47.

³⁸⁶ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 48.

the treatments of women in Islam, Mernissi's work identifies a key component of how Islam utilizes space for sexual control.³⁸⁷ Rhouni sees Mernissi's "Beyond the Veil" as a crucial contribution to the academic discourse of gender in Islam, acknowledging its radical critique of Islam's misogyny. While the book adopts a secularist position and a disparaging attitude to Islam, it is viewed as an exposition of Islamic legal notions and an early stage in the development of Islamic feminism.³⁸⁸

Despite this book receiving acclaim for its thought-provoking analysis, it faced criticism for theoretical confusion, undisciplined methodology, and an episodic style. Scholars point out its treatment of Islam outside historical contexts and the potential generalizability issues arising from a focus on the urban petite bourgeoisie in Morocco.³⁸⁹ Nonetheless, the work remains valuable for the questions it raises and its detailed bibliographic contributions, shedding light on evolving women's roles in the Middle East and enriching the discourse on gender dynamics in Muslim societies. Mernissi's book serves as a foundational resource for further research in understanding male-female relationships within the context of Islam and modernization.

3.1.2.2 Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women (1983)

Fatema Mernissi's work incorporates a secular impression to unveil the historical background of gendered subalternity in Morocco, challenging the dominant male discourse and providing a voice to working-class women. Through interviews with women from various backgrounds, Mernissi constructs a subaltern gendered accounts that challenged the documented history of Morocco that was influenced by bourgeois male elitism. This approach is reflected in her book "Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women" (1983), where she strives to rewrite Moroccan history from the views of the female subaltern—those historically marginalized and excluded from historical narratives.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁷ Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, Indiana University Press, Revised Ed (Cambridge, Mass.: Indiana University Press, 1987), xvi.

³⁸⁸ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 39.

³⁸⁹ Joseph, "Review of Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society by Fatima Mernissi," 468.

³⁹⁰ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 43.

The interviews reveal the contradictions between women's perspectives and the prevailing male discourse, emphasizing the silence imposed on women and the disparities in their lived experiences.³⁹¹ Mernissi explores the impact of socioeconomic changes on women's access to public space, employment, and education.³⁹² The interviews shed light on the struggles women face for survival, challenging the portrayal of women as weak and dependent.³⁹³

Contrary to the male discourse, Mernissi accentuates women as economic agents playing a significant role in income generation and labour. This challenges the perception of women as weak and dependent on men. The interviews emphasize that women are participating in economics due to their need to survive, while the dominant discourse removes men from understanding these struggles.³⁹⁴ Mernissi also critiques the implications of the male discourse for national development, highlighting the oversight of women's contributions.³⁹⁵

In her examination of the dominant discourse, Mernissi questions its claim to scientific status and definition of cultural heritage. Rejecting quantitative approaches, she opts for alternative approaches and methodologies that allow women to express their perceptions and experiences freely such as through open dialogues.³⁹⁶ Nonetheless, some argue that her analysis lacks a clear distinction between economic and ideological factors, overlooking broader socio-economic contexts.³⁹⁷ Additionally, her choice to write in French has been questioned in light of her intention and sincerity to contribute to Arab thought and women's empowerment.

³⁹¹ Fatima Mernissi, *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women*, ed. Mary Jo Lakeland (London: The Women's Press, 1988), 3.

³⁹² Mernissi, 219–24; Julie Peteet, "Review of *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women* by Fatima Mernissi; Mary Jo Lakeland; *Both Right and Left Handed: Arab Women Talk about Their Lives* by Bouthaina Shaaban," *Middle East Journal* 43, no. 3 (1989): 545.

³⁹³ Mernissi, *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women*, 1988, 5.

³⁹⁴ Mernissi, 2.

³⁹⁵ Peteet, "Review of *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women* by Fatima Mernissi; Mary Jo Lakeland; *Both Right and Left Handed: Arab Women Talk about Their Lives* by Bouthaina Shaaban," 545.

³⁹⁶ Peteet, 545.

³⁹⁷ El-Manssoury, "Review of *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women* by Fatima Mernissi," 358.

3.1.2.3 *Woman in the Muslim Unconscious (1984)*

Fatima Mernissi's "Woman in the Muslim Unconscious" is a significant exploration of gender equality within Islam, building on her previous works to challenge androcentrism in Islamic legal philosophy and early Islamic thought. The book analyses the representation of women in Islamic culture, focusing on the Muslim psyche and their role in the religion.

An intriguing aspect of the book is Mernissi's use of the pseudonym Fatna Ait Sabbah, which, while secretly employed to avoid reprisals, has become common knowledge to those in academic spheres and those scholars familiar with her works.³⁹⁸ The content, references to Mernissi's other works, and a shared translator with "The Veil and the Male Elite" all point to her authorship.³⁹⁹

Mernissi's analysis delves into two distinct discourses on gender and sexuality within Islam—the erotic discourse and the orthodox discourse.⁴⁰⁰ The erotic discourse objectifies women, reducing them to sexual drives, while the orthodox discourse justifies their subjugation and symbolically mutilates them in order to uphold the patriarchal religious system. Both discourses, Mernissi argues, serve in the benefit of economically reliant neo-colonial Muslim countries and reinforce the global authoritarian political system.

While essential in critiquing the androcentric nature of Islamic thought, Mernissi's secularist feminist approach in this book has limitations. By reducing Islam to a mere ideology, she overlooks the plurality of interpretations and historical contexts, reinforcing the fixity of orthodox views and neglecting alternative perspectives within Islam.

Despite these limitations, "Woman in the Muslim Unconscious" plays a vital role in challenging the androcentric and misogynistic aspects of Islam. It initiates discussions on gender equality and emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of Islamic

³⁹⁸ For more details, see Svensson, *Women's Human Rights and Islam: A Study of Three Attempts at Accommodation*, 12:112.

³⁹⁹ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 179; Joan Isabel Listernick, "Sabbah's Legacy: The Evolution of the Image of Woman in the Muslim Unconscious" (Boston College University, 2016), 2; Svensson, *Women's Human Rights and Islam: A Study of Three Attempts at Accommodation*, 12:112.

⁴⁰⁰ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 179.

theology. This book serves as a foundation for further exploration and dialogue on women's rights and empowerment within Islamic societies.

3.1.2.4 L'Amour Dans Les Pays Musulmans (1986)

In her book, "L'Amour dans les pays musulmans: A travers le miroir des textes anciens,"⁴⁰¹ Fatima Mernissi explores the concept of love in Muslim societies, drawing from historical texts and modern experiences. The book showcases her signature style of blending humour, anecdotal storytelling, and deep historical knowledge to give readers a broad perspective on the topic.

According to Rhouni, "L'Amour dans les pays musulmans" signifies a pivotal moment in Mernissi's feminist journey, as it represents her initial Islamic feminist work.⁴⁰² The book challenges the notion that Islam is inherently against love, presenting a different perspective by highlighting the writings of liberal Muslim scholars and the tradition of Sufism. While "L'Amour dans les pays musulmans" exhibits a diminished analytical rigor in comparison to Mernissi's earlier works, owing to its inception as a compilation of articles initially published in the 1984 issue of *Jeune Afrique* (Young Africa), it does sustain the author's rebellious aesthetic.

This book holds significant importance in the discourse on gender equality. Mernissi underscores the significance of beauty and seduction in the court of the Caliphs and during the Prophet's ﷺ time, challenging stereotypes and misunderstandings that have surfaced with the rise of Islamist currents. She explores ancient religious texts, showcasing the views of progressive scholars and emphasizing the role of Sufism, to demonstrate that Islam has a nuanced and egalitarian approach to love and relationships.⁴⁰³

Mernissi also delves into the historical figures of Sakīnah and ʿĀishah Bint Ṭalḥah, arguing that feminism is authentically rooted in Islamic thought.⁴⁰⁴ The book addresses the

⁴⁰¹ Translation "Love in Muslim countries: Through the mirror of ancient texts."

⁴⁰² Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 195.

⁴⁰³ Mernissi, *L'Amour Dans Les Pays Musulmans*, 18–20.

⁴⁰⁴ Mernissi, 19.

context of its time, navigating the political landscape of the late 1970s and 1980s when political Islam was gaining influence. Mernissi's feminist project needed to accommodate the centrality of Islam to Muslim identity.⁴⁰⁵

A strong point of the book is Mernissi's attention to the drastic changes occurring in the Arab world due to technology, emphasizing the role of the internet in changing interpersonal relationships. She views this digital revolution as an opportunity for the East and West to transcend the fear of the 'other'. Another highlight is Mernissi's exploration of love rituals, the language of passion, and how they've evolved to the present day, connecting with young Moroccans to understand their experiences with love.

The book suggests that love can be a unifying force between East and West, challenging the notion that these two civilizations are irreconcilable. However, it also has limitations, such as the adoption of an apologetic discourse and the romanticization of certain aspects of Islam. Mernissi struggles with reconciling the *Qur'ān's* androcentric discourse with her feminist viewpoint. Despite these limitations, "L'Amour dans les pays musulmans" contributes to the dialogue on gender equality in Muslim societies, challenging stereotypes and providing a nuanced understanding of Islam's teachings on love and relationships.

3.1.2.5 The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam (1987)

Fatima Mernissi's 1987 book, "The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam," undertakes a comprehensive exploration of the role of women in Islam, dispelling the misconception that women's rights and equality are incompatible with Islamic teachings.⁴⁰⁶ Mernissi conducts a nuanced examination of the lives of Muslim women from the past, revisiting their roles and contributions through a careful re-reading

⁴⁰⁵ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 198.

⁴⁰⁶ Mernissi's works, "Le Harem politique: le Prophète et les femmes" (Paris: Albin Michel, 1987) and "The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam," translated by Mary Jo Lakeland (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1991), with an alternative British edition titled "Women and Islam: An Historical Enquiry and Theological Enquiry" (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).

of historical literature. Her focus extends to highlighting the agency of women, particularly the wives of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, in shaping the Islamic faith and securing their rights within society.

A significant aspect of Mernissi's argument centres on the fabrication of misogynistic *ḥadīths*, actions and sayings attributed to Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, which have been utilized to subjugate women. She contends that these *ḥadīths* were deliberately fabricated by men for personal, economic, and political motives. Drawing attention to the endeavours of influential women like 'Āishah, one of the Prophet's ﷺ wives, Mernissi emphasizes their active role in disputing and correcting these fabricated *ḥadīths*. Notably, she reveals that the fabrication of *ḥadīths* commenced during the Prophet's ﷺ lifetime, influencing the ongoing status of women in Islamic societies.⁴⁰⁷

In her investigation of the historical context surrounding women in early Islam, Mernissi addresses questions pertaining to the true status of women during the time of the Prophet ﷺ. Delving into the contradictions within the *Qur'ān* and the *Ḥadīth*, she sheds light on the political and social circumstances that influenced the interpretation of these foundational texts. Mernissi argues that the struggle for power and control in Islam has led to the suppression of women's rights, despite the initially embraced egalitarian principles of the faith.

For example, Mernissi meticulously examines the practice of veiling and its historical roots in the early Islamic community. She challenges conventional interpretations of Islamic texts, asserting that the veil symbolizes unjust male authority over women. She contends that misogynistic *ḥadīths* perpetuate a tradition of misogyny within Islam, tracing it back to the Prophet's ﷺ alleged compliance with a male elite keen on curtailing women's rights. According to Mernissi, the veil becomes a symbolic battleground reflecting an

⁴⁰⁷ Shahida Lateef, "Review of Women and Islam: An Historical and Theological Enquiry by Fatima Mernissi," *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 2, no. 2 (1995): 279.

enduring conflict between men and women, a remnant of a civil war that hampers women's progress.⁴⁰⁸

Exploring the historical context, Mernissi posits that the imposition of veiling on all Muslim women was a result of a male elite's desire to control women, shifting blame away from men for their actions. However, her argument attributing the veil to women bearing the consequences of male failure is subject to criticism.⁴⁰⁹ Despite incorporating traditional Islamic methodologies, Mernissi upholds her previous assertion that Islam views women's essence as anti-divine, excluding them from the community of believers.⁴¹⁰ However, scholars challenge some of the *ḥadīths* she relies upon, citing contradictions in her interpretation and highlighting her reliance on rejected sources. Additionally, her claim that the veil represents exclusion from the Muslim community overlooks *Qur'anic* verses emphasizing women's equal worth and their membership in the community of believers.⁴¹¹

While Mernissi's arguments may have some weaknesses and inconsistencies, her book makes a significant and valuable contribution to the ongoing conversation about women's rights in Islam. By questioning established interpretations, providing historical context, and highlighting restrictive practices, Mernissi encourages a thoughtful examination of gender roles. Throughout her book, she challenges the conventional understanding of Islamic texts and champions a feminist theology that empowers women within the Islamic framework. With passion, she calls for a reassessment of religious texts and the rejection of teachings that sustain inequality and discrimination against women. Mernissi's work stands as a crucial analysis of the historical and theological foundations of Islam, emphasizing the potential for gender equality within the faith and advocating for the rights of women in Muslim societies.

⁴⁰⁸ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 191; Katherine H. Bullock, "Review of *The Veil and The Male Elite* by Fatima Mernissi," *Journal of Law and Religion* 15, no. 1 (2001): 529.

⁴⁰⁹ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 187.

⁴¹⁰ Mernissi, 69–70.

⁴¹¹ Bullock, "Review of *The Veil and The Male Elite* by Fatima Mernissi," 530.

3.1.2.6 Chahrazad N'est Pas Marocaine: Autrement, Elle Serait Salariee (1988)

In her 1988 work "Chahrazad N'est Pas Marocaine: Autrement, Elle Serait Salariee,"⁴¹² Fatema Mernissi presents a feminist critique of the nationalist discourse surrounding women's liberation in Morocco. Central to her argument is the challenge to the prevailing notion that women's liberation primarily targeted upper-class and bourgeois women, excluding the lower-class women who were the focus of Mernissi's research.

Mernissi questions the authenticity and sincerity of women's liberation in Morocco, asserting that it predominantly aimed at emancipating the secluded women of the urban bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie—individuals from the same class as the nationalist reformists themselves. Her emphasis lies on the imperative to critically assess the nationalist reformist discourse and its restricted efficacy in addressing the concerns and struggles of lower-class women.

While Mernissi's critique is robust and uncompromising, she also acknowledges the positive aspects of the nationalist movement. Commending the nationalist renaissance of Moroccan society in the 1940s, she underscores the profound societal re-evaluation initiated by the nationalist elite. Leaders like Kamal Ataturk, Habib Bourguiba, and King Mohammed V are celebrated for their pivotal roles in advancing women's education and employment, marking significant milestones in the empowerment of women throughout history.⁴¹³

Mernissi's work reveals a shift in her discourse over time. Subsequent writings reflect a more celebratory tone towards the nationalist movement and the Moroccan state, urging the government to take further measures for women's political participation and rights. This shift is interpreted as a strategic approach, engaging with the state and its apparatuses to enact laws ensuring women's education and equal access to economic and social privileges.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹² Translation "Sheherazade is not a Moroccan: Otherwise, She will be a Salaried Worker."

⁴¹³ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 65.

⁴¹⁴ Fatima Mernissi, *Chahrazad n'est Pas Marocaine: Autrement Elle Serait Salariee, Le Fennec* (Casablanca: Le Fennec, 1988), 46.

Addressing the issue of illiteracy among rural women becomes a central objective in "Chahrazad N'est Pas Marocaine." Mernissi identifies illiteracy as a significant barrier to the well-being and empowerment of rural women. She argues that by promoting girls' schooling, especially in rural areas, the state can break the cycle of illiteracy and provide opportunities for women to access valued and salaried jobs. The underlying intention is to influence state policies and actions, moving beyond mere criticism to strategic engagement.

In summary, Mernissi's work constitutes a feminist re-evaluation of the nationalist discourse on female liberation in Morocco. By exposing its limitations, she advocates for a more inclusive and comprehensive approach that addresses the concerns of all women, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds. While her stance evolves, her overarching objective remains centred on promoting gender equality and empowering women through strategic collaboration with the state.

3.1.2.8 The Forgotten Queens of Islam (1990)

Fatema Mernissi's "The Forgotten Queens of Islam" delves into the historical landscape of women's political leadership in the Muslim world, challenging the prevailing belief that Benazir Bhutto was the first female leader in a Muslim community.⁴¹⁵ Mernissi seeks to unveil other influential women who played substantial roles in Muslim state affairs but were silenced in historical narratives, thus highlighting the power and agency of queens in the Islamic world, and contesting the notion that political authority was exclusively male.⁴¹⁶

Despite the English version of "The Forgotten Queens" being published after "Islam and Democracy," the French original, titled "Sultanes Oubliées: femmes chefs d'état en Islam," preceded the French original of "Islam and Democracy" by two years in 1990. Mernissi's chronological publication history is an essential context for understanding the evolution of her ideas.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*.

⁴¹⁶ Malik, "Towards a Feminist Interpretation of Islam: Faith and Gender in the Work of Fatima Mernissi," 25.

⁴¹⁷ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 150.

Within the book, Mernissi explores social, religious, and historical factors contributing to the erasure of women rulers in Islamic countries. She scrutinizes the patriarchal construction of the veil as a tool to marginalize women from positions of power and examines how women throughout Islamic history subverted and undermined this spatial and physical imposition. Despite the constraints imposed by the veil and separate spheres, Mernissi identifies fifteen queens who defied patriarchal norms and ruled openly across Islamic empires.⁴¹⁸

Mernissi challenges traditional narratives by documenting the lives of forgotten queens who openly governed, minted coins, and had prayers recited in their names at mosques. While recognizing the exceptional circumstances that facilitated their reigns, such as Islamic respect for royalty and nobility, she acknowledges that the veil and separate spheres prevented many influential women from openly governing.⁴¹⁹

Despite some errors and a lack of comprehensive analysis of women's history, Mernissi's work offers valuable insights into the historical and contemporary positions of women in Islamic societies. She connects the past to the present, examining contradictions between democratic ideals and religious tenets conflicting with individual rights. Mernissi argues that the coexistence of the Islamic state with authoritarian regimes suppresses women and the general population, perceived as threats to established power structures.⁴²⁰

In conclusion, "The Forgotten Queens of Islam" provides a thought-provoking exploration of women's political independence and legitimacy as rulers in the Muslim world. It challenges misconceptions, serving as a valuable resource for understanding historical and cultural dynamics shaping gender relations in Islamic societies.

⁴¹⁸ Haleh Afshar, "Review of The Forgotten Queens of Islam by Fatima Mernissi; A World of Difference: Islam and Gender Hierarchy in Turkey by Julie Marcus," trans. Mary Jo Lakeland, *Signs* 21, no. 1 (1995): 205–6.

⁴¹⁹ Afshar, 207.

⁴²⁰ Mary Ann Fay, "Review of The Forgotten Queens of Islam by Fatima Mernissi," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 3 (1999): 455, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020743800055562>.

3.1.2.7 *Islam and Democracy (1992)*

In her 1992 work, "Islam and Democracy," Fatema Mernissi advocates for the reinstatement of democracy in the Arab world.⁴²¹ Addressing the intricate manipulation of Islamic symbolism by despotic rulers to subvert democratic processes, Mernissi contends that religion can both bolster and undermine the authentic democratic aspirations of the populace.⁴²² This publication marks the culmination of Mernissi's Islamic feminist trajectory, reacting to the first Gulf War and positioning her as a prominent figure in 'liberal' or 'progressive' Islam due to her advocacy for women's rights in Muslim societies.⁴²³

Mernissi's exploration of the historical evolution of Islam unveils the animosity of Arab youth towards democracy. She traces early Islamic concepts of obedience to God, balanced by rational free will and personal opinion, highlighting the shift towards blind obedience to rulers under the 'Abbāsids. This transformation, she argues, suppressed the individualistic facets of Islam, attributing the rise of authoritarianism to patriarchal states and male dominance. The book sheds light on how Gulf sheikdoms exploit religion and oil wealth to perpetuate control.⁴²⁴

Mernissi's analysis underscores the intricate interplay between state structures, cultural worldviews, and the authoritarian ethos in the Arab world. She posits that the Arab world grapples with modernity without a deep comprehension of its foundational principles, advocating for a reformation of political terminology and a journey towards plural modernities. Mernissi envisions a transformative journey led by middle-class professional women in the Arab world.⁴²⁵

Despite her optimism for change, Mernissi acknowledges challenges, particularly Western support for patrimonialist regimes hindering democracy. She calls for Western intervention to install democracy and ensure equitable wealth distribution, emphasizing the

⁴²¹ Fatima Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, trans. Mary Jo Lakeland (Reading, MA.: Addison-Wesley, 1992), 2–3, 15.

⁴²² Malik, "Towards a Feminist Interpretation of Islam: Faith and Gender in the Work of Fatima Mernissi," 25.

⁴²³ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 236.

⁴²⁴ Daniel Brumberg, "Review of *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World* by Fatima Mernissi," *Contemporary Sociology* 23, no. 5 (1994): 680.

⁴²⁵ Brumberg, 680.

importance of a coherent economic reform plan to address the crises stemming from decades of state-managed underdevelopment.⁴²⁶ Mernissi cautions against rapid democratization without a concurrent transformation of Arab civil societies, fearing empowerment of forces contrary to her goals.

In conclusion, "Islam and Democracy" critically examines the intricate relationship between Islam, democracy, and gender equality. Mernissi advocates for the reinstatement of democracy in the Arab world, elucidating historical factors contributing to the authoritarian ethos. The work calls for a reformation of political terminology, empowerment of Arab civil societies, and recognition of gender equality's significance in achieving true democracy in the Arab world.

3.1.2.9 Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood (1994)

Fatema Mernissi's autobiographical fiction, "Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood", provides a compelling exploration of her upbringing in a harem in 1940s Morocco. The narrative not only delves into Mernissi's experiences but also those of the women in the harem, including her mother, grandmother, aunts, and cousins, offering a rare glimpse into the concealed world of harems and uncovering the universal desires and needs of the women within.

A central theme in Mernissi's work is the significance of self-expression and personal happiness within a communal-based household. She elucidates the challenges faced by women in a domestic harem, where societal norms often curtail opportunities for self-fulfilment. Mernissi highlighted the imperative for women, particularly those of colour, to have a platform to share their voices and stories where they were frequently left unheard.⁴²⁷

Through childhood memories, Mernissi provides insights into gender roles and social expectations in 1940s Morocco. The narrative portrays varying perspectives within

⁴²⁶ Brumberg, 681.

⁴²⁷ Raihanah Mohd. Mydin, "The Harem Within: An Interdisciplinary Reading of the World of the Muslim Moroccan Woman in Fatima Mernissi's Autobiography" (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1999), 7.

her family, with some women advocating for modernization and criticizing seclusion, while others adhering to traditional values. This dynamic reflects the clash between traditional and modern values in Moroccan society during that era, intensified by French influence advocating for monogamy and modern education.⁴²⁸

While Mernissi's work offers valuable insights into harem life, concerns are raised about the accuracy and anachronisms within the stories. Given the high illiteracy rate among elite women during that time and the challenges faced by uneducated Moroccans in comprehending literary Arabic, it becomes difficult to fully accept the extent to which medieval Arabic oral literature and the works of early Egyptian feminists significantly influenced the consciousness of these women, as Mernissi suggests.⁴²⁹

Despite these critiques, "Dreams of Trespass" sheds light on the struggles and aspirations of women in a patriarchal society, emphasizing the power of self-expression, the impact of cultural transformations, and the importance of gender equality. Mernissi's narrative, by sharing her experiences and documenting the lives of the women in her harem, highlights the importance of challenging societal norms and advocating women's rights.

In summary, "Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood" stands as a significant contribution to gender studies, cultural studies, and the autobiographical genre. Mernissi's work explores themes of agency, cultural continuity, and the complexities of navigating gender boundaries in a changing society. It serves as a testament to the resilience and determination of women striving for personal freedom and self-fulfilment within the constraints of societal expectations.

3.1.2.10 Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory (1996)

Fatima Mernissi's work, "Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory", directs attention to gender equality and the challenges faced by women in the Arab world. Mernissi contends that education plays a pivotal role for women in the Middle East, advocating for the

⁴²⁸ Christine Eickelman, "Review of Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood by Fatima Mernissi," *Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA)* 28, no. 2 (1994): 251.

⁴²⁹ Eickelman, 252.

transformative power of writing as a tool for self-expression and empowerment. She encourages women to prioritize intellectual growth over superficial beauty standards, positing writing as a rejuvenating "elixir of youth."⁴³⁰

Despite its 1996 publication, the book is a collection of Mernissi's essays from the late 1970s and early 1980s, representing her 'secularist' stage during that period. For instance, a chapter in the book originated from her early work, "Morocco: The Merchant's Daughter and the Son of the Sultan," published in 1983.⁴³¹ This historical context is important for the understanding of the evolution of Mernissi's ideas.

In the book, Mernissi critiques Arab governments for their oppressive treatment of women, viewing the emphasis on veiling as a tool to silence them. She perceives these policies as part of a broader strategy to hinder democratic participation among citizens. She also urges the Arab governments to redirect resources from military endeavours to address pressing women's issues and contribute to social development.⁴³²

However, Mernissi's generalizations about "the Muslim woman" and "the Muslim male" face criticism for implying a uniform experience that overlooks the diversity within Muslim societies.⁴³³ Suggestions are made to historicize her claims and ground them in empirical research. Despite this, Mernissi's work is lauded for its accessibility and political engagement, as she advocates for feminist texts that reach a wide audience, big and small, avoiding unnecessary jargon.⁴³⁴

Embracing the feminist label, Mernissi confidently explores questions that offend her and focuses on the discrimination faced by women in the Arab world. She positions her work as part of a global feminist project in the revision of the past Muslim societies, asserting that understanding and challenging misogyny through the exploration of Muslim

⁴³⁰ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 2.

⁴³¹ This is the English translation of one of Mernissi's earliest works—"Qui l'emporte la femme ou l'homme? conte populaire Marocain recueilli par Fatima Mernissi" (Who wins woman or man? A folktale collected by Fatima Mernissi)—originally published in 1983. See Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 4.

⁴³² Anne Meneley, "Review of Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory by Fatima Mernissi; Women, the Family, and Divorce Laws in Islamic History by Amira El Azhary Sonbol," *Signs* 25, no. 2 (2000): 614.

⁴³³ Meneley, 616.

⁴³⁴ Meneley, 617.

heritage are crucial for achieving equal opportunities and countering fundamentalism in resource-limited environments.⁴³⁵

Acknowledging some flaws, Mernissi's work is commended for its accessibility and political impact, inspiring political activism and critical thinking. Despite generalizations and a lack of comprehensive historical analysis, this work is seen as a form of subversive feminism in the contemporary Middle East. Mernissi reinterprets Islamic history, reclaiming the significance of powerful Muslim women of the past and challenging conservative versions of Islamic history. In summary, "Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory" contributes to the ongoing discourse on gender equality, challenging prevailing gender norms and stereotypes in the Arab world.

3.1.2.11 Les Aït-Débrouille: Ong rurales du Haut-Atlas (1998)

Fatima Mernissi's 1998 book, "Les Aït-Débrouille: Ong rurales du Haut-Atlas,"⁴³⁶ explores the interplay of gender equality, Islamic feminism, and social capital in Morocco. As a sociologist, Mernissi investigates the connections between traditional forms of solidarity and social capital within rural communities.⁴³⁷

The book delves into the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in harnessing the social capital within these communities for implementing development projects and mobilizing illiterate individuals in managing daily village affairs. Mernissi contends that NGOs can effectively utilize traditional solidarity to promote social and economic progress.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁵ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, vii, 61; Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 120.

⁴³⁶ Translation "The Ait Resourceful Coping: Rural NGOs in the High Atlas."

⁴³⁷ Fatima Mernissi, *ONG Rurales Du Haut-Atlas : Les Aït-Débrouille, Le Fennec* (Casablanca: Le Fennec, 1998), 2-7.

⁴³⁸ Rashid Touhtou, "Civil Society in Morocco under the New 2011 Constitution: Issues, Stakes and Challenges," 2014, 8, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep12647.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Aa2f05d13a792eb685b17592984808d9b&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1.

Emphasizing the significance of trust and community support in the traditional *Jamā'ah* (community) structure, Mernissi highlights how individual achievements can lead to influence and power, colloquially known as becoming 'the brain of the *jamā'ah*.' This influential position allows individuals to exert authority over others without being held accountable, a crucial aspect in the concept of trust and social capital within the community.⁴³⁹

Furthermore, Mernissi explores the potential of associational involvement and networks in addressing challenges faced by rural areas, such as isolation, marginalization, and lack of information. She advocates for investing in civil society, particularly by invigorating NGOs and encouraging local participation in communal affairs, as a means to stabilize the population and prevent emigration.⁴⁴⁰

In the realm of Islamic feminism, Mernissi's work offers insights into how social capital and traditional solidarity can be leveraged to advance gender equality. By tapping into existing social capital, Mernissi suggests that women's empowerment can be facilitated within the framework of Islamic values.

In conclusion, "Les Aït-Débrouille: Ong rurales du Haut-Atlas" provides a nuanced examination of gender equality, social capital, and Islamic feminism in Moroccan rural communities. Mernissi's analysis sheds light on the potential of community-based initiatives and associational involvement to foster development and address societal challenges.

3.1.2.12 Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems (2001)

Published in 2001, "Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems" challenges Western constructions of the harem and confronts its associated misconceptions

⁴³⁹ Mernissi, *ONG Rurales Du Haut-Atlas : Les Aït-Débrouille*, 52; Bernadette Montanari and Sylvia I. Bergh, "The Challenges of 'Participatory' Development in a Semi-Authoritarian Context: The Case of an Essential Oil Distillation Project in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco †," *The Journal of North African Studies*, 2014, 20.

⁴⁴⁰ Mernissi, *ONG Rurales Du Haut-Atlas : Les Aït-Débrouille*, 41; Joan Lacomba, "Migración y Desarrollo Rural En Marruecos. El Papel de Los Emigrantes y Sus Asociaciones," in *Migración y Desarrollo*, ed. Angeles Escriva and Natalia Ribas (Cordoba: CSIC, 2004), 185–212.

and stereotypes.⁴⁴¹ Mernissi contends that the Western portrayal of the harem primarily as a locus for male sexual fantasy and domination contrasts with its historical role in Eastern traditions as a seat of female power and knowledge.⁴⁴²

The central argument of the book revolves around the dichotomy in Scheherazade's depiction in Eastern and Western literature. Mernissi uses the iconic figure from "One Thousand and One Nights" to illustrate how the Western misunderstanding of the harem often associates it with female subjugation. In contrast, Mernissi underscores Scheherazade as a powerful female figure who, through intelligence and storytelling, resisted the sultan's dominance.⁴⁴³

Employing cultural analysis, art, and historical references, Mernissi challenges the Western perception of the harem and its implications to the gender equality mission. She explores various cultural aspects, including belly dancing, ballets, Persian miniatures, and literary works, such as those by Edgar Allan Poe, to illustrate the differing representations of the harem and female sexuality. Mernissi argues that Western portrayals often dichotomize love and sexual desire from intelligence, perpetuating the notion that intelligent women are not sexually desirable.⁴⁴⁴

The book's objective is to dismantle Orientalist stereotypes and highlights the agency and resistance of women in Muslim societies. Mernissi posits that the harem historically served as a site of female empowerment, and the Western representation of it as a space of female subjugation overlooks social and cultural transformations in Muslim societies. By challenging Western misconceptions and highlighting women's roles in

⁴⁴¹ The English edition, titled "Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems," was published in New York by Washington Square Press in 2001. An earlier version was released with the title "Etes-vous vacciné contre le harem" (Are you vaccinated against the harem) in Casablanca by Le Fenec in 1998. The French edition, titled "Le Harem et l'Occident" (The harem and the West), was published in Paris by Albin Michel in 2001.

⁴⁴² Fatima Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems*, Washington Square Press (New York: Washington Square Press, 2001), 2–10.

⁴⁴³ Mernissi, 51, 68.

⁴⁴⁴ Mernissi, 50–79; Edgar Allan Poe, "The Thousand and Second Tale of Scheherazade," in *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* (London: Everyman's Library, 1998), 332–49.

resisting domination through intelligence and subliminal narrative, Mernissi advocates for better Muslim women's portrayal in the Western perspective.

"Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems" offers a thought-provoking analysis of the harem, gender dynamics, and the cultural exchange between East and West. Mernissi's use of humour and satire, coupled with her personal experiences as a Moroccan woman navigating Western culture, adds depth and authenticity to her exploration of these themes. Overall, the book contributes significantly to the ongoing discourse on gender equality, Orientalism, and the representation of Muslim women in Western societies.

3.1.2.13 Les Sindbads Marocains: Voyage dans le Maroc civique (2004)

In her 2004 book, "Les Sindbads Marocains: Voyage dans le Maroc civique,"⁴⁴⁵ Fatema Mernissi explores the transformative journey of young individuals in the High Atlas Mountains and the desert who have become virtual Sindbads, navigating and communicating through the internet. The book underscores the impact of civil initiatives and the democratization of knowledge and communication facilitated by internet and satellite technology.⁴⁴⁶

Mernissi places a strong emphasis on comprehending the aspirations and dreams of the younger generation, particularly those in rural areas, challenging the prevailing narrative that young Moroccans are primarily driven to emigrate. Instead, she provides examples of their patriotism and involvement in civic initiatives, showcasing the remarkable success achieved when young people are trusted and supported by their elders.

Based on five years of research, Mernissi illuminates the lives of ordinary individuals often overlooked by a media fixated on terrorism. The narrative captures the metamorphosis of young people in the High Atlas Mountains and the desert, empowered

⁴⁴⁵ Translation "The Moroccan Sindbads: Journey into Civic Morocco."

⁴⁴⁶ Fatema Mernissi, *Les Sindbads Marocains: Voyage Dans Le Maroc Civique*, Marsam Editions (Rabat: MARSAM, 2004).

by the internet to dedicate themselves to environmental causes, such as protecting endangered wildlife and preserving prehistoric sites.

Building on her earlier work on the "Aït Débrouille: ONG du Haut Atlas," Mernissi underscores Morocco's intelligent focus on human intellect as a winning combination, combining civic initiative with the liberalization of telecommunications. The book challenges stereotypes about rural and urban areas, highlighting the vitality and resourcefulness of rural youth who, armed with internet connectivity and solar energy, surpass their urban counterparts in centres like Casablanca.⁴⁴⁷

Mernissi's contribution in "Les Sindbads Marocains" reflects her dedication to understanding the dynamics of Moroccan society and the potential for social change. By shifting the focus to marginalized areas and amplifying the voices of young people, she challenges preconceived notions and provides a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary Morocco. The book stands as a testament to the power of grassroots movements and the role of technology in shaping the aspirations and activism of the younger generation.

3.1.2.14 Un Libro Para La Paz – Asturias Prize Book (2004)

"Un Libro Para La Paz"⁴⁴⁸ stands as a notable work by Fatema Mernissi, renowned for her contributions to feminist discourse, but diverging into the theme of peace, harmony and tolerance which earned her the Asturias Prize in 2004.⁴⁴⁹

The focal point of "Un Libro Para La Paz" revolves around the analysis of the literary character Sinbad the Sailor and his global adventures. Mernissi draws a compelling contrast between Sinbad and the prevalent American cowboy archetype often depicted in movies. Through this comparison, she seeks to reclaim dialogue as a strategy divorced from

⁴⁴⁷ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 241.

⁴⁴⁸ Translation "A Book for Peace."

⁴⁴⁹ "Books," fatemamernissi.com, accessed July 12, 2023, <https://fatemamernissi.com/books>.

violence, political manipulation, and irrational fears, proposing it as the singular solution to current global conflicts.

Examining Sinbad's character, Mernissi explores the potential for peacebuilding through understanding and communication. Sinbad, the legendary seafarer, embodies the spirit of exploration and encounters with diverse cultures. Mernissi highlighted the importance of engaging in dialogue, positioning it as a preferable alternative to violence or manipulation in addressing global conflicts, overcoming differences and finding peaceful resolutions. Critiquing the prevalent use of aggression and manipulation in conflict resolution, she argues that these approaches only perpetuate division and hostility. Instead, Mernissi advocates for the transformative power of open, respectful dialogue to bridge gaps and foster understanding.

"Un Libro Para La Paz" advances the notion that dialogue possesses the potential to break down barriers separating individuals and nations. Through the promotion of empathy, open-mindedness, and mutual respect, Mernissi posits that a culture of peace can be cultivated, leading to a more harmonious global society.

In conclusion, Fatema Mernissi's "Un Libro Para La Paz" seeks to recover the strategy of dialogue by contrasting Sinbad the Sailor with the American cowboy archetype. By examining Sinbad's adventures and emphasizing the importance of dialogue, Mernissi advocates for peaceful conflict resolution and challenges the prevalent use of violence and manipulation. Through her work, she presents dialogue as the key to addressing the current state of global conflict and fostering a more peaceful world.

3.1.2.15 Le Jardin Des Amoureux: Les 50 Noms D'amour (2004 and 2011)

"Les 50 Noms d'amour: Le Jardin des amoureux,"⁴⁵⁰ a book by Fatema Mernissi originally published in 2004 and reprinted in 2011, offers insightful commentary on "The Garden of Lovers" by al-*Imām* ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, a 14th-century Islamic scholar. Mernissi's work presents a contemporary interpretation of the original text that was translated into

⁴⁵⁰ Translation "The Garden of Lovers: The 50 Names of Love."

French, with her commentaries translated into Arabic. The book is enriched by calligraphic creations by Mohamed Idali for each of the 50 names of love, alongside illustrations by naive art painters, Fatema Louardighi and Mohamed Bannour.⁴⁵¹

"Les 50 Noms d'amour" stands out as a visually captivating book that seamlessly merges the original text with Mernissi's modern insights and interpretations. Through her engagement with al-'Imām 'Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's work, Mernissi delves into the theme of love and its diverse dimensions from an Islamic scholarly perspective. It exemplifies Mernissi's prowess in blending her expertise as a feminist scholar with a profound understanding of Islamic traditions.

Through her reinterpretation and contextualization of the original work, she introduces a unique perspective, prompting readers to reflect on the intricate facets of love, its cultural expressions, and its relevance in the contemporary world. The artistic elements, including calligraphic designs and illustrations, enhance the aesthetic appeal of the book, providing a comprehensive and impactful reading experience.

Mernissi's commentary serves to contemporize the historical text, enabling readers to contemplate the enduring nature of love and its significance in human relationships. The book acts as a conduit between the past and the present, bridging the wisdom of medieval Islamic thinkers with contemporary understandings and experiences.

In summary, "Les 50 Noms d'amour: Le Jardin des amoureux" stands out as a captivating and thought-provoking exploration of the multifaceted nature of love, seamlessly integrating literature, art, and commentary. Mernissi's contribution to the original text opens new avenues for dialogue and understanding, rendering the book a valuable addition to the exploration of love in Islamic thought and beyond.

⁴⁵¹ "Books."

3.1.2.16 Ruses de Femmes? Ruses d'Hommes (2006)

"Ruses de Femmes? Ruses d'Hommes,"⁴⁵² edited by Fatema Mernissi in 2006, delves into the theme of women's wisdom and cunning through a Moroccan folk tale narrated by Lalla Laaziza and collected by Mernissi.⁴⁵³ The book, translated by Abdellatif Laabi and illustrated by Fatima Lourdigh, originates from Mernissi's essay titled "Morocco: The Merchant's Daughter and the Son of the Sultan," which was initially published in 1983 and later featured in various anthologies.⁴⁵⁴

The central protagonist of the tale is Aicha, a young woman residing in a traditional Moroccan household adjacent to the Sultan's palace. While finding solace in tending to her basil plants on the terrace, Aicha's freedom is compromised when the Sultan's son becomes infatuated with her, incessantly spying on her.

Aicha's intelligence shines through as she engages in a playful exchange with the Sultan's son, matching and surpassing his teasing remarks. Despite his proposal of marriage with the condition that Aicha admits men's superiority, she steadfastly refuses. Consequently, the Sultan's son locks her underground, believing he has subdued her. However, Aicha deceives him by pretending to become pregnant three times, revealing the ruse when confronted by their three children.

Aicha's victory lies in outsmarting the Sultan's son and using her seductive powers to assert dominance. The story connects to historical and mythical female figures, emphasizing the strength of women throughout history and challenging traditional gender roles.

⁴⁵² Translation "Tricks of Women? Tricks of Men."

⁴⁵³ Lalla Laâziza Tazi, *Ruses de Femmes? Ruses d'Hommes?*, ed. Fatima Mernissi, trans. Abdellatif Laâbi, *Marsam Editions* (Rabat: MARSAM, 2006).

⁴⁵⁴ The original piece was an essay named "Morocco: The Merchant's Daughter and the Son of the Sultan," serving as the English translation of one of Mernissi's early works from 1983, titled "Qui l'emporte la femme ou l'homme? conte populaire Marocain recueilli par Fatima Mernissi" (Who wins woman or man? A folktale collected by Fatima Mernissi). This essay is also included as "Morocco: The Merchant's Daughter and the Son of the Sultan" in the anthology "Sister-hood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology," edited by Robin Morgan. Furthermore, Miriam Cooke and Eliose Goldwasser contributed a translation titled "Who's Cleverer: Man or Woman" in the collection "Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writing," edited by Margot Badran and Cooke. See Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 4.

"Ruses de Femmes? Ruses d'Hommes" underscores Mernissi's dedication to promoting gender equality and Islamic feminism. Through Aicha's character, the book encourages readers to question patriarchal norms and recognize women's intellectual capacities. Mernissi's work contributes to the broader discourse on feminism within the Islamic context, advocating for equal rights and opportunities for women.

3.1.2.17 A Quoi Rêvent Les Jeunes? (2008)

"A Quoi Rêvent Les Jeunes?" is a collaborative book directed by Fatema Mernissi and was published in 2008.⁴⁵⁵ The compilation brings together the written reflections of intellectuals, artists, and journalists who participated in a seminar organized by the L'IIC (L'Istituto Italiano di Cultura) on May 26th and 27th, 2007. This initiative, conceived by Fatema Mernissi, aimed to provide a platform for young Moroccan artisans to share their dreams and aspirations with an audience of intellectuals.⁴⁵⁶

The seminar served as a catalyst for dialogue and exchange, effectively bridging the gap between the intellectual elite and the young artisans. It created a space for the voices of the youth to be heard, enabling them to articulate their dreams, hopes, and expectations.

Through "A Quoi Rêvent Les Jeunes?", Mernissi sought to illuminate the dreams and aspirations of the younger generation in Morocco. The book captures a rich tapestry of perspectives and experiences shared during the seminar, offering a nuanced understanding of the hopes and goals of young Moroccans.

In her role as a distinguished feminist scholar and writer, Mernissi played a pivotal part in establishing a platform for marginalized voices, particularly emphasizing the empowerment of youth and women. The involvement of intellectuals, artists, and journalists facilitated a meaningful dialogue that explored the dreams and hopes of the younger generation from diverse angles.

⁴⁵⁵ Translation "What do young people dream of?"

⁴⁵⁶ Fatema Mernissi, *A Quoi Rêvent Les Jeunes?*, ed. Fatema Mernissi, *Marsam Editions* (Rabat: MARSAM, 2008).

The collaborative nature of the book reflects Mernissi's commitment to inclusivity and the amplification of voices often marginalized in societal discussions. By creating a space for young artisans to articulate their dreams, "A Quoi Rêvent Les Jeunes?" contributes to the broader discourse on youth and women empowerment, social change, and the role of dreams in shaping individual and collective aspirations.

In essence, "A Quoi Rêvent Les Jeunes?" serves as a platform for the dreams and aspirations of Moroccan youth to be recognized, heard, and comprehended. It underscores the significance of fostering spaces for dialogue and promoting understanding between different segments of society, with the ultimate goal of inspiring positive social transformation and change.

3.1.2.18 Reflexions Sur La "Violence" Des Jeunes (2015)

"Réflexions Sur La "Violence" Des Jeunes" published in 2015, is a book edited and introduced by Fatema Mernissi. The focus of this book is the phenomenon known as "Tcharmil" in Morocco, which pertains to instances of individual and collective violence and gangsterism predominantly observed in urban areas involving adolescents and young adults. The objective of the book is to instigate multidisciplinary and multi-axial reflections on this phenomenon and various forms of violence committed by young people, encompassing incidents in stadiums and other contexts.⁴⁵⁷

While the media attention directed at the "Tcharmil" phenomenon may not always be proportionate to its significance, it remains a subject that warrants examination and analysis. Mernissi invites a diverse group of specialists and intellectuals to contribute to the book, ensuring a range of perspectives on the issue of violence among young people.

The book delves into the intricacies and underlying causes of youth violence, illuminating its social, psychological, and cultural dimensions. Contributors, including Professor Jallal Taoufiq, Khadijah Alaoui, Abderrahim Al Atri, Reda Dalil, Fatna Elbouih,

⁴⁵⁷ Fatema Mernissi, ed., *Réflexions Sur La «Violence» Des Jeunes*, Le Fennec (Casablanca: Le Fennec, 2016).

Ahmed Ghayat, Youssef Madad, and Hanane El Ouadrhiri, provide valuable insights into the phenomenon, contributing to a nuanced understanding of its root causes and offering potential solutions.

The publication of "Réflexions Sur La "Violence" Des Jeunes" underscores Mernissi's dedication to addressing pressing social issues within Moroccan society. By bringing together a diverse array of experts and intellectuals, the book serves as a platform for informed discussions, fostering a comprehensive dialogue on the complex nature of youth violence.

"Réflexions Sur La "Violence" Des Jeunes" significantly contributes to a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding youth violence in Morocco. It encourages dialogue, research, and policy interventions aimed at addressing the root causes of this phenomenon and promoting positive change in the lives of young people.

3.1.2.19 Essay and Articles

Fatema Mernissi has also left an indelible mark on the discourse surrounding women's issues through a series of essays and articles. This journey through her writings unveils the evolution of her thoughts and the trajectory of her activism.

In 1979, Mernissi embarked on one of her first groundbreaking endeavours, crafting the article "The Degrading Effect of Capitalism on Female Labour in a Third World Economy."⁴⁵⁸ This work not only aimed to render visible the often-overlooked realm of female labour but also scrutinized its unacknowledged significance in the economy. Mernissi delved into the conditions of women's work, exposing the corrosive impact of capitalism on their status and living conditions. Furthermore, she shed light on the complicity of religious and scientific patriarchal discourses in shrouding women's labour. Mernissi argued that the exploitation of women's labour was perpetuated by both the "Muslim vision of womanhood" and a scientific discourse rooted in patriarchal

⁴⁵⁸ Fatema Mernissi, "The Degrading Effect of Capitalism on Female Labour in a Third World Economy: The Particular Case of Craftswomen in Morocco," *Peuples Méditerranéens [Mediterranean Peoples]* 6 (1979): 41–42.

ideologies.⁴⁵⁹ "The Degrading Effect of Capitalism" became a platform for Mernissi to challenge the prevailing narrative of modernization propagated by the postcolonial state and the national bourgeoisie. She asserted that this discourse, with its market and banking systems, remained alien to illiterate women, emphasizing the exclusion of the female proletariat from the benefits of modern capitalism. Mernissi boldly contended that the discourse of modernization ignored the interests of poor women, revealing the underlying motives of the dominant native bourgeois minority.

Building upon these themes, Mernissi continued her exploration in 1980 with "Le Proletariat Féminin au Maroc" (The Female Proletariat in Morocco).⁴⁶⁰ This work affirmed the existence of a female proletarian class resulting from the massive rural exodus prompted by modernization. Mernissi's incisive questions challenged development planners and indicated her broader goal of generating interest in sociology in Morocco, advocating for research on female workers to identify their specific needs and legitimate aspirations. In 1982 and 1983, Mernissi extended her critical lens to the intersection of women and capitalist development in "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development."⁴⁶¹ Originally prepared for the Tripartite Seminar of the International Labor Office for Africa, this study assessed the detrimental effects of traditional perceptions and capitalist development on rural women's situations.⁴⁶²

"Zhor's World" emerged as another pivotal instance of Mernissi's commitment to amplifying the voices of the female subaltern.⁴⁶³ This work, published in 1982, sought to make the maidservant, overshadowed by the emerging bourgeois city-woman, visible to decision-makers. By interviewing Zhor, a maidservant, Mernissi highlighted the aspirations of underprivileged women for economic independence, challenging traditional patriarchal family structures. In 1985, Mernissi published the essay "Women's Work: Religious and

⁴⁵⁹ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 90.

⁴⁶⁰ Fatema Mernissi, "Le Proletariat Féminin Au Maroc (The Female Proletariat in Morocco)," *Al Asas*, October 1980.

⁴⁶¹ Fatema Mernissi, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 1)," *Feminist Issues* 2, no. 2 (1982): 69–104; Fatima Mernissi, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 2)," *Feminist Issues* 3, no. 1 (1983): 61–112, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02685589>.

⁴⁶² Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 60.

⁴⁶³ Fatema Fatima Mernissi, "Zhor's World: A Moroccan Domestic Worker Speaks Out," *Feminist Issues* 2, no. 1 (1982): 3–31, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02933964>.

Scientific Concepts as Political Manipulation in Dependent Islam." This work aimed to demystify the manipulation of Islam and scientific concepts, urging planners to seek better conceptual tools for evaluating and integrating female labour into national accounts.⁴⁶⁴

Mernissi also confronted opposition and criticism in her feminist activism, notably expressed in her 1982 article, "La conversation de salon comme pratique terroriste" (Living room conversation as terrorist practice) and published in the avant-garde magazine *Lamalif*.⁴⁶⁵ This frustration with resistance became a recurring theme in her publications, provoking her detractors with feminist provocations. Prior to that, Mernissi had already released a series of articles in *Lamalif* and various Moroccan publications that unequivocally embraced feminist perspectives. These included "Virginité et patriarcat" (Virginity and patriarchy) in 1979 and,⁴⁶⁶ in 1980, "Un futur sans femmes" (A future without women),⁴⁶⁷ "Femmes: ascension ou décripitude" (Women: Rise or decadence),⁴⁶⁸ and "Le prolétariat féminin au Maroc" (The female proletariat in Morocco).⁴⁶⁹

In 1987, "Etat planification nationale et discours scientifique sur la femme" (National Planning and Scientific Discourse on Women) encapsulated Mernissi's assertion that scientific discourse could express misogynist options, reinforcing patriarchal and male supremacist political choices.⁴⁷⁰ Her critique emphasized the complicity of statistical discourse in obscuring the reality of women's economic agency.⁴⁷¹ Mernissi's dedication to fostering research on women is evident in her active role in editing publications from the research group on *La Femme, la famille et l'enfant* (Woman, family, and child).⁴⁷² This

⁴⁶⁴ Fatema Mernissi, "Women's Work: Religious and Scientific Concepts as Political Manipulation in Dependent Islam," in *Contemporary North Africa: Issues of Development and Integration*, ed. Halim Baraket (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1985), 214.

⁴⁶⁵ Fatema Mernissi, "La Conversation de Salon Comme Pratique Terroriste (Living Room Conversation as Terrorist Practice)," *Lamalif*, 1982.

⁴⁶⁶ Fatema Mernissi, "Virginité et Patriarcat (Virginity and Patriarchy)," *Lamalif*, July 1979.

⁴⁶⁷ Fatema Mernissi, "Un Future sans Femmes (A Future without Women)," *Lamatif*, April 1980.

⁴⁶⁸ Fatema Mernissi, "Femmes: Ascension Ou Décripitude (Women: Rise or Decadence)," *Al Asas*, June 1980.

⁴⁶⁹ Mernissi, "Le Proletariat Féminin Au Maroc (The Female Proletariat in Morocco)."

⁴⁷⁰ Fatema Mernissi, "Etat Planification Nationale et Discours Scientifique Sur La Femme," in *Portraits de Femmes*, ed. Fatema Mernissi (Casablanca: Le Fenec, 1987), 69–105.

⁴⁷¹ Mernissi, 74, 94–95.

⁴⁷² The research group was originally formed by the Faculty of Law at Université Mohammed V, Rabat, in 1981. Daoud also highlights Mernissi's involvement in an additional research group, the Commission de

initiative, born in 1981, aimed to encourage research on women and establish women's studies programs in Morocco. The subsequent book series, "Approches" (Approaches), initiated by Mernissi, produced several edited books on women's issues, with the first issue, "Portraits de femmes" (Portraits of women), published in 1987.⁴⁷³

In conclusion, Fatema Mernissi's intellectual journey reflects a relentless commitment to unravelling the intricacies of women's issues, challenging dominant discourses, and creating spaces for marginalized voices. Her chronological body of work stands as a testament to her pioneering role in feminist scholarship and activism.

3.2.3 Fatema Mernissi and the Islamic Feminist Movement

Mernissi emerged as an early and insightful observer of the "Islamic feminism" movement, while simultaneously actively engaging in its discourse. In her 1992 work, "Islam and Democracy," she delineated the nascent Islamic feminist paradigm. Mernissi astutely identified a courageous effort of women from diverse backgrounds who assert their right to God and historical traditions.⁴⁷⁴

She observed that these women were not only actively involved in movements but also engaged in the reinterpretation of the Muslim heritage, while recognising it an essential component of modernity. Mernissi argued that the liberation of Muslim women hinged upon a critical re-examination of the Islamic past and a reappropriation of the elements that have shaped Islamic civilization. As someone who was actively involved in these transformative efforts herself, Mernissi played a pivotal role in laying the groundwork for the Islamic feminist movements and contributing significantly to Islamic feminist theory.⁴⁷⁵

This chapter aims to elucidate Mernissi's profound influence on the Islamic feminist movement, emphasizing her substantive contributions to the development of Islamic

recherche pour la formation et la promotion de la femme (Council for Research on Women's Training and Advancement), established on April 24, 1978. See Zakiya Daoud, *Féminisme et Politique Au Maghreb (Feminism and Politics in the Maghreb)* (Casablanca: Eddif, 1993), 56, 369.

⁴⁷³ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 101.

⁴⁷⁴ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 160.

⁴⁷⁵ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 22.

feminist theory. References to Mernissi's insights, will be highlighted to underscore the scholarly underpinnings of her impact on this evolving intellectual and social phenomenon.

3.1.3.1 Mernissi Influence on Islamic Feminist Figures and Movements

Fatima Mernissi, as a distinguished Islamic feminist and scholar, exerted a considerable influence on Islamic feminist figures and movements. Her involvement in research groups such as "La Femme, la famille et l'enfant" (Woman, family, and child) and "Commission de recherche pour la formation et la promotion de la femme" (Council for the training and the promotion of woman) helped to stimulate research on women and initiate the establishment of women's studies programs in Morocco.⁴⁷⁶ Its overarching objective was to convene, articulate a shared vision of change, demonstrate the potential transformation of Morocco, and propose alternatives perspective and approach in addressing women's issues.

Acknowledging Mernissi's pivotal role, Jonas Svensson and others recognized her as one of the founding members of the Moroccan Organization for Human Rights.⁴⁷⁷ This acknowledgment stemmed from her significant exploration on the experiences of former female political prisoners, as well as the wives and mothers of political detainees during the tumultuous 'les années de plomb' (years of lead) period in Morocco that occurred between the 1960s to the 1980s.⁴⁷⁸ Mernissi's contributions extend to the documentation of this significant episode in Moroccan history characterized by intense state repression against dissidents, narrated and viewed through the lens of women's perspectives.⁴⁷⁹ She also helped in the mentorships of young writers aspiring for a better Morocco.

⁴⁷⁶ Rhouni, 101; Daoud, *Féminisme et Politique Au Maghreb (Feminism and Politics in the Maghreb)*, 56, 369.

⁴⁷⁷ Svensson, *Women's Human Rights and Islam: A Study of Three Attempts at Accommodation*, 12:114.

⁴⁷⁸ A historical period in contemporary Morocco characterized by the repression of political opponents during the reign of Hassan II. Throughout this time, the Moroccan people staged multiple revolts against Hassan II's regime, particularly in major cities such as Casablanca, Fes, Rabat, demanding greater democracy. The Rif region also experienced intense riots during this period.

⁴⁷⁹ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 10.

Mernissi exerted a profound influence on Islamic feminist movements, including Musawah, Sisters in Islam, Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, among others. Zainah Anwar, former director of Sisters in Islam and current Executive Director of Musawah, offers a vivid portrayal of Mernissi as a warm, generous, and perpetually curious individual, known for her storytelling prowess and commitment to addressing societal challenges. Anwar fondly reminisces about Mernissi's vibrant attire as a reflection of her spirited personality.⁴⁸⁰

Anwar characterizes Mernissi as a storyteller who, through her books and study of *tafsīr* materials, brought to light the lives of resilient women in early Islamic history. One such figure is Şakīnah, the Prophet's ﷺ great-granddaughter that challenged conventional gender norms and enjoyed revolutionary rights over a millennium ago. Anwar raises pertinent questions about the neglect or exclusion of such inspiring narratives from mainstream teachings and religious discourse, emphasizing Mernissi's role in unravelling the roots of misogyny within the Muslim tradition. Mernissi's contributions, as highlighted by Anwar, extend beyond storytelling to a deeper understanding of the evolution of gender dynamics within the Islamic context.⁴⁸¹

Anwar reflects on Mernissi's impactful assertion that women's rights align with Islam but clash with the interests of a male elite. Specifically, she highlights Mernissi's critical examination of the character of the *Şahābah* Abū Ḥurayrah, which she considers as a narrator of numerous misogynistic *ḥadīth* proven by contextual analysis applied to his narrations. Through meticulous research, Mernissi unveiled the historical backdrop and motivations behind these *ḥadīth*, providing readers with a nuanced understanding and fostering a culture of critical inquiry.⁴⁸²

Anwar underscores that Mernissi's contributions extend beyond the impartation of knowledge, emphasizing the empowerment to question and delve into the rich Islamic tradition. Grateful for Mernissi's enlightening insights, Anwar acknowledges her role in

⁴⁸⁰ Zainah Anwar, "Fatima, the Storyteller," in *Musawah Vision*, ed. Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Special (Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2016), 1.

⁴⁸¹ Anwar, 1.

⁴⁸² Anwar, 2.

inspiring and empowering Muslim feminists across diverse countries. Anwar's recollection of their final meeting highlights Mernissi's enduring passion and commitment, despite physical frailty, reinforcing her steadfast dedication to the cause and connection with the Musawah women. Mernissi's legacy, as recounted by Anwar, encompasses both intellectual enlightenment and a resilient spirit that continues to resonate within the global Muslim feminist community.⁴⁸³

Amina Wadud, co-founder of Sisters in Islam, reflects on the profound connection she shared with Mernissi as fellow activists and soul sisters in the shared pursuit of truth-telling in the face of power. In acknowledging the challenges they both encountered while seeking to reconcile gender equality with Islamic teachings, Wadud highlighted the transformative nature of their respective journeys. Despite an initial sense of existing on separate planes of reality, both Wadud and Mernissi managed to navigate these challenges successfully.⁴⁸⁴

Wadud, inspired by Mernissi's groundbreaking exploration of the disparities faced by women within the Islamic tradition, became a founding member of Sisters in Islam in 1989. This pivotal decision marked a turning point in her journey, drawing her closer to Mernissi's work. Wadud introduced the revolutionary concept that women can reclaim Islam as a source of empowerment, aligning her mission with the insights provided by Mernissi. The narrative underscores the convergence of their activism and intellectual endeavours, emphasizing the influence of Mernissi's research on Wadud's foundational contributions to Sisters in Islam.⁴⁸⁵

Over time, the intellectual trajectories of Amina Wadud and Fatima Mernissi underwent significant evolution and transformation. Wadud adopted a personal and political approach, aiming to reconcile a gender-inclusive analysis of Islamic primary sources with the lived experiences of Muslim women. Mernissi had laid the foundation for this exploration, delving into and addressing these lived realities. Despite their distinct geographical locations and contexts, Wadud and Mernissi shared a profound commitment

⁴⁸³ Anwar, 2.

⁴⁸⁴ Wadud, "We Were Soul Sisters," 1.

⁴⁸⁵ Wadud, 1.

to leveraging their voices in challenging patriarchal power structures and advocating for justice.⁴⁸⁶

Wadud expresses a sense of regret over the missed opportunity to meet Mernissi in person during her final days. Nevertheless, she calls attention to the deep connection forged through their shared vision of an inclusive Islam and the imperative of engaging in their own embodied readings. Their approach to activism stemmed from the heart and resonated with the heart, recognizing the necessity of embracing differences and valuing individual perspectives on the journey toward gender equality and justice.⁴⁸⁷

In conclusion, Wadud emphasizes the enduring legacy of Mernissi, predicting its inspirational impact on future generations. She issues a call to action for women and their allies to embody the change they aspire to see in the world, drawing strength from Mernissi's example and unwavering commitment to divine beauty, truth, and harmony. Wadud's heartfelt tribute to Mernissi encapsulates the enduring influence of Mernissi's work and philosophy, urging a continued commitment to transformative change.⁴⁸⁸

Sarah Marsso, an advocate for Musawah, accented Fatima Mernissi's remarkable ability to surpass the constraints imposed by patriarchal interpretations of the *Qur'ān*. Mernissi's approach involved liberating the divine text, unveiling its inherent beauty, and highlighting the principles of love, justice, and equality embedded within it. Central to her perspective was the belief that the pursuit of knowledge is a divinely granted privilege accessible to all.⁴⁸⁹

Marsso acknowledges that Mernissi's writings were deeply rooted in lived realities, drawing inspiration from her interactions with women and men in the populous areas in many Moroccan cities. Unlike a mere adherence to legalistic interpretations and moral codes, Mernissi viewed the *Qur'ān* as a spiritual guide capable of aiding individuals in discovering the wonders of the present moment. Marsso further recognizes Mernissi's

⁴⁸⁶ Wadud, 1.

⁴⁸⁷ Wadud, 1.

⁴⁸⁸ Wadud, 2.

⁴⁸⁹ Sarah Marsso, "Fatima Mernissi, Inner Beauty," in *Musawah Vision*, ed. Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Special (Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2016), 1.

profound impact on Muslim feminists, citing her as a source of courage and hope and recognizing her as someone who planted seeds of empowerment in the hearts of numerous women and men. This perspective highlights Mernissi's transformative influence beyond scholarly circles, resonating with individuals on a personal and societal level.⁴⁹⁰

In her tribute to Fatima Mernissi, Asma Lamrabet underscores the profound impact of Mernissi's literary contributions, particularly in works such as "Le Harem Politique," "Sultanes Oubliées," and "Islam et Démocratie." Lamrabet highlights Mernissi's intellectual courage and sincerity, with a specific focus on "Le Harem Politique" that she considered as Mernissi's magnum opus. She praised this seminal work and how Mernissi fearlessly broached the taboo subject of religion and women, aiming to illuminate the obscured realms of resistance and entrenched attitudes perpetuating gender inequality.⁴⁹¹

She admires how Mernissi's approach encouraged a critical reassessment of religious texts and their interpretations, urging a distinction between the spiritual message and normative traditions derived from human understanding. Despite facing criticism for her perspectives, Mernissi remained unwavering in her commitment to advocating for intellectual integrity and the legitimate right to criticize in the pursuit of justice. Lamrabet notes that Mernissi's contributions extended beyond the realm of women's rights in Islam, recognizing the interconnectedness of democracy, freedom of expression, and the political instrumentalization of religion.⁴⁹²

Lamrabet also provides insight into her personal relationship with Mernissi, highlighting Mernissi's generosity of heart, inner strength, and love for her country and the marginalized people. Mernissi's concern for the Arab world, curiosity about geopolitics, and boundless optimism for positive change were evident in her interactions. She championed the potential of youth and advocated for a world that transcended East-West debates.⁴⁹³ Lamrabet contends that Mernissi's pride in her Moroccan identity and rejection

⁴⁹⁰ Marsso, 1.

⁴⁹¹ Asma Lamrabet, "Fatima Mernissi As I Knew Her," in *Musawah Vision*, ed. Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Special (Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2016), 1.

⁴⁹² Lamrabet, 1.

⁴⁹³ Lamrabet, 3.

of a restricted Western universality accentuate her commitment to a broader civilizational contribution. Continuously seeking solutions and alternatives, Mernissi urged for a contemporary world that goes beyond divisive debates. Lamrabet further acknowledges Mernissi's refusal to yield to her illness in her final years, maintaining focus on intellectual pursuits and the urgency of effecting positive change.⁴⁹⁴

In conclusion, Lamrabet pays homage to the eternal wonder embodied by Mernissi, highlighting her teachings on appreciating the simple joys of life, perseverance, and embracing the positive aspects of humanity. Mernissi's legacy endures through the continuation of her work and her steadfast belief in a future marked by freedom.

In another reflection, Zakia Soman, co-founder of Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan and a Musawah Advocate, delves into the resonance she experienced with the work of Fatima Mernissi and the shared experiences of Muslim women globally. Soman acknowledges the stark realities of subordination faced by Muslim women, including confinement and inequality despite the foundational teachings of peace and justice within Islam. Mernissi's exploration of life in a Moroccan harem particularly struck a chord with Muslim women in the Indian subcontinent such as Soman who grapple with similar restrictions behind curtains, exposing a dissonance between the compassionate nature of Allāh ﷻ and the persistent misogyny within Muslim societies.⁴⁹⁵

Soman underscores a specific aspect of Mernissi's work that deeply resonated with her—the examination of a particular *ḥadīth* perpetuating misogyny. Mernissi employed scientific evidence to question the authenticity of the *ḥadīth* while elucidating essential Islamic ethics and principles in arguing against it. Soman contrasts Mernissi's clarity with the often ambiguous and obfuscated writings of renowned scholars, appreciating the rigor applied to dispelling misconceptions.⁴⁹⁶

Further, Soman commends Mernissi's investigation into the *ḥijāb*, tracing its origins, distortions, and practices. Drawing from her South Asian Muslim perspective,

⁴⁹⁴ Lamrabet, 4.

⁴⁹⁵ Soman, “What Fatima Mernissi Means To Me,” 1–2.

⁴⁹⁶ Soman, 1.

Soman finds the Sufi viewpoint on *ḥijāb* particularly illuminating. She reflects on the concept of "*akal pe purdah*" or the curtain on the mind, arguing that a closed mind, symbolized by the *ḥijāb*, obstructs the appreciation of Allāh's ﷻ creations, fosters division, and obscures the messages of love and peace.⁴⁹⁷

Despite not having the opportunity to meet Mernissi in person, Soman expresses the intimate and personal connection she feels with her. Both women shared similarities in how they both learned about the poetic aspects of religion from their grandmothers, highlighting the impactful influence of Mernissi's work on her. For Soman and countless Muslim women, Fatima Mernissi symbolizes the love and splendour of life, and her legacy is poised to inspire generations to come.⁴⁹⁸

In her tribute to Fatima Mernissi, Ziba Mir-Hosseini, co-founder of Musawah and a member of its International Advisory Group, reflects on Mernissi's profound impact from their personal interactions. Mir-Hosseini recalls the poignant timing of Mernissi's passing, which coincided with a Musawah capacity-building course dedicated to Islam and gender equality.⁴⁹⁹ Drawing inspiration from Zora Neale Hurston's profound words, "There are years that ask questions and years that answer," Mir-Hosseini applies this sentiment to Mernissi's writings and their shared intellectual journey.⁵⁰⁰ She delves into Mernissi's seminal work, "Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Muslim Society," which explored the complexities of the Muslim ideology of sexes and the impact of modernizing trends on women's rights in Morocco. Mernissi's early work challenged prevailing notions and brought attention to the barriers to gender equality, specifically the intertwining of sexuality and *Sharī'ah*. Mir-Hosseini emphasizes Mernissi's contribution in highlighting the disjunction between Islam's affirmations of gender equality and their practical realization.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁷ Soman, 2.

⁴⁹⁸ Soman, 2.

⁴⁹⁹ Ziba Mir-Hosseini, "Honouring Fatima Mernissi," in *Musawah Vision*, Special (Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2016), 1, <http://arabic.musawah.org/sites/default/files/HonouringFatimaMernissiZIBAMIRHOSSEINI.pdf>.

⁵⁰⁰ Mir-Hosseini, 1.

⁵⁰¹ Mir-Hosseini, 1.

Moving forward, Mir-Hosseini also discusses Mernissi's book, "Women in the Muslim Unconscious," written under the pseudonym Fatna A. Sabbah. This work delves into the cultural constraints imposed on women, exploring the repercussions of silence, immobility, and obedience as criteria for female beauty. Mir-Hosseini identifies a resonance with this book, noting its impact on shaping her understanding of the importance for legal and societal change to improve the situation of women.⁵⁰²

Mir-Hosseini shares personal moments with Mernissi, recounting their meeting in Morocco in 1988. This encounter deepened her admiration for Mernissi's work and provided insights into the impact of Islamic laws on women's lives in both Iran and Morocco. Observing marital disputes in the courts, Mir-Hosseini recognized the flaws and contradictions within the application of Islamic law and teachings, challenging her prior assumption of an inherent incompatibility between Islam and gender equality.⁵⁰³

Mir-Hosseini discusses Mernissi's book, "The Veil and the Male Elite" in highlighting a turning point in her approach. Here, Mernissi aimed to reclaim the egalitarian message within Islam and confront patriarchal structures from within the Islamic tradition. By utilizing Islam's sacred texts, Mernissi sought to recover a humanist Islam, challenging Orientalist narratives and distorted perceptions of Muslims. This book aligned with the emergent discourse of Islamic feminism, seeking reconciliation between Islam and women's rights.⁵⁰⁴

Mir-Hosseini lauds Mernissi's study and efforts for its impact and applauds Mernissi's unwavering energy and commitment to bridging diverse perspectives and challenging patriarchy. Acknowledging the difficulty of accepting Mernissi's passing, particularly in the face of rising extremist patriarchal voices, Mir-Hosseini emphasizes the urgency of revisiting Mernissi's critical and loving approach to religious tradition. The call is made to engage with Mernissi's legacy as a source of inspiration and guidance in addressing contemporary challenges.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰² Mir-Hosseini, 3.

⁵⁰³ Mir-Hosseini, 3.

⁵⁰⁴ Mir-Hosseini, 5.

⁵⁰⁵ Mir-Hosseini, 5.

In conclusion, the profound impact of Fatima Mernissi on the Islamic feminist movement reverberates across the personas and movements of Islamic feminism globally. Through her meticulous analysis of patriarchal interpretations, exploration of historical context, and adept storytelling approach, Mernissi provided inspiration and courage to numerous Muslim feminists. Her enduring influence within the Islamic feminist movement stands as a testament to her legacy as a distinguished scholar, advocate, and storyteller, whose work serves as a guiding light toward achieving gender equality and justice within the framework of Islam.

The void left by the passing of Fatima Mernissi is keenly felt within the Islamic feminist movement. Her intellectual contributions, visionary insights, and steadfast commitment to equality and justice continue to serve as wellsprings of inspiration for scholars and activists alike. Mernissi's enduring legacy persists as a source of guidance and motivation for those dedicated to advancing gender equality within Muslim societies.

3.1.3.2 Fatema Mernissi Contributions to the Islamic Feminist Theory

Fatima Mernissi is recognized as the pioneer and major contributor to Islamic feminist texts, notably with the publication of "Le Harem Politique" in 1987.⁵⁰⁶ Her impactful contributions to Islamic feminist theory was mainly due to her critical criticism and analysis on traditional interpretations and a profound illumination on the women's agency and autonomy throughout Islamic history. What distinguishes Mernissi's work from other feminists is her notable shift in her approach and perspective toward Islam, epitomizing two major trends within Muslim feminisms and reflecting broader intellectual developments in Islamic feminist discourse.⁵⁰⁷

Mernissi's scholarly endeavours centred on scrutinizing the reliability of certain traditions and sayings attributed to the Prophet, particularly those exhibiting misogynistic

⁵⁰⁶ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 8.

⁵⁰⁷ Chapter 3.1.2 has explored two discernible trends or perspectives within Islamic feminism, as illuminated by Mernissi's work. For a more detailed exploration, see Barlow and Akbarzadeh, "Women's Rights in the Muslim World: Reform or Reconstruction?," 1482.

or demeaning tendencies towards women.⁵⁰⁸ Here, she highlighted the deliberate manipulation of *sharī'ah* by men that leads to its patriarchal interpretation. Her emphasis on critically re-examining Islamic traditions aimed to counteract the repression of Muslim women globally resulting from misguided religious convictions. Mernissi argued that a gender-sensitive interpretation, spearheaded by women, would render *sharī'ah* devoid of its patriarchal underpinnings.⁵⁰⁹ Through providing a feminist interpretation of Islamic texts, Mernissi sought to challenge prevailing patriarchal interpretations inherent in Islamic religious literature. Notably, scholars like Mernissi are not only "adding the female" to this tradition but also engaging in the ongoing conversations within Islamic thought, both ancient and contemporary, thereby contributing to its dynamism and refreshing its perspective through the introduction of a new analytical category which is "gender".⁵¹⁰

In addition to her critical examination of religious texts, Mernissi explored the socio-linguistic dimensions of political discourse within Islam, identifying several key words carrying positive or negative connotations.⁵¹¹ This exploration delved into the Arab/Islamic context's fear of freedom of thought, the present, and the past, shedding light on Muslim attitudes toward specific concepts and their impact on social and political dynamics. Mernissi also delved into feminist intersectionality discourse, examining the complexities of women's experiences as both Muslim and Arab.⁵¹² She advocated for a feminist theology that reinterpreted Islam through a gender-sensitive lens, empowering women by highlighting their historical role in the formulation and dissemination of Islam.

According to Rhouni, Mernissi's feminist inquiry defies the unthinkable by introducing gender as a category of analysis to the study of Islam. Her work on the historical writing of Muslim societies aligns with Arkounian applied Islamology, which is rethinking Islamic thought by scrutinizing silenced narratives through new analytical tools.⁵¹³

⁵⁰⁸ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 49–85.

⁵⁰⁹ Mernissi, 189–96.

⁵¹⁰ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 8.

⁵¹¹ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 92–121.

⁵¹² Malik, "Towards a Feminist Interpretation of Islam: Faith and Gender in the Work of Fatima Mernissi," 25.

⁵¹³ Arkoun characterizes his work as an innovative exploration in the field of religious anthropology, seeking to transcend the limitations of 'Classical Islamology.' He argues that while 'European Islamology' has made

Mernissi's objective in "The Forgotten Queens of Islam" is to extract the issue of women and power from the realm of the unthinkable and subject it to examination and decoding, thereby displacing it from the sphere of the sacred or what has been sacralised.⁵¹⁴

By amalgamating historical analysis, feminist theology, and socio-linguistic exploration, Fatema Mernissi's work has significantly enriched feminist thought, paving the way for a more inclusive and empowering understanding of Islamic feminism. Her multifaceted efforts have provided an alternative narrative to predominant patriarchal interpretations, creating pathways for Muslim women to reclaim their rights and agency within their faith.

3.3 FATEMA MERNISSI'S VIEWS ON THE CONCEPT OF GENDER EQUALITY IN ISLAM

Islam emphasizes unwavering faith in the one God, Allāh ﷻ, and the unequivocal submission to Him, categorically rejecting any forms of devotion to entities other than Him. The concept of freedom in Islam extends beyond the absence of physical constraints, encompassing the liberation of the human soul from detrimental and unnatural limitations, notably those related to gender hierarchy. Both men and women are assigned equal responsibility in adhering to the commands of Allāh ﷻ and fulfilling their roles as His vicegerent on Earth.

In the historical context, women during the pre-Islamic Arabian society, referred to as the Jahiliya era, experienced marginalization and contempt. The advent of Islam marked a significant shift by providing women with protection, freedom, and dignity. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ actively promoted kindness and respect towards women, explicitly highlighting the importance of gender equality in his final sermon before his passing. A

significant strides in comprehending Islam and its ideologies, it has predominantly focused on description, especially regarding Islamic legal schools and elucidating the distinctions in their doctrines for a Western audience. While acknowledging the importance of this scholarship, Arkoun criticizes its ethnocentric tendencies, particularly its hesitance to analyse Islamic thought rigorously through the lenses of the humanities and social sciences. See Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 19.

⁵¹⁴ Rhouni, 19.

comprehensive understanding of the Islamic assignment of gender roles in worship, rights, religious obligations, human relationships, family, and leadership necessitates a return to the *Qur'ān* and the *Hadīths* (sayings and actions of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ).

However, despite these principles, it is crucial to acknowledge the existence of misrepresentations and varied interpretations of the Islamic concept of gender equality influenced by local customs and foreign ideologies. The interpretation of Islamic equality diverges among different Islamic sects and ideologies. Islamic feminism asserts that the intrinsic equality within Islam is not fully realized in contemporary practices of Muslim communities. Consequently, Fatema Mernissi, a prominent Islamic feminist, provides her distinct perspective on gender equality within Islam. This chapter aims to explore Mernissi's conceptualization of gender equality and assess how she perceived this concept within the Islamic framework.

3.3.1 Gender Equality in Islam: Mernissi Perspective

Fatima Mernissi, a renowned Moroccan sociologist and author, presents a distinctive viewpoint on gender equality within Islam. In her work, she challenges prevailing stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding feminism and gender roles in Islamic contexts, advocating for an "Islamic feminism." This perspective involves a critical examination of traditional Islamic theology through alternative readings of scripture and canonical conventions. Mernissi's feminist approach is rooted in an Islamic framework, emphasizing the intrinsic mission of Islam to promote the equality of all human beings.

Mernissi's goal is to reclaim Islam from both stereotypical orientalist discourses, which often depict Muslim women in a sexualized manner, and traditionalist Muslim perspectives that cast women in negative portrayals. By interpreting Islam within a sensitive and human context, Mernissi endeavours to establish a society founded on principles of gender equality. This chapter aims to delve into Mernissi's unique perspective on gender equality in Islam, focusing on her key insights into the subject.

3.2.1.1 Women 'Kayd'

In the realm of Islamic feminist discourse, Fatima Mernissi has offered valuable insights into the intricate web of women's roles and identities. One focal point of her exploration is the concept of "Kayd," a term denoting women's cunning intelligence and malice, as referenced in *Qur'ānic* verses such as *Surah Yūsuf*.⁵¹⁵ The *Qur'ān* said:⁵¹⁶

﴿فَلَمَّا رَأَىٰ قَمِيصَهُ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ كَيْدِكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ﴾

So when her husband saw his shirt torn from the back, he said, "Indeed, it is of the women's plan. Indeed, your plan is great."

Mernissi argues that despite the erotic discourse in Islam potentially diminishing the intellectual aspect of male-female relations, it does not negate women's inherent intellectual capacity. Instead, there is a profound belief in women's 'Kayd,' aligning with the idea that, in Islam, women are not considered inferior but are seen as powerful beings needing control.⁵¹⁷

Mernissi delves into the relationship between the concepts of *al-Nushūz* and *Kayd* in the *Qur'ān*, both highlighting women's drives and destructive powers, as well as their potential for being uncooperative and unreliable members of the Muslim community.⁵¹⁸ She suggests that Allāh institutionalized *al-'Iddah* to control lineage identification,⁵¹⁹ as women might not willingly obey divine orders without external enforcement.⁵²⁰ Mernissi also explores the connection between women's *Kayd* and the concept of *Fitnah*,⁵²¹ a belief

⁵¹⁵ Mernissi explores the concept of destructive female intelligence, exemplified by the well-known story of Zulaikha's deceit upon Yūsuf AS. Zulaikha, the wife of Yūsuf's owner, becomes the catalyst for his imprisonment through her deceptive actions. See Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 13; Mernissi, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 1)," 104.

⁵¹⁶ *Surah Yūsuf*, 12:28.

⁵¹⁷ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1975, 35–37.

⁵¹⁸ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 13.

⁵¹⁹ In Islamic tradition, *al-'Idda* is the designated duration that a woman must observe following the passing of her husband or after a divorce. During this period, she is not permitted to enter into marriage with another man.

⁵²⁰ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1975, 82.

⁵²¹ *Fitnah*, originating from Arabic, carries profound meanings associated with trials, afflictions, or distress.

deeply embedded in the Muslim community translated into folktales like "A'ishah Qandīshah" and "the Merchant's Daughter and the Son of the Sultan."⁵²²

Mernissi emphasizes that the belief in women's *Kayd* acts as a common thread between erotic and orthodox discourses in Islam, central to understanding the laws implemented to restrict women's power, especially the *ḥijāb*.⁵²³ She said: "This notion of *Kayd* might also be seen as explaining the institution of *ḥijāb*, where female sexuality is also regarded as a site of potential disorder and sedition."⁵²⁴ Her work, particularly "Beyond the Veil," delves into both "explicit" and "implicit" theories of female sexuality, revealing the relations connecting seemingly disparate discourses.⁵²⁵ Women's *Kayd*, according to Mernissi, becomes a pivotal element in shaping the narrative surrounding women's roles and capabilities in Islamic societies.⁵²⁶ She contends that the notions of *Kayd* act as obstacles to women's citizenship.⁵²⁷

To unravel the roots of the association of women with '*Kayd*' in Islam, Mernissi conducts a historical reading of "The Arabian Nights," focusing on the 'Abbāsīd era that was considered the Golden Age of Islam.⁵²⁸ During this period, women became intricately linked with sexual entertainment in the Muslim psyche. Mernissi explores the image of the "*jāriyah*," a female pleasure slave, reinforced by the sacred model of the *ḥūriyy* promised to virtuous male believers in heaven.⁵²⁹ She observes how these women wielded unexpected power over the Caliphs, challenging the expectations set by the *sharī'ah*.⁵³⁰

She contends that figures like Şhajarāh al-Dur of Egypt, Ḥabābah the *jāriyah* of Yazīd II, and Şubḥ the *jāriyah* of Caliph al-Ḥakam of the Umayyads Caliphate, ascended

⁵²² Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1975, 42; Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 16.

⁵²³ Fatna Ait Sabbah, *Woman in the Muslim Unconscious*, trans. Mary Jo Lakeland (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984), 59; Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 55–57.

⁵²⁴ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 56–57.

⁵²⁵ Mernissi argues that both theories share a common element: the women's *kayd* power lies in deceiving and outsmarting men, not through force, but through cunning and intrigue. See Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1975, 33.

⁵²⁶ Mernissi, 4–5.

⁵²⁷ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 55–57.

⁵²⁸ Mernissi, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 1)," 65.

⁵²⁹ Mernissi, 79–80.

⁵³⁰ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 37–38.

to authority by skilfully manipulating Sultans and their sons, employing love, eroticism, and sensuality as strategic tools to establish a *Kayd* that controlled both their masters and the political landscape.⁵³¹ She said:⁵³²

Unlike the *zawj*, who tried to seize power from the periphery of the system, the *jawārī* operated within the caliph's palace itself, in the bed and heart of the man whom the law set up as absolute master of souls and possessions.

She notes that in Islamic history, a notable number of caliphs whose mothers were slaves, while only three 'Abbāsīd caliphs were the sons of free women, challenging prevailing narratives about the Golden Age.⁵³³

Fatima Mernissi's exploration of women's *Kayd* provides a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between power dynamics and gender roles in Islam. By bridging the gap between erotic and orthodox discourses, she sheds light on the shared belief in women's intelligence and malice, offering a comprehensive perspective on women's roles in Islamic societies. Furthermore, Mernissi's historical analysis of "The Arabian Nights" unveils the constructed myth of the Golden Age, challenging prevalent narratives and opening avenues for a deeper examination of the intersection between literature and politics in shaping perceptions of women in Islam.

3.2.1.2 Free Will and Self-Autonomy

Fatema Mernissi was critical of Islam's stance on women's free will and self-autonomy. Mernissi, notably expressed in works such as "Women in the Muslim Unconscious" and "Beyond the Veil," persistently argues that orthodox Islam inherently restricts free will and self-autonomy for women. In her writings, Mernissi contends that orthodox Islam portrays desirable women as submissive and silent, lacking self-determination. She said:⁵³⁴

Why, according to the canons of beauty in Islamic literature, does a woman who does not express herself excite desire in a man? ... Is it a secondary, superficial fact that a Muslim man's aesthetic admiration and desire is for a

⁵³¹ Mernissi, 51–52, 90.

⁵³² Mernissi, 37–38.

⁵³³ Mernissi, 57.

⁵³⁴ Ait Sabbah, *Woman in the Muslim Unconscious*, 3.

silent woman - one deprived of power and the right to self-expression - or is this a fact that determines his choices and his political behaviour at the subliminal, unconscious level? (And the more unconscious it is, the more strongly determining it is!) Is it a "purely" sexual fact that the ideal of female beauty in the Muslim cultural order specifies silence, spatial immobility (seclusion), and obedience as the qualities that are supposed to excite male desire and produce pleasure?

Thus, she saw her work in rewriting cultural heritage as going against orthodox Islamic principles.⁵³⁵ She also believed that God's existence entails restricting women's ability to create life.⁵³⁶

Mernissi also explores how Islam utilizes space as a device for sexual control, questioning restrictions imposed on women and critiquing the societal design of sexual spaces.⁵³⁷ Moreover, she perceives Islam as an overwhelmingly materialistic vision of the world and asserts that the fear of female self-determination is fundamental to the Muslim order and closely tied to the fear of *fitnah*.⁵³⁸ Mernissi argues that Islam prohibits practices asserting the sexual self-determination of women.⁵³⁹

In "Women Rebellion and Islamic Memory," Mernissi emphasizes the *Qur'an's* clear definition of gender roles, citing examples like *Sūrah Al-Baqarah* verse 228 to highlight the economic justification for assigning men the role of providing for women.⁵⁴⁰⁵⁴¹ She argues that individualism is viewed as alien and fatal to the heavily collectivist Islam,

⁵³⁵ Ait Sabbah, 6.

⁵³⁶ Ait Sabbah, 66.

⁵³⁷ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, xv, 137.

⁵³⁸ Mernissi, xv, 53.

⁵³⁹ Mernissi, 67.

⁵⁴⁰ The verse:

﴿وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنْنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ
حَكِيمٌ﴾

Divorced women remain in waiting for three periods, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allāh has created in their wombs if they believe in Allāh and the Last Day. And their husbands have more right to take them back in this [period] if they want reconciliation. And due to the wives is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]. And Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise.

⁵⁴¹ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 68.

with women symbolizing suppressed individualistic trends.⁵⁴² However, in "Veil and Male Elite," Mernissi presents a more positive view of Islam, by observing and praising the Prophet's ﷺ eagerness in promoting gender equality.⁵⁴³ She notes instances where the Prophet ﷺ consulted his wife for advice and displayed openness to views and equality. Mernissi suggests that external pressures forced the Prophet ﷺ to accept unequal practices, such as *hijāb*, but acknowledges the freedom of choice given to women, as seen in Umm Salama's rejection of the Prophet's ﷺ marriage proposal.⁵⁴⁴

Yet, Mernissi contends that Islam, in general, still controls women's free will. She saw Allāh ﷻ as overriding the Prophet's ﷺ ideal on sexual practices to ensure Islam's survival, like allowing nonconsensual intercourse in marriage; permitting husbands to engage sexual intercourse at will and condemning wives' refusal.⁵⁴⁵ She identifies clashes between the Prophet's ﷺ mission of equality and Allāh's ﷻ commandments of inequality, emphasizing the rejection of a police system of control in Muḥammad's ﷺ ideal of Islam. She said:⁵⁴⁶

The Islam of Muhammad banished the idea of supervision, of a police system of control. This explains the absence of clergy in Islam and the encouraging of all Muslims to get involved in understanding the written word. Individual responsibility came into play to balance the weight of aristocratic control, finally making it ineffective in an *ummah* of believers whose behaviour followed precise, internalized rules. Recognizing in women an inalienable will be fitted into this scheme of making everyone individually responsible.

In "Islam and Democracy," Mernissi stresses that Islam promises peace at the cost of sacrifice, specifically renouncing freedom of thought and subordinating oneself to the group.⁵⁴⁷ She posits that the pact to sacrifice individualism leads to peace, echoing the broader theme of monotheistic religions demanding sacrifice for harmony.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴² Mernissi, 110.

⁵⁴³ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 105.

⁵⁴⁴ Mernissi, 106, 116.

⁵⁴⁵ Mernissi, 145, 148, 158.

⁵⁴⁶ Mernissi, 145, 186–87.

⁵⁴⁷ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 89.

⁵⁴⁸ Mernissi, 89.

3.2.1.3 Women Empowerment

Delving into Fatema Mernissi's perspective on women's empowerment in Islam unveils a nuanced outlook that recognizes the potential for gender equality within the Islamic framework. Interestingly, Mernissi's views on women's empowerment in Islam appear to undergo a transformation, possibly attributed to her shift from the stance of a secular feminist to that of an Islamic feminist.

In her role as a secular feminist, Mernissi criticized Islam as fundamentally opposing women's empowerment.⁵⁴⁹ However, later as an Islamic feminist, she adopts a somewhat apologetic tone, highlighting the Prophet ﷺ himself as an inherently egalitarian figure in contrast to Allāh ﷻ. Alternatively, she points to instances of women's sainthood in Islamic history, where these women, according to Mernissi, operated outside the jurisdiction imposed on women, enjoying freedom and high positions within Islam. She said:⁵⁵⁰

Unlike the emphasized passivity of women in the material, real worlds, supernatural women lead intensively active lives, perform all kinds of acts, from being benign motherly protection to straightforward aggression, such as rape of men.

Building on her earlier assertion that Islam's practical approach tends towards unequal gender treatment, Mernissi paradoxically argues that the religion, in general, does not advocate for women's inherent inferiority. Instead, she attributes gender disparity to specific social institutions—namely, segregation and legal subordination in the family structure—crafted to curtail women's power.⁵⁵¹ She emphasizes that this inequality does not arise from an ideological or biological theory of women's inferiority. Traditional Islam, in her view, recognizes the potential equality between the sexes, aligning with the

⁵⁴⁹ Referring to Mernissi's discussion and perspective on Islam as portrayed in her initial works, "Women in Muslim's Unconscious" and "Beyond the Veil."

⁵⁵⁰ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 28.

⁵⁵¹ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 19.

democratic glorification of the human individual, irrespective of sex, race, or status—the essence of the Muslim message.⁵⁵²⁵⁵³

Within Mernissi's perspective, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ emerges as a figure inherently inclined towards egalitarianism.⁵⁵⁴ She introduces the notion that Allāh ﷻ, during the early stages of Islamic revelation, proposed injunctions to empower women, such as introducing equality in property and inheritance laws.⁵⁵⁵ However, as the Islamic mission progressed, Mernissi suggests that inequality was strategically enforced to ensure Islam's survival and gain support from the patriarchal Arab community.⁵⁵⁶ Notably, she points to the *ḥijāb* ruling, revealed after the Muslim's defeat in the Battle of Uhud, as a response to political pressure and a measure to protect women against the lecherous gaze of certain members of the Medinan community.⁵⁵⁷ While the *ḥijāb* aimed to safeguard the honour of the Prophet ﷺ and his wives, Mernissi contends that it deviated from the Prophet's ﷺ original mission of gender equality, representing an Islamic retreat from the principle of equality.⁵⁵⁸

Nevertheless, Mernissi maintains that women's empowerment and the mission for gender equality in Islam are ongoing processes that extend beyond the Prophet's ﷺ time. She criticizes scholars who restrict this mission solely to the Prophet's ﷺ era, pointing to the vocalization of several important women in Islamic history against rulings such as the *ḥijāb*, male leadership, and restrictions on women's rights of repudiation and jurisdiction.⁵⁵⁹ In doing so, Mernissi advocates for a continual evolution and progression towards women's empowerment within the Islamic context, asserting it as the initial objective of Islam.

⁵⁵² Mernissi, 19.

⁵⁵³ In reading Mernissi's various books, one encounters sections where she views Traditional Islam as both misogynistic and patriarchal or, conversely, as acknowledging equality. This variation stems from Mernissi's perspective on the specific historical narratives she is currently addressing. In the overarching historical context, Mernissi maintains the belief that Islam was misogynistic. However, acknowledging the subjectivity of history and its diverse narratives, she introduces anti-misogynist historical accounts to underscore the existence of elements promoting equality or women's empowerment within the Islamic tradition.

⁵⁵⁴ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 155.

⁵⁵⁵ Mernissi, 120.

⁵⁵⁶ Mernissi, 145.

⁵⁵⁷ Mernissi, 164, 170–71.

⁵⁵⁸ Mernissi, 179, 185.

⁵⁵⁹ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 83.

3.2.1.5 Sexual Identity

Fatema Mernissi's perspective on Sexual Identity in Islam sheds light on her intricate observations regarding the malleability of human sexuality and its manipulation by societies for various purposes.⁵⁶⁰ Mernissi posits that Islam perceives men and women as having different sexual identities. She contends that Allāh ﷻ regards women's identity as potentially deleterious, leading to their spatial restraint and prohibition from matters beyond the family, placing female access to non-domestic space under male control. She said:⁵⁶¹

Since women are considered by Allāh to be a destructive element, they are to be spatially confined and excluded from matters other than those of the family. Female access to non-domestic space is put under the control of males.

Despite this, Mernissi asserts that Islam does not inherently endorse the thesis of women's inferiority. Instead, she sees Islamic devices as strategies designed to restrain women's power.⁵⁶² This differs from Western cultural perspectives where sexual inequality often stems from beliefs in women's biological inferiority. Mernissi identifies two mechanisms of sexuality in relation to community structure, distinguishing between societies with surveillance and seclusion of women with those without. In societies where women are surveilled and secluded, the concept of female sexuality is deemed active, while in societies without such surveillance, the concept of female sexuality is considered passive.⁵⁶³

Mernissi delves into the implicit and explicit theories of female sexuality, citing *al-Imām* Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's interpretation of the *Qur'ān* as implicit, which portrays women as hunters and men as passive victims.⁵⁶⁴ Al-Ghazālī perceives civilization as grappling with the need to restrain women's potent and all-encompassing influence. The

⁵⁶⁰ Mernissi, 37.

⁵⁶¹ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 19.

⁵⁶² Mernissi, 19.

⁵⁶³ Mernissi, 31.

⁵⁶⁴ Mernissi directly quoted from page 25 of *Imām* al-Ghazālī's "*Iḥya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*," (The Revivification of Religious Sciences) in her book, stating: "Sexual desire was created solely as a means to entice men to deliver the seed and to put the woman in a situation where she can cultivate it, bringing the two together softly in order to obtain progeny, as the hunter obtains his game, and this through copulation." See Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1975, 28.

control of women is deemed necessary to ensure that men remain undistracted from their societal and religious responsibilities. The survival of society, in his view, hinges on the establishment of institutions that promote male dominance through practices such as sexual segregation and polygyny.⁵⁶⁵

Conversely, Mernissi also explores the explicit theory, exemplified by ‘Abbās Maḥmūd al-‘Aqqād’s idea which portrays an antagonistic and machismo vision of relations between the sexes.⁵⁶⁶ Al-‘Aqqād sought to elucidate male-female dynamics as presented in the *Qur’ān* in establishing the notion of male supremacy above women and that women are endowed with a hearty appetite for suffering and surrender.⁵⁶⁷⁵⁶⁸ According to Mernissi, al-‘Aqqād’s explicit theory is very similar to Western sexual perspective on women, specifically to Freudian emphasis on the ‘law of the jungle’ aspect of sexuality.⁵⁶⁹ Both theories, implicit and explicit, share a common component—the woman’s ‘*kayd*’ power, defined as the ability to deceive and defeat men through cunning and intrigue.⁵⁷⁰ However, while al-‘Aqqād’s theory links this power to women’s weak constitution and divinely decreed inferiority, al-Ghazālī perceives it as the most destructive element in the Muslim social order, equating femininity with the satanic.⁵⁷¹

Mernissi also contends that Islam considers preserving the virtue of women as a man’s duty.⁵⁷² The satisfaction of women’s sexual needs, according to *Ghazālīan* theory, is connected to the security of the social order, wherein women limiting themselves to their husbands can prevent chaos.⁵⁷³ Mernissi observes the difficulty men face in satisfying women’s sexual demands and argues that Islam views raw instincts such as lust and

⁵⁶⁵ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 33.

⁵⁶⁶ Mernissi, 32–33.

⁵⁶⁷ Mernissi directly quoted from page 25 of Al-‘Aqqād’s “Women in the Koran,” in her book, stating: “Males in all kinds of animals are given the power – embodied in their biological structure – to compel females to yield to the demands of the instinct (that is, sex) ... There is no situation where that power to compel is given to women over men.” See Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1975, 32–33.

⁵⁶⁸ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 32–33.

⁵⁶⁹ Mernissi, 32.

⁵⁷⁰ Mernissi, 33.

⁵⁷¹ Mernissi, 33.

⁵⁷² Mernissi, 39.

⁵⁷³ Mernissi, 39.

sexuality as constructive energy when it is channelled in a lawful way for the sake of Allāh

☞⁵⁷⁴ Mernissi stated:⁵⁷⁵

The *Ghazālīan* theory directly links the security of the social order to that of the woman's virtue, and thus to the satisfaction of her sexual needs. Social order is secured when the woman limits herself to her husband and does not create *fitnah*, or chaos, by enticing other men to illicit intercourse. *Imām* al-Ghazālī's awe of the overpowering sexual demands of the active female appears when he admits how difficult it is for a man to satisfy a woman.

Mernissi also distinguishes the Muslim theory of sublimation from the Western Christian tradition represented by Freudian psychoanalytic theory. While Freud views civilization as a war against sexuality, Mernissi claims that Islam sees civilization as the outcome of satisfied sexual energy and productive community the direct result of a contented and harmoniously lived sexuality.⁵⁷⁶ She suggests that Islam opposes asceticism due to the perception that a sexually frustrated member of the community is dangerous and needs proper direction or place to release their desire.⁵⁷⁷

Mernissi highlighted women's sexual identity with its relationship with the history of *jāriyah* practices that were prevalent during the Golden Age.⁵⁷⁸ She observes the connection between the heavenly and sacred image of females, the *ḥūriyy* in the *Qur'ān*, and the secular and worldly models and identities of *jāriyah* in the Muslim psyche.⁵⁷⁹ This association ties to sexuality, with the possession of numerous *jawāriyy* or ownership of renowned *jāriyah* seen as a symbol of power, influence, and success, be it in the afterlife or on earth. Mernissi argues that this pervasive female model and identity contributes to the inability of technocrats and peasants to perceive women beyond sexual role or as economically equal.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷⁴ Mernissi, 40–45.

⁵⁷⁵ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1975, 39–40.

⁵⁷⁶ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 42–45.

⁵⁷⁷ Mernissi, 59.

⁵⁷⁸ *Jāriyah* is female slaves known for their exceptional qualities

⁵⁷⁹ Historically in 'Abbasīds Caliphate and imaginarily in the Arabian Nights's folktales collection. See Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 71–72.

⁵⁸⁰ Mernissi, 72.

Lastly, Mernissi acknowledges that sexual inequality as a foundation of monotheistic religion is not unique to Islam but also similarly exists in Judaism and Christianity. She highlights more virulent degradation of women in Judeo-Christianity, particularly in the figure of the Virgin Mary, whose portrayal involves psychological dismemberment comparable to the women's spatial immobilization in the Muslim universe.⁵⁸¹

3.2.1.6 Gender Relationship

Mernissi suggested that al-Ghazālī's interpretation of gender dynamics represents the prevailing viewpoint of gender relationships within Islam. According to al-Ghazālī, God created two sexes with unique anatomical configurations, intended to complement each other in the fulfilment of God's plan.⁵⁸² This forms the basis for Mernissi's investigation into the ways these distinctions are understood and expressed in Islamic societies. However, Mernissi contends that al-Ghazālī portrayed the gender relationship in a rather unconventional manner, likening it to a form of hunting where women play the role of the hunter and men become the passive victims. Additionally, Mernissi asserts that Islam holds a decisively negative stance towards body ornamentation, particularly for women. Interpreting al-Ghazālī's writings on women, Mernissi emphasizes that, in the Muslim structure of reality, the eye 'organ' serves as an undeniably erogenous zone, capable of providing pleasure akin to the role of the penis. Consequently, she contends that a man's gaze can tarnish a woman's honour as much as physical contact would with his hands. She stated:⁵⁸³

According to Ghazālī, the eye is undoubtedly an erogenous zone in the Muslim structure of reality, just as able to give pleasure as the penis. A man can do as much damage to a woman's honour with his eyes as if he were to seize hold of her with his hands.

⁵⁸¹ Mernissi, 75.

⁵⁸² Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 28–29.

⁵⁸³ Mernissi, 141.

Mernissi argues that Muslim sexuality is defined by its territorial nature, reflecting a specific societal structure and power dynamic.⁵⁸⁴ In traditional Muslim societies, women are consistently viewed as adversaries, and trespassing into male spaces is deemed inappropriate. If a woman ventures into traditionally male domains, it would be considered as an act of aggression, disrupting the order established by Allāh ﷻ and potentially inciting men to commit *zinā*. This encounter poses a threat to men's peace of mind, self-determination, allegiance to Allāh ﷻ, and social prestige.⁵⁸⁵ Mernissi contends that Islam views gender relations within the context of a cosmogony where sexes symbolize obedience and authority.⁵⁸⁶ The division of labour between men and women, as outlined in the *Qur'ān*, reinforces the belief where women are defined as incapable of providing for their own needs.⁵⁸⁷ Women in Islam are spatially confined and materially taken care of by men in exchange for their obedience and reproductive services.⁵⁸⁸ Spatial boundaries further confine women to the domestic sphere, emphasizing their role as primarily sexual beings.⁵⁸⁹

Mernissi argues that the *Qur'ān* and Islam in general, akin to Judaism and Christianity, endorses hierarchical relationships and sexual inequality, defining clear gender roles and limiting women's access to material goods.⁵⁹⁰ Mernissi argues that Islam designates men with a dual role: as protectors who fulfil women's sexual and economic needs, and as enforcers of Muslim order by overseeing and safeguarding their female relatives.⁵⁹¹ She emphasizes that in Islamic traditional systems, one's identity is predominantly sexual. A man's respectability is not solely derived from economic power but also hinges on his control over the sexual conduct of his wife, daughters, and sisters in ensuring the preservation of his household's chastity. The intertwining of money and sex intricately distinguishes the identity and individuality of both men and women. She said:⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁴ Mernissi, 169.

⁵⁸⁵ Mernissi, 144.

⁵⁸⁶ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 111.

⁵⁸⁷ Mernissi, 68.

⁵⁸⁸ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 169.

⁵⁸⁹ Mernissi, 138.

⁵⁹⁰ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 14.

⁵⁹¹ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 82.

⁵⁹² Mernissi, 149.

The most obvious one is that in the traditional system our identities are primarily sexual. The system of honour binds the reputation of men and women to their genital apparatus. A respectable man is not simply someone who acquires some degree of economic power, but who also controls the sexual behaviour of his wife, daughters, and sisters.

Mernissi introduces the concept of a cosmic battle between good and evil, mirroring the gender dynamic and relationship between male and female in Islam.⁵⁹³ The good side, comprising God, men, husbands, reason, pre-defined sacred, eternal plan, the collective interest (*ummah*) and order, stands opposed to the evil side, featuring the devil, women, wives, lawlessness (*fitnah*), freedom and individualism. Men also represent the good characteristics and responsibilities—protectors, providers, obedience, consensus, and upholders of order—while women are relegated to the negative characteristics and image, associated with desire (*al-ṣaḥwah*), passion (*al-hawā*), disorder, innovation (*bid'ah*) and rebellion (*nushūz*).⁵⁹⁴ This dualistic perspective shapes societal roles and perceptions of men and women within Islamic cosmogony. This dichotomy, dividing Muslim society into two sub-universes—the universe of men (*ummah*) representing world religion and power, and the universe of women, confined to the domestic realm of sexuality and family. This division, according to Mernissi, leads to conflicting principles governing the *ummah* and Muslim families, emphasizing inequality and mistrust within the family structure.

Mernissi's in-depth examination of gender dynamics in Islam reveals an intricate mosaic of ideas and viewpoints. She argues that Islam does not inherently endorse the democratic equality of gender advocated by modern Muslims.⁵⁹⁵ Mernissi posits that Islam follows a pyramidal structure, positioning God at the apex and placing women and children at the base—a hierarchy considered heretical to reverse.⁵⁹⁶ This perspective serves as a foundation for Mernissi's comprehension of the entrenched hierarchy within Islamic gender dynamics. Furthermore, Mernissi contends that Muslim society fails to educate men on winning women through love, leaving them ill-equipped to handle self-determined women. This deficiency leads to a sense of repulsion and fear in the face of women's liberation.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹³ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 118.

⁵⁹⁴ Mernissi, 118.

⁵⁹⁵ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 95.

⁵⁹⁶ Ait Sabbah, *Woman in the Muslim Unconscious*, 74.

⁵⁹⁷ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 166.

Consequently, Mernissi critiques this Islamic gender dynamic, delving into various facets of Islamic gender dynamics, spanning conceptualizations of gender, criticisms of traditional gender relationships, and the inherent hierarchies within the religion. As her viewpoints continue to inspire discussion, they instigate a profound reflection on the evolving role of gender within the framework of Islamic beliefs and practices.

3.2.1.7 Patriarchal Family Unit

Fatema Mernissi offers a thought-provoking examination of the patriarchal family unit within Islam. In her exploration, Mernissi delves into the foundational principles that underpin the Islamic concept of gender equality, emphasizing the dominance of males in the family structure. She challenges the prevailing notion of gender equality within Islam, asserting that the family institution is rooted in male dominance.⁵⁹⁸ She contends that the segregation of sexes aligns with Islam's ideology, positioning women under the authority of fathers, brothers, or husbands.⁵⁹⁹ According to Mernissi, this spatial confinement and exclusion from matters beyond the family are consequences of the perception of women as potentially destructive elements in the social order, sanctioned by Allāh ﷻ. She stated:⁶⁰⁰

Sexual equality violates Islam's premiss, actualized in its laws, that heterosexual love is dangerous to Allāh's order. Muslim marriage is based on male dominance. The desegregation of the sexes violates Islam's ideology on women's position in the social order: that women should be under the authority of fathers, brothers, or husbands.

The Muslim psyche, as outlined by Mernissi, intertwines sexuality with *sharī'ah*, influencing the legal and ideological foundation of the Muslim family structure.⁶⁰¹ She argues that the ingrained belief in Islam that the family structure is unalterable and divine functions as a mechanism to restrain active female sexuality and to hinder women from asserting sexual self-determination.⁶⁰² Polygyny, repudiation, the prohibition of *zīna* (illicit sexual relations), and guarantees of paternity, she believes, are mechanisms designed and

⁵⁹⁸ Mernissi, 19.

⁵⁹⁹ Mernissi, 19.

⁶⁰⁰ Mernissi, 19.

⁶⁰¹ Mernissi, 18.

⁶⁰² Mernissi, 60.

introduced to transition from a family with some degree of female determination to one centred on male control.⁶⁰³ She suggests that the Prophet ﷺ viewed the establishment of the male-dominated Muslim family as essential to the establishment of Islam.⁶⁰⁴

Mernissi suggests that Muslim marriages are built on the idea that social stability hinges on restraining women's perceived capacity for disruption through a dominant, non-affectionate husband. She contends that this husband has access to other females—concubines, co-wives, and prostitutes—for sexual satisfaction, all within similarly demeaning circumstances.⁶⁰⁵ A husband's involvement with multiple women has the potential to diminish his love and intimacy towards his primary wife, concurrently diminishing her status. Furthermore, the husband is endowed with authority over his wife through the concept of *nushūz* that was introduced in the *Qur'ān*—a negative label assigned to a wife who rebels against her Muslim husband's authority. The *Qur'ān* addresses *nushūz* to describe the punishment a husband must inflict upon his wife in case of rebellion.⁶⁰⁶ However, Mernissi contends that the fundamental notion of sexual segregation in Islamic regulation of sexuality is gradually diminishing in today's context. She notes ongoing efforts from the Muslim establishment to resist this change, as it views the affection between men and women, particularly spouses, as a significant menace to societal stability.⁶⁰⁷

3.2.1.8 Against Heterosexual Intimacy

Fatema Mernissi presents a compelling argument regarding Islam's purported opposition to heterosexual love and intimacy. According to her, Islam inherently opposes the concept of heterosexual love, asserting that sexual equality challenges the fundamental principles embedded in Islamic law.⁶⁰⁸ She argues that the very foundation of Muslim marriage is based on male dominance, and any attempt to desegregate the sexes is viewed as a violation

⁶⁰³ Mernissi, 167.

⁶⁰⁴ Mernissi, 64.

⁶⁰⁵ Mernissi, 167.

⁶⁰⁶ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 109.

⁶⁰⁷ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 107.

⁶⁰⁸ Mernissi, 19.

of Islam's ideology regarding the position of women in the social order. Women, considered by Allāh ﷻ to be potentially destructive, are spatially confined and excluded from matters beyond the family, with their access to non-domestic spaces controlled by males.⁶⁰⁹

In Mernissi's exploration, she suggests that sexual acts in Islam are considered polluting, surrounded by ceremonials and incantations designed to create emotional distance between spouses. These rituals aim to diminish the act's elemental function, reducing it to a purely reproductive role. The religious orientation of the coital space, requiring individuals to face away from Mecca and keep Allāh ﷻ present in the mind during intercourse, symbolizes the perceived antagonism between Allāh ﷻ and women. She stated:⁶¹⁰

In an attempt to prevent a complete merging with the woman, the coital embrace is surrounded by a ceremony which grants Allāh a substantial presence in the man's mind during intercourse. The coital space is religiously oriented: the couple should have their heads turned away from Mecca. 'They should not face the "holy shrine" in respect for it.' This symbolism of spatial orientation expresses the antagonism between Allāh and the woman. Mecca is the direction of God. During intercourse, the man is reminded that he is not in Allāh's territory, whence the necessity to invoke his presence.

Mernissi suggests that practices like polygyny and repudiation are intended to weaken the conjugal relationship, aligning with the Muslim God's desire to maintain exclusive devotion from the believers. She introduces the idea that the Muslim God is characterized by jealousy, disapproving of anything that might interfere with believers' devotion to Him, including the conjugal unit. She said:⁶¹¹

The Muslim god is known for His jealousy, and He is especially jealous of anything that might interfere with the believer's devotion to him. The conjugal unit is a real danger and is consequently weakened by two legal devices: polygamy and repudiation. Both institutions are based on psychological premisses that reveal an astonishing awareness of the couple's psychology and its weaknesses.

⁶⁰⁹ Mernissi, 19.

⁶¹⁰ Mernissi, 113.

⁶¹¹ Mernissi, 115.

In her analysis of sexual identity, Mernissi posits that a society choosing sexual segregation inadvertently fosters 'homosocial' relations while promoting seduction as a means of communication. She suggests that the impoverishment of heterosexual relations in such a society has broader societal consequences, influencing interpersonal dynamics and communication. This perspective suggests that by limiting heterosexual relations, societies may inadvertently encourage alternative forms of social interaction.⁶¹²

Fatema Mernissi's critical analysis provides a thought-provoking examination of Islam's stance on heterosexual love and intimacy. Her exploration delves into the intricate dynamics of sexual relationships within the context of Islamic beliefs, challenging prevailing norms and shedding light on the broader societal implications of sexual segregation. As Mernissi's viewpoints continue to stimulate discourse, they invite a deeper reflection on the evolving nature of relationships within the framework of Islam.

3.2.1.9 Conclusion

Mernissi predominantly maintains a critical perspective on the Islamic concept of gender equality. In her view, Islam associate women with negative attributes, portraying them as cunning and potentially evil, aligning them with the concepts of '*kayd*' and '*fitnah*.' This association, according to Mernissi, leads to the restriction of women's free will and self-autonomy due to the perceived risk of disorder and dishonour. She also underscores the disparity between the Prophet's ﷺ envisioned ideal of gender equality in Islam and the actual ruling revealed by Allāh ﷻ. Mernissi's observations further bring to light explicit inequalities in sexual identity and gender relationships between Muslim men and Muslim women. Moreover, Mernissi scrutinizes the patriarchal underpinnings of the Islamic family unit, highlighting the emphasis it gives to male superiority and the subordination of women. She also addresses how the Islamic family structure was built to go against heterosexual love and intimacy between husbands and wives. Mernissi's stance on the Islamic concept of gender equality remains steadfast, undergoing minimal changes from her secular

⁶¹² Mernissi, 140.

feminist stage to her Islamic feminist stage. Despite adopting a more apologetic style at the latter stage, her criticisms endure, albeit with a shift in focus to other topics within Islam.

3.3.2 Mernissi's Methodology in Approaching Gender Issues in Islam

Fatima Mernissi offers a unique perspective on gender equality within Islam. In her scholarly endeavours, she employs diverse methodologies and approaches to engage with Islamic texts. Her viewpoint involves a critical examination of traditional Islamic theology through alternative readings of scripture and canonical conventions.

Mernissi's feminist approach is rooted in Islamic discourse, highlighting Islam's intrinsic mission to promote the equality of all human beings. Her commitment to discussing and analysing these texts stems from various motives. This chapter aims to explore Mernissi's motives, unravel the reasons behind her approach, and shed light on her distinctive methodologies when dealing with Islamic texts.

3.2.2.1 Mernissi's Motives and Reasons Approaching Gender Issues in Islam

This section delves into Mernissi's motivations and rationale for tackling gender issues in Islam. She puts forth various reasons driving her enthusiasm to address this issue, including the desire to amend historical inaccuracies, enhance policies related to women, and shift the consciousness of Muslims regarding women's identity and position in Islam. The exploration here focuses on her reasoning and justification drawn from the analysis of her books.

3.2.2.1.1 Reclaiming History

Mernissi's motivation in addressing gender issues in Islam was driven by a commitment to reclaim history and translate it into an alternative narrative that supports women. She argues that alternative questions and inquiries can lead to a different historical narrative, revealing

multiple 'truths' hidden in history.⁶¹³ Recognizing Islamic memory and history as a diverse accumulation of experiences spanning fifteen centuries, Mernissi emphasizes the need to select, prioritize, and choose from this wealth of experience.⁶¹⁴ She contends that every generation draws from this historical fund to shape its 'cultural identity' based on current challenges. She said:⁶¹⁵

Muslim memory is a vast accumulation of fifteen centuries of diverse cultural experiences, of struggles between rulers and the ruled, of popular campaigning movements variously held in check, and more of less despotic responses to those movements. To take Muslim history as a reference is, therefore, necessarily to select, prioritize and choose from among the fund of images, models, cliches and schemas swept along in the history of a great people, no single precise vision of which has to be accepted. Every generation draws from that fund what it needs to manufacture its 'cultural identity' according to the pressing problems facing it. 'Islamic memory' is, therefore, the product of a choice like any other. And the proof of this is that this memory varies from one social class to another.

Regarding this matter, Mernissi emphasizes the importance of uncovering the past to confront the present and to shape the future of Muslims. She highlights the existence of many obscured 'pasts,' concealed by the veil and *hijāb* ruling, particularly those related to women and their freedom.⁶¹⁶ Central to "The Veil and the Male Elite" and Mernissi's previous works is her emphasis on the political and ideological manipulation of religion, especially concerning history.⁶¹⁷ Mernissi leverages the legitimacy of her revision to reexamine history, underlining that the *Qur'ān's* etymology encourages interpretation, and interpretations are never neutral. She contends that Muslims have been intimidated by the misuse of memory, dwelling excessively on their glorious past while deliberately choosing to look away from the harsh reality of the future.⁶¹⁸ Mernissi seeks to untangle the control exerted by patriarchal *imāms* and politicians over memory and history. Presenting her book, "The Veil and Male Elite," as a narrative journeying back to the historical time of the Prophet ﷺ, Mernissi portrays the Prophet ﷺ as a protector and his reforms as revolutionary

⁶¹³ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 85.

⁶¹⁴ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 79.

⁶¹⁵ Mernissi, 79.

⁶¹⁶ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 85.

⁶¹⁷ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 8–9, 10, 49.

⁶¹⁸ Mernissi, 20.

for women's rights.⁶¹⁹ She argues that those who question mainstream Islamic memory, such as the rationalists, have been suppressed by unjust *imāms* who selectively interpret history and divine will regarding women.⁶²⁰

"The Forgotten Queens of Islam" represents another instance where Mernissi reexamines history in Muslim societies from a rejuvenating perspective. The explicit goal of the book is to uncover the forgotten women heads of states in Islam and to 'demystify history' by revealing its inherently male-centric narrative. This project solidifies Mernissi's position as a subaltern historian operating from the margins of an androcentric 'Muslim history,' delving into its gaps, rendering its silent moments eloquently, and challenging its patriarchal foundations.⁶²¹ While Mernissi employs the term 'Muslim history' in a seemingly monolithic manner, she acknowledges its subjectivity and plurality. Her assessment highlights variations in the historical treatment of women in power, evident in distinctions between Yemenite historians and their Arab counterparts. In this context, 'Muslim history' pertains to a specific official narrative taught in schools, which often erases and neglects women in positions of power and leadership. Mernissi's book, therefore, seeks to subvert this homogenous history by constructing a counter memory, spotlighting women's agency, and resistance against marginalization in the realm of power.

Mernissi commends the early Muslim historians for extensively featuring women in their writings, deviating from the expected portrayal of women solely as mothers and daughters of powerful men. In general history books, genealogies, and chronicles, women are recognized as active participants and fully engaged as male partners in historical events, including at the pivotal period during the emergence of Islam. Muslim historians, encompassing events from the Prophet's ﷺ birth to his death, acknowledge women's contribution in religious fields such as in the field of *ḥadīth* and *Qur'ānic tafsīr*. They are praised for their contributions as *ṣahābiyyah* during the Prophet's ﷺ lifetime and as *ḥadīth* narrators after his death.⁶²²

⁶¹⁹ Mernissi, 10.

⁶²⁰ Mernissi, 154; Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 23.

⁶²¹ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 40, 191.

⁶²² Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 92.

Mernissi argues that history books from the early decades of Islam emphasize the significant role of women in history. The focal figures are the Prophet's ﷺ wives and female *ṣaḥabiyyah* who held high positions of respect.⁶²³ Historians depict the Prophet's ﷺ entourage, highlighting contributions of his wives such as Khadījah ﷺ, ‘Ā’isha ﷺ, Ummu Salamah ﷺ, Zaynab bint Jaḥshi ﷺ, and *ṣaḥabiyyah* from many of the *Quraysh* nobles. They portray a reminiscence of memory, at times where women were politically independent and assertive, and narrated retrospective stories where the Prophet ﷺ attentively listening to *ṣaḥabiyyah* complaints, as seen in Ummu Salamah ﷺ question on the lack of women mentioned in the *Qur’ān*. Another notable instance is the story of Khawlah Bint Tsā‘labah ﷺ, symbolizing the prominence of women on the political stage, especially in the dialogue between the divine and the terrestrial.⁶²⁴

Mernissi stresses the need to liberate Islam from clichés, transcending the idealized images of those in power, scrutinizing counter-resistance, and studying marginal cases and exceptions. This is particularly crucial for comprehending the 'history' of women in Islam, a history often overlooked, much like that of peasants and the poor, absent from official discourse.⁶²⁵

Mernissi argues that the liberation of Muslim women will result from re-examining the past and reclaiming all aspects that have shaped Islamic civilization. She contends that women, not just men, should hold ownership over the mosque and the *Qur’ān*, thereby granting them rights and authority to interpret divine revelation. She stated:⁶²⁶

What we are seeing today is a claim by women to their right to God and the historical tradition. This takes various forms. There are women who are active within the fundamentalist movements and those who work on a reinterpretation of the Muslim heritage as a necessary ingredient of our modernity. Our liberation will come through a rereading of our past and a reappropriation of all that has structured our civilization. The mosque and

⁶²³ Mernissi, 94.

⁶²⁴ Mernissi, 81.

⁶²⁵ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 85.

⁶²⁶ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 160–61.

the Koran belong to women as much as do the heavenly bodies. We have a right to all of that, to all its riches for constructing our modern identity.

Mernissi advocates for the right to access these riches in constructing a modern Muslim women's identity.⁶²⁷ She calls for a revisit of Muslim history, moving beyond the Islam represented by *imāms*, caliphs, and presidents, beyond the Islam of the palace and its corrupted scholars. To achieve this, she encourages exploring the swampy, dark areas of the marginal and exceptional, which is the stories of dynamic tension, thwarted order, rejection, and resistance that was buried in Islamic history.⁶²⁸

Mernissi believes that embracing this history is the key to restoring Muslims' glorious humanity, portraying them not as obedient automatons but as responsible beings capable of refusing orders that compromise their well-being. In Mernissi's view, every 'tradition' is a political construct and is a refined editing of 'memory' reinforcing the speaker's interests. She contends that Muslim men seeking democratic living will always find autonomous women of the past, such as the Prophet's ﷺ wives and Companions ﷺ, as complementary to authentic Muslim women identity. Meanwhile, those uncomfortable with egalitarian participation will always refer to the example of courtesans in rulers' palaces to reinforce their inferior image of Muslim women. She said:⁶²⁹

Muslim men who wish to live democratically would have no difficulty in unearthing from the past Muslim women who were partners in the game of politics, such as the Prophet's wives and disciples. Whilst those whom the advent of egalitarian participation discomfited could always point to the example of the courtesans in the rulers' palaces.

Mernissi argues that Muslim and Arab women cannot rely on scholars or anyone, whether 'involved' or 'neutral', to interpret their history for them.⁶³⁰ She asserts that delving into history independently provides women with valuable insights on how to navigate life happily as women, Muslims, and Arabs—three identities historically condemned as a maleficent triad.⁶³¹ According to Mernissi, in the preceding decades, women in Muslim

⁶²⁷ Fatima Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, trans. Mary Jo Lakeland (New York: Addison-Wolsey Publishing Co., 1992), 160–61.

⁶²⁸ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 85.

⁶²⁹ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 89.

⁶³⁰ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 116.

⁶³¹ Mernissi, 116–17.

societies were denied a future and relegated to the sole prospect of growing old. The challenge lies between these two states of mind—either aging and become a speck in history or envisioning a future and documenting time-bound events for future generations.⁶³²

Acknowledging that man-written history has formed the basis of 'national' or 'cultural' heritage and often claimed to be of divine origin by theocracies, Mernissi contends that it remains arduous for a woman to construct her own past. Ironically, she notes that other tasks, including designing a future, appear more feasible and rewarding. Despite the hardship, Mernissi still emphasizes the significance of history and urges women to actively shape their own past. She underscores the intricate and weighty nature of historical writing, traditionally considered a male-exclusive pursuit characterized by both burdens and privileges.⁶³³

3.2.2.1.2 Improving Policy on Women

Mernissi embarked on the analysis of gender equality in Islam driven by her dismay at the oppressive policies affecting women in Muslim countries, particularly in her own country, Morocco. Her objective was to uncover the influence of religion on local customs and on the state policies, sparking discussions and rooms for improvement. Many of Mernissi's works, including "Beyond the Veil," "Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women," and "Les Aït-Débrouille: Ong rurales du Haut-Atlas," incorporate field studies and interviews with Moroccan women across various economic strata.

⁶³² Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, xii.

⁶³³ Mernissi, xii.

She extensively critiqued Morocco's *al-Mudawwanah* in her works,⁶³⁴ questioning why Muslims adhere to oppressive sex-role models of the past instead of striving to create a new, empowering one. She said:⁶³⁵

Why do we remain limited to sex-role models that are heavily dependent on our medieval past, instead of creating ones that would help us dynamize our perception of ourselves as sexual beings?

Mernissi also criticized the dual stance of Arab countries that introduced reservations or amendments to international conventions, such as trying to incorporate *sharī'ah* aspects in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).⁶³⁶ She argued that equality and *sharī'ah* were incompatible, citing conflicts with the United Nations Charter.⁶³⁷ Mernissi encouraged Muslim women to vocalize their resistance, as she explored historical instances where women engaged in forms of resistance due to perceived threats to their status and sexual autonomy during the time of Caliph Abū Bakar ﷺ.⁶³⁸

Despite exploring economic exploitation of subaltern women, her goal was not to portray women solely as victims. Instead, Mernissi aimed to draw the attention of national policymakers and development planners to the needs of economically disadvantaged women. Her interviews sought to amplify the voices of female subalterns, documenting women's agency and counterpower to oppressive policy. Mernissi highlighted that post-independence Moroccan women have become aware of their disadvantageous legal, economic, and political status. Young women, in particular, are rejecting traditional

⁶³⁴ *Al-Mudawwanah* or the *Mudawana*, also known as the family code, comprises a collection of personal status laws within the Moroccan legal system. It deals with diverse family issues including marriage, polygyny, divorce, inheritance, and child custody. Originally grounded in the *Mālikī* school of *Sunnī* Islamic jurisprudence, it was institutionalized subsequent to Morocco's liberation from France in 1956. See Josep Lluís Mateo Dieste, “‘Demonstrating Islam’: The Conflict of Text and the Mudawwana Reform in Morocco,” *The Muslim World* 99, no. 1 (2009): 134–54, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-1913.2009.01258.x>; Nowrin Tamanna, “Personal Status Laws in Morocco and Tunisia: A Comparative Exploration of the Possibilities for Equality-Enhancing Reform in Bangladesh,” *Feminist Legal Studies* 16, no. 3 (2008): 323–43, [10.1007/s10691-008-9099-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10691-008-9099-9).

⁶³⁵ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 73.

⁶³⁶ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 66.

⁶³⁷ Mernissi, 60.

⁶³⁸ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 73.

feminine values, challenging patriarchy, and emphasizing the urgency of policy improvements to address these gender disparities.⁶³⁹

3.2.2.1.3 Altering Consciousness

Mernissi's mission in addressing gender equality in Islam extended beyond the quest for justice—it aimed to reshape the consciousness of Muslims, challenging their inferiority complex in comparison to the Western world and dismantling subaltern mentalities. She vehemently criticized the tendency among Arabs to perceive the West as the exclusive source of innovation, urging them to rediscover the richness within their own heritage.

Mernissi opposed the notion that Arab feminism was a Western import, emphasizing the capacity of Muslim women to generate ideas and highlighting the feminist elements deeply rooted in Arab history. She stated:⁶⁴⁰

'Feminism is not home-grown in Arab lands, it is an import from Western capitals.' This often-heard statement is shared by two groups of people one would never think of as having anything in common: Conservative Religious Arab Male Leaders, and the Provincial Western Feminists. The implication of this statement is that the Arab woman is a semi-idiotic submissive subhuman who bathes happily in patriarchally organized degradation and institutionalized deprivation.

Thus, she drew upon Arabic folktales like "The Merchant's Daughter and the Son of the Sultan" and stories from "Arabian Nights" to illustrate the evidence of indigenous feminist elements.⁶⁴¹

According to Mernissi, Muslims had surrendered their position and self-consciousness by excessively relying on the West, even adopting the Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) as a measure of time.⁶⁴² She attributed this loss of autonomy in

⁶³⁹ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 103.

⁶⁴⁰ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 13.

⁶⁴¹ Mernissi, 13–17.

⁶⁴² Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 140–41.

generating ideas to the Arab governments of the 20th century, which, after the departure of colonial powers, abandoned *al-‘aql* (reason) as foreign.⁶⁴³

Mernissi called upon Muslims to rewrite their history, moving beyond the Islam of *imāms*, caliphs, and presidents. She advocated exploring the marginalized and exceptional aspects of history, to reveals and uncovers a dynamic tension, resistance, and rejection of the past that could help to restore Muslims' glorious consciousness. She emphasized the need to depict Muslims not as obedient automatons but as responsible beings capable of resisting orders that compromise their individual prosperousness.⁶⁴⁴

Highlighting a shift in the relationship between humans and the divine during the *jāhiliyyah*, Mernissi noted that in pre-Islamic times, gods were subject to the will and critical reasoning of humans.⁶⁴⁵ Mernissi stated:⁶⁴⁶

The relationship between the human and the divine during the *jahiliyya* was the reverse of the ideal to be proposed by Islam: it was the gods who were hostage to the will and critical reasoning of men rather than the other way around. The individual was sovereign, criticizing the god and constantly evaluating him according to his own criteria.

She stressed the importance of imagination and opinion, urging the *ummah* to find security outside the constraints of restricted thought.⁶⁴⁷

In her revised edition of "Beyond the Veil," Mernissi accentuate the formation of a subaltern consciousness among Muslim women, particularly the poor Moroccan women she had interviewed over a decade. This evolving consciousness, marked by a political and legal understanding of their problems, reflected a revolutionary process in the Muslim world. Despite negative changes in economic conditions, Mernissi observed a notable transformation in self-perception and worldviews among these women, signifying a crucial shift in their awareness and resistance to traditional subjectivity.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴³ Mernissi, 39.

⁶⁴⁴ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 85.

⁶⁴⁵ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 105.

⁶⁴⁶ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 105.

⁶⁴⁷ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 91.

⁶⁴⁸ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, xviii, xiii–xiv, xiv.

3.2.2.1 Mernissi Approaches and Methods in Criticizing the Gender Equality Issues in Islam

Fatema Mernissi, through her writings, has employed a diverse range of approaches and methods in criticising gender equality issues within Islam. She has skilfully applied various strategies to analyse and articulate her criticisms. The following outlines the approaches and methods evident in her works:

3.2.2.1.1 Contextual and Socio-Historical Analysis

Mernissi's contextual reading and socio-historical analysis bring forth a refreshing perspective on Islamic thought and its discourse. Her methodology goes beyond traditional exegesis, challenging and expanding the conventional approaches. She scrutinizes each issue through contextual analysis, examining the socio-historical aspects in connection to the revelations. For instance, she poses probing questions such as the true significance of the *hijāb* in the early Muslim context, its symbolic meaning, and the logic and justification behind it. She explores when it was introduced, for whom, and why.⁶⁴⁹ Regarding the *hijāb*, Mernissi suggests that external pressures compelled the Prophet ﷺ to accept these practices.⁶⁵⁰ She further argues that the success of the Prophet ﷺ in spreading Islam was facilitated by the receptive ideological climate of the Arabic terrain at that time.⁶⁵¹

Mernissi employs socio-historical methods to decipher Islamic legal texts related to these injunctions. She delves into the socio-political conditions of one's localities and periods, analysing the diverse interpretations of Islamic law stemming from these conditions. This approach enables her to challenge conventional interpretations and advocate for a more inclusive and gender-equal understanding of religious texts.⁶⁵² Mernissi's work, "The Veil and the Male Elite," introduces an original and indispensable

⁶⁴⁹ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 81.

⁶⁵⁰ Mernissi, 106.

⁶⁵¹ Mernissi, 68.

⁶⁵² Muslikhati, *Feminisme Dan Pemberdayaan Wanita Dalam Timbangan Islam*, 82.

contextualizing methodology in the discourse of gender equality in Islam, emphasizing the historical context of Islamic texts and the influence of certain gender norms.⁶⁵³ While contextualization may be seen as a strategy rather than a definitive and persuasive approach, it sheds light on the coexistence of contextual reading and apologetic mystification in Mernissi's work.

Mernissi also explores the historical context of Islam in Madinah and the issues related to *ḥadīths* after the Prophet's ﷺ death. She analyses the historical settings of the early Muslim community to help her comprehend the context in which the *ḥadīths* were transmitted and interpreted.⁶⁵⁴ She acknowledges that political and social factors influenced the interpretation of *ḥadīths*, leading to its potential manipulation for specific interests. For instance, the issues of leadership succession and the rise of the caliphate resulted in conflicting interpretations of *ḥadīth* texts, as the political actors involved sought to justify their positions using the sacred texts. Mernissi underscores how the interpretation of *ḥadīths* was often shaped by male politicians manipulating religious sentiments for personal gain, while scholars sought to counter such manipulations through the development of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) using various concepts and verification methods.⁶⁵⁵

Rhouni highlights that Mernissi's innovative approach aligns with Arkoun's call to revisit medieval theology by expanding the historicizing technique of *asbāb al-nuzūl*; treating *Qur'ānic* verses as historical texts that provide insights into Arabian society and culture.⁶⁵⁶ Mernissi advocates for the necessity of examining the historical context, specifically the socio-spatial context, to understand a crucial element: the influence of social control on the Prophet ﷺ, amplified by his close proximity and interaction with his Companions ﷺ. This goes beyond a mere historical inquiry; it is a methodology that allows the extrication of women's legal status from the sacred domain.

⁶⁵³ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 12.

⁶⁵⁴ Mernissi, *Women and Islam: A Historical and Theological Enquiry*, 43.

⁶⁵⁵ Burhanuddin, *Fatima Mernissi: Menggugat Ketidakadilan Gender Dalam Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer*, 134.

⁶⁵⁶ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 230.

3.2.2.1.1 Authentication Methodology

Mernissi firmly believes that the *Qur'ān* is the primary source of Islamic teachings, and the *ḥadīth*, which contains the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, serves as a secondary source to complement the *Qur'ān*. However, she raises pertinent questions on the interpretation of the revealed text, highlighting the historical context and the socio-political influences that may have affected the portrayal of women in the texts. Mernissi's employs several methodologies in scrutinizing the text, emphasizing her efforts to challenge gender bias and the manipulation of religious texts for political purposes.⁶⁵⁷

Mernissi delves into the historical context of Islam in Madinah and the emergence of *ḥadīth*-related issues following the death of the Prophet ﷺ. The question of succession and the rise of the caliphate led to conflicting interpretations of *ḥadīth* texts, particularly as political interests sought to justify their positions using sacred texts. Mernissi emphasizes the influence of male politicians on the interpretation of *ḥadīths*, revealing their attempts to manipulate religion for personal gain. Thus, Mernissi implemented the authentication methodology to counteract these manipulations by following the authentication method of *ḥadīth* scholars in scrutinizing the narrators and the chain of transmission of the *ḥadīths*.⁶⁵⁸

Its reliability hinges on the careful examination of the chain of transmission (*isnād*) and the biographies of the narrators (*sanad*). Mernissi emphasizes the need to personally investigate the evidence provided by generations of narrators who heard the *ḥadīth* from the Prophet ﷺ to ascertain its authenticity and credibility.⁶⁵⁹

3.2.2.1.1 Multiple-Front Critique

Mernissi stands among many third-world feminists engaging in a comprehensive critique on multiple fronts, targeting not only overarching narratives like colonialism and fundamentalism but also so-called 'progressive' discourses such as nationalism, Marxism,

⁶⁵⁷ Mernissi, *Women and Islam: A Historical and Theological Enquiry*, 43.

⁶⁵⁸ Mernissi, 43.

⁶⁵⁹ Mernissi, 35, 49.

and feminism.⁶⁶⁰ She takes aim at nationalists who introduced Western democratic concepts like "constitution," "parliament," and "universal suffrage" without adequately educating the masses on essential principles like individual sovereignty and freedom of opinion, which form the foundation of these institutions and concepts.⁶⁶¹

Mernissi also critiques Islamic fundamentalism, arguing that religion is manipulated by Muslim politicians to confuse the masses, labelling their opposition as infidels, blasphemers, enemy agents, and supporters of colonizers.⁶⁶² She condemns the shortsightedness of Arab countries in addressing population explosion, emphasizing that instead of analysing its root causes—such as women's illiteracy and economic marginalization—Arab states focus on promoting the veil. Despite international population studies indicating that educating women is key to reducing birth rates, the emphasis on women's education confined to only superficial measures.⁶⁶³

Mernissi criticizes colonization for further devaluing women's labour beyond the existing patriarchal system, resulting in a double impact: the depreciation of manual labour in contrast to technical expertise, and the specific devaluation of domestic labour within the capitalist framework that perceived domestic labour as nonproductive and excluded from national accounts.⁶⁶⁴ Her simultaneous critique of both colonialism and ethnocentrism positions Mernissi as a postcolonial feminist critic. Rhouni interprets Mernissi's multi-front critique as an illustration of her stance as a secular critic, a position that rejects all forms of theoretical and philosophical affiliations.⁶⁶⁵

3.2.2.1.1 Secular Critique

Examining Mernissi's approach and methodology reveals her intentional departure from religious dogmas and orthodoxy when scrutinizing gender issues in Islam. Rhouni suggests

⁶⁶⁰ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 44.

⁶⁶¹ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 48.

⁶⁶² Mernissi, 48.

⁶⁶³ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, x.

⁶⁶⁴ Mernissi, 14.

⁶⁶⁵ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 44–45.

that Mernissi's 'secular critique' pertains to her worldly scholarship, particularly her sociological work as opposed to her engagements with religion. This concept relates to her original training as a sociologist and her scholarly output focused on highlighting the history of laywomen.⁶⁶⁶ Mernissi's scholarly objective is to amplify the voices of subaltern women for state planners, shedding light on tangible issues such as illiteracy, minimum wage, and social security. One of Mernissi's key goals is to shift the discourse on gender away from mere rhetoric—depicted as a religious and cultural matter—and compel decision-makers to confront its underlying economic nature.⁶⁶⁷

In her exploration of Muslim history, Mernissi adopts a "modern outlook," encompassing gender dynamics and acknowledging the inherent bias in historical writing.⁶⁶⁸ Rhouni sees this methodology as another facet of her secular critique—a demystifying, critical interpretation of history aimed to move discussions on women and political power away from the sacred realm.⁶⁶⁹ Mernissi recognizes the subversive nature of her endeavour, challenging the strong link between history writing in Islam's name and religious knowledge and truth. She asserts that historical truths vary based on the perspective of the presenter and the ideological framework they operate from. Mernissi's secular approach is evident in her divergence from authoritative male Muslim historians who could not envision women in power, as well as in the heretical questions she poses.⁶⁷⁰

Rhouni suggests that Mernissi's work can illuminate gaps in Moroccan official history through this secular gaze or secular critique approach.⁶⁷¹ By 'secular critique,' Rhouni does not imply Mernissi's antagonism towards religion but points to a critical nonconformity and resistance to dogmatism, whether religious or philosophical. Mernissi emerges as a secular intellectual, employing a hybrid approach that borrows analytical tools from various theories while resisting 'theoretical fundamentalism' that imposes boundaries on her analysis. To highlights gendered subalternity, Mernissi embraces a heterodox

⁶⁶⁶ Rhouni, 43.

⁶⁶⁷ Rhouni, 44.

⁶⁶⁸ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 40.

⁶⁶⁹ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 147.

⁶⁷⁰ Rhouni, 148.

⁶⁷¹ Rhouni, 43.

approach attentive to both gender and class, avoiding orthodox or dogmatic affiliations limited to either Marxism or feminism. Her simultaneous use of Marxist and feminist approaches showcases her rejection of constraining theoretical frameworks.⁶⁷²

3.2.2.1.1 Double Investigation

Mernissi's method of double investigation is explicitly outlined in her book, "The Veil and the Male Elite." It involves a fusion of two critical inquiry methods in the study of *ḥadīth*: historical background analysis and methodological background analysis. Before delving into the analysis of the meaning of any misogynistic *ḥadīth*, Mernissi employs this method as a preliminary step to assess the authenticity of the *ḥadīth*. Even if a *ḥadīth* is declared authentic and is found in a reputable book, Mernissi contends that it requires scrutiny, considering potential contributing elements like human bias that could invalidate the *ḥadīth*.⁶⁷³

According to Mernissi, she proposes steps for testing the *ḥadīth* through the double investigation method, encompassing both historical background analysis and methodological analysis of the *ḥadīth* and its narrators. This involves asking the essential "who, where, when, why, and to whom?" questions.⁶⁷⁴ The method scrutinizes the credibility of the narrators by exploring their psychological aspects—history, characteristics, tragedies, traumas, biases, and demeaning incidents—aiming to humanize the narrators' actions and attitudes as much as possible. This approach goes beyond revealing surface symptoms and characteristics, delving into the deeper realms of psychological consciousness to better comprehend human behaviour and societal dynamics in the past.⁶⁷⁵

Mernissi applies this "double investigation" approach to critique various companions of the Prophet, such as Abū Bakrah رضي الله عنه and Abū Ḥurayrah رضي الله عنه. Through this

⁶⁷² Rhouni, 44.

⁶⁷³ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 49.

⁶⁷⁴ Mernissi, 49.

⁶⁷⁵ Munirah, "Hermeneutika Hadis Ala Fatima Mernissi," 42–45.

method, she seeks to illuminate the evolution of narrations and uncover potential gender bias within the *ḥadīth* traditions.⁶⁷⁶ Using this method, she subjected various *ḥadīths* to criticism, including those *ḥadīth* prohibiting women in leadership roles, asserting that women invalidate prayers if they pass in front of a praying person, portraying women as bringers of disasters, presenting women as a *fitnah* for men, and depicting women as the majority inhabitants of hell.⁶⁷⁷

3.2.2.1.1 Demystifying Religion

Mernissi employs a notable strategy in addressing gender equality within Islam by dispelling the mystique surrounding religion and history. She deliberately eliminates elements of the all-encompassing and everlasting concept of divine attribution and special considerations regarding the revealed text and Prophetic tradition, subjecting them to criticism from a secular standpoint. Mernissi humanizes the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions رضي الله عنهم by reducing them to basic human characteristics and psychology, thereby challenging the notion of the Prophet's ﷺ infallibility. According to Rhouni, Mernissi's demystification approach involves critically examining history to remove discussions on women and political power from the sacred realm. Instead, she asserts that the conflict between women and power in Islam is a constructed agenda rather than a natural or divine phenomenon.⁶⁷⁸

For instance, Mernissi envisions the Prophet ﷺ succumbing to pressure from his surroundings, portraying the Prophet's ﷺ acceptance of *ḥijāb* rulings as a response to sexual pressure to prove his libido and protect his wives.⁶⁷⁹ Another illustration of Mernissi's demystification is her assertion that the Prophet's ﷺ changing of the *Qiblah* was a political initiative aimed at introducing originality to his preaching, intertwined with elements of

⁶⁷⁶ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 49.

⁶⁷⁷ Most of the *ḥadīths* found in Mernissi's "The Veil and Male Elite" have been examined and discussed in a Master's thesis authored by Norzi Nasir. See Bin Nasir, "Fatima Mernissi Dalam Timbangan Ilmu Hadith: Kritik Terhadap Pemikiran Dan Dakwaan Hadith-Hadith Misoginis."

⁶⁷⁸ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 147–48.

⁶⁷⁹ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 106, 163–64.

Arabic nationalism.⁶⁸⁰ She demystifies the Prophet's ﷺ motive, suggesting that the *Qiblah* change was based on political reasoning initiated by the Prophet ﷺ himself rather than by Allāh's ﷻ revelation.

In advocating for her demystifying approach, Mernissi promotes reason as the arbiter over the divine. She highlighted the reversal of the ideal proposed by Islam, where gods, during the *jāhiliyyah*, were subject to the will and critical reasoning of humans, contrary to the Islamic proposition where humans are meant to be submissive to the divine. Mernissi argues that in the pre-Islamic era, individuals were sovereign, critiquing and constantly evaluating God based on their own criteria.⁶⁸¹ Clearly stating one of the objectives of her book "The Forgotten Queen of Islam," Mernissi aims to demystify Islamic history and make it more easily accessible to the masses.⁶⁸²

3.2.2.1.1 Marxist Approach

Mernissi frequently employs Marxist analytical tools in her works, particularly on the discourse related to the social class of Moroccan women, labour economics, and socioeconomic interactions. Her objective is to challenge the dichotomy between the private and public spheres, illustrating how the private realm influences the political landscape. Mernissi delves into the impact of religion on personal life and its role in shaping political policies at the state level. Her application of Marxist analysis extends to critiquing postcolonial Muslim states that neglect the economic and educational dimensions essential to addressing women's issues and poverty.⁶⁸³

Mernissi highlights class and gender struggles, ideological conflicts, unequal surplus value between genders, and other Marxist concepts in her critique. A prominent example of her adoption of the Marxist approach is evident in her fieldwork studies.⁶⁸⁴ This

⁶⁸⁰ Mernissi, 66, 69.

⁶⁸¹ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 105.

⁶⁸² Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 191.

⁶⁸³ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, x.

⁶⁸⁴ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 87–164.

approach allows her to scrutinize the exploitation of urban and rural lower-class working women through a capitalist lens of modernization and development. Informed by Marxist and feminist analytical tools, Mernissi's perspective enables her to reexamine the state's development policies, bringing to light any gender and class biases. This critical analysis sheds light on the challenging conditions faced by many Moroccan women, particularly those in rural areas.⁶⁸⁵

3.2.2.1.1 Feminist Perspective

Mernissi integrates feminist perspectives and narratives into her works. Drawing inspiration from well-known Arab folktales such as "The Merchant's Daughter and the Son of the Sultan" and "Arabian Nights," she aims to establish the existence of feminist elements originating in the Arab world. Mernissi adopts a modern outlook to revisit Muslim history, placing a strong emphasis on gender considerations and acknowledging the inherent bias in historical writings.⁶⁸⁶

By critically scrutinizing history, Mernissi strives to elevate the discourse on women and political power beyond the sacred domain. She contends that the conflict between women and power in Islam is not inherent or divine but rather a constructed phenomenon. Emphasizing the subjective nature of historical truths, Mernissi underlines their dependence on the perspective of the narrator and the ideological framework within which they operate. Consequently, she selectively chooses historical narratives that align more closely with her feminist viewpoint.⁶⁸⁷

Mernissi's methodology aligns with Muslim feminist methodology that utilizes socio-historical methods to illuminate feminist narratives within religious texts. She advocates for reform in Islamic family law to diminish male dominance, citing examples of gender bias in the interpretation of *ḥadīths*. Criticizing male scholars for their views on women, Mernissi contends that historical materials, including *ḥadīths*, have undergone

⁶⁸⁵ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 290.

⁶⁸⁶ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 8–9, 10, 49.

⁶⁸⁷ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 85.

ensorship and manipulation, perpetuating the marginalization of women in Islamic societies.⁶⁸⁸ Mernissi challenges these interpretations through various methodologies, including historical analysis, contextual analysis and linguistic studies by highlighting it from the feminist perspective.⁶⁸⁹

3.2.2.1.1 Incorporating Fiction and Humour

Mernissi earned acknowledgement not only as an academic writer but also as a fiction author. Infusing humour and irony into her works, she skilfully conveyed her messages with a subtle yet provocative touch. Humour, pervasive in Mernissi's writings, served not only as a tool to challenge the claim of objective and scientific truth, a notion she approached with scepticism, but also as a means to satirize and demystify resistant discourses of violence.⁶⁹⁰

The light-heartedness, or the apparent lack of 'seriousness,' in Mernissi's approach is evident in her use of fictitious and semi-autobiographical stylistic elements, even in more scholarly texts addressing religious matters. Mernissi openly admitted that the incorporation of fiction had always lingered in her books, a style of her innate character she initially sought to suppress. She candidly shared with Serge Ménéger, "In the past I had to kill this fiction to prove that I was scientific."⁶⁹¹ However, a turning point came in 1987 when she decided to embrace fiction, acknowledging its power to make a lasting impression on readers.

Mernissi's penchant for creative expression transcended academic boundaries, extending into the realm of literature and fiction with works like "Dreams of Trespass." While not her initial foray into fiction, this novel exemplifies her ability to blend

⁶⁸⁸ Burhanuddin, *Fatima Mernissi: Mengugat Ketidakadilan Gender Dalam Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer*, 133.

⁶⁸⁹ Asghar Ali Engineer, *The Qur'an Women and Modern Society* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1999), 17; Khalif Muammar, *Atas Nama Kebenaran Tanggapan Kritis Terhadap Wacana Islam Liberal*, 2nd ed. (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia: Institut Alam dan Tamadun Melayu (ATMA), 2009), 151.

⁶⁹⁰ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 153.

⁶⁹¹ Mernissi, "'Fatima Mernissi.' Interview by Serge Ménéger," 114.

imagination with scholarly insight. Even in her scholarly works such as "The Veil and the Male Elite," she seamlessly weaves imaginative storytelling. For instance, she introduces a fictional grocer who articulates a misogynistic *ḥadīth*, thereby infusing her serious discussions with a touch of literary flair.⁶⁹²

In "Islam and Democracy," Mernissi skillfully interweaves reality and imagination. Introducing two fictional personas—a fishmonger and a merchant from Rabat's shoe market—she uses them as symbolic "barometers" of Moroccan societal sentiments. Through these crafted characters, Mernissi vividly portrays the profound Western preoccupation among Arab populations, particularly the youth, following the historic events of the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. The fishmonger's refusal to serve her serves as a poignant reflection of the Arab world's fixation on the West during that era, even at the expense of losing some dirhams.⁶⁹³

3.2.2.1.1 Improvising Approach

Mernissi was not a scholar confined to a singular method, ideology, or rigid convention; she embodied an organic and revolutionary scholarly approach that evolved, improved, and adapted based on her research needs. A notable instance of her adaptability is her critique of national surveys relying on quantitative, statistical methods. She argued that such surveys, grounded in instruments and language alien to illiterate women in contexts of widespread female illiteracy, could not authentically reflect reality. Mernissi advocated for the development and adoption of alternative methodologies, more attuned to local contexts, making a compelling case for a qualitative approach.⁶⁹⁴

Her revisionist inclination extended to the methodologies and techniques she acquired in Western sociology schools during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although she initially aspired to be an interview specialist to amplify the voices of illiterate women,

⁶⁹² Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 1–11.

⁶⁹³ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 1–10.

⁶⁹⁴ Fatima Mernissi, *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women*, trans. Mary Jo Lakeland (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 17–18.

Mernissi recognized the limitations of this technique. As she confessed to Serge Ménéger, she observed that traditional interview methods caused people to clam up like oysters.⁶⁹⁵ The revision of her methodology commenced with her Ph.D. dissertation, "Beyond the Veil," where she favoured extensive interviews conducted in the form of "gossip exchanges" to align with the narrative rhythm of illiterate women.⁶⁹⁶

In her quest to amplify women's voices, Mernissi boldly acknowledged her divergence from the methodological norms of sociology as taught in Western academia. In "Doing Daily Battle," she expressed her pride in interviews that authentically captured the essence of women's lived experiences, valuing them above statistical analyses. Mernissi openly confessed to breaking the cardinal rule she learned in prestigious institutions like the Sorbonne and American universities—maintaining strict objectivity towards interviewees. This departure from conventional objectivity underscored her scepticism towards the purported neutrality and representation in scholarly inquiry.⁶⁹⁷

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter focuses on Mernissi's background, works, and her significant contributions to Islamic feminist theory and movements. It delves into Mernissi's perspective on gender equality in Islam and her unique methodologies for addressing gender issues within the religion. The chapter documents Mernissi's distinctively critical stance toward the Islamic concept of gender equality, highlighting her approaches that deviate from mainstream Islamic methodologies. Drawing from various sociological disciplines, she employs diverse approaches and methodologies to tackle gender equality issues in Islam. Through her critiques of the Islamic concept of gender equality, we gain insight into Mernissi's vision, characterized by an embracement of a secular and modernist view of religion. Mernissi underscores the importance of rational thinking over divine revelation, advocating for the demystification of divine revelation and subjecting it to humanistic evaluation. The subsequent chapter will explore Mernissi's practical views on contemporary women's

⁶⁹⁵ Mernissi, "'Fatima Mernissi.' Interview by Serge Ménéger," 111.

⁶⁹⁶ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 90.

⁶⁹⁷ Mernissi, *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women*, 1989, 18–19.

issues and drawing comparisons between her positions on those issues with the positions and conclusions of mainstream Islamic teachings.



CHAPTER FOUR

FATEMA MERNISSI AND GLOBAL ISSUES ON GENDER EQUALITY: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, women have endured numerous forms of oppressions and unjust treatment. Globally, discussions have been held to explore appropriate solutions and remedies for addressing these issues of subordination. This chapter aims to delve into the overarching global challenges related to gender equality, with a specific focus on identity and intersectionality, encompassing aspects like identity, expression, and equality in feminism; autonomy and religious absolutism, involving topics such as veiling, *hijāb*, *hudūd*, women's autonomy, and leadership; deconstruction of the traditional family institution, including subjects like virginity, sanctity, wifhood, and motherhood; law and cultural conflict, covering extremism, violence, reproductive rights, and healthcare; feminization of poverty, touching upon women's economic issues, discrimination, and the domestic economy dilemma; women and education, discussing education for empowerment, privileges, and issues faced by educated women. Mernissi's arguments related to these topics are presented and addressed from a normative Islamic perspective in a subtopic at the end of each topic.

The selection of topics aligns with the feminist discourse on global women's issues, while the choice of subtopics is rooted in Mernissi's discourse related to the main topic. This chapter's discussions aim to highlight the connection between Mernissi's perspective on the Islamic concept of gender equality and the approaches and methodologies she outlined in Chapter 3. The exploration of the issues presented in this chapter seeks to offer a clearer understanding of Mernissi's stance on the Islamic concept of gender equality and how she applies her methodologies and approaches in a more practical context.

4.2 IDENTITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Feminist theory often revolves around the concepts of identity and intersectionality. Identity provides individuals with a sense of meaning and belonging, while intersectionality focuses on amplifying the voices of those multiple, simultaneous identity convergence. It delves into how an individual's diverse social and political identities result in unique combinations of discrimination and privilege.⁶⁹⁸ Mernissi, renowned as a third-world feminist, particularly stands out in the discourse of Arab-Muslim intersectionality within feminist theory. This section will delve into Mernissi's perspective on the identity and expression of Muslim women, exploring her insights on equality within feminism. Additionally, we will review Mernissi's arguments and examine them through the lens of mainstream Islamic principles.

4.2.1 Identity and Expression

Mernissi, a prominent third-world feminist, placed a high value on the identity of Arab and Muslim individuals. She asserted that identity gives one's life a profound meaning, manifesting one's impact and influence even within the confines of limited surroundings.⁶⁹⁹ Mernissi contended that the loss of identity leads to the demise of a society.⁷⁰⁰ She believes that the reason Muslims strongly assert their traditionalism as a means of self-representation is to fulfil a psychological need to preserve a minimal sense of identity in a perplexing and ever-changing reality.⁷⁰¹ Having a distinct identity, according to Mernissi, allows Muslims to express themselves naturally and alleviate any psychological congestion within the Muslim psyche.

⁶⁹⁸ Anna Carastathis, "The Concept of Intersectionality in Feminist Theory," *Philosophy Compass* 9, no. 5 (2014): 1–2; Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–99; Darren Lenard Hutchinson, "Identity Crisis: 'Intersectionality,' 'Multidimensionality,' and the Development of an Adequate Theory of Subordination Development of an Adequate Theory of Subordination," *Michigan Journal of Race & Law* 6, no. 285 (2001): 287–317.

⁶⁹⁹ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, ix.

⁷⁰⁰ Mernissi, ix.

⁷⁰¹ Mernissi, viii.

Nonetheless, Mernissi argues that Muslims are gradually losing their identity by excessively relying on Western invention, such as submitting to the Western-defined time, the Coordinated Universal Time (UTC). She said:⁷⁰²

... the destruction of Baghdad by teleguided, televised bombs - was so tragic for us Arabs and Muslims, whatever side we were on, because it made us aware that we are slaves of this Coordinated Universal Time that we have decided to ignore in order to keep a bit of dignity, in order not to acknowledge that we don't exist in our own time. We exist only in time defined by the West. We are exiles in Western time. The most horrible colonization is that which installs itself in your time, for there the wounds are to your dignity, and the resulting confusion borders on the pathological.

According to her, Islam's valuable contribution to the Arabs lies in teaching them to be confident in exploring the cosmos and its consciousness, providing a beautiful perspective that lends meaning and power to life. The erosion of this cosmic dimension, as seen in the adoption of Western-coordinated time, has led to confusion in Arab identity.⁷⁰³ Mernissi emphasizes that Muslims are currently experiencing a new form of colonization through lifestyles, where every aspect of Muslim life—thinking, vocabularies, daily habits, and administrative models—has been shaped and moulded by Western influences.⁷⁰⁴

Mernissi posits that, concerning identity, Islam serves as a collection of psychological tools for self-empowerment, enabling individuals to feel at home globally in both unfamiliar and familiar environments, irrespective of language or culture.⁷⁰⁵ Islam frees the Muslim identity from worldly subordination to men, assigning it solely to Allāh ﷻ. However, following Western colonization, Mernissi observed discrepancies in Muslim identity, stemming from the challenge of balancing allegiance to two distinct masters in daily life—being responsive sovereign citizens of the Western ideal while simultaneously needing to be believing Muslims submitted to Islamic teachings embodied in the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth*. Muslims must learn to adapt to this disjointed rhythm, termed by Mernissi as "Medina Democracy."⁷⁰⁶ Criticizing this phenomenon, she notes that, due to the dissonance

⁷⁰² Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 140–41.

⁷⁰³ Mernissi, 144–45.

⁷⁰⁴ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 18.

⁷⁰⁵ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, x–xi.

⁷⁰⁶ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 186.

of times and languages, Muslims have focused extensively on linguistic nuances and acrobatics, neglecting the essence of critical thinking and the brain's importance.⁷⁰⁷

Despite emphasizing the significance of Islam as an identity, Mernissi opposed the traditional assignment of gender-based identity within Islam. She observed that Islamic traditional systems primarily associate identity with sexuality and inequality. For instance, Mernissi argued that male Muslim identity is systematically ingrained with phallic pride and a mentality focused on fulfilling sexual desires from early childhood, creating an impression that society is organized around the goal of satisfying their sexual wishes. She said:⁷⁰⁸

The male child is introduced to sex differently. His penis, *htewta* ('little penis'), is the object of a veritable cult on the part of the women rearing him. Little sisters, aunts, maids, and mothers often attract the little boy's attention to his *htewta* and try to teach him to pronounce the word, which is quite a task given the guttural initial letter 'h'. One of the common games played by adult females with a male child is to get him to understand the connection between *sidi* (master) and the *htewta*. *Hada sidhum* ('This is their master'), say the women, pointing to the child's penis. They try to make him repeat the sentence while pointing to his own penis. The kissing of the child's penis is a normal gesture for a female relative who has not seen him since his birth. *Tbarkallah 'ala-r-Rajal* ('God protect the man'), she may whisper. The child's phallic pride is enhanced systematically, beginning in the first years of life.

Additionally, according to Mernissi, in traditional Islam, a respectable man is not merely someone with economic power but someone who controls the sexual behaviour of female family members to protect "family honour," linking money and sex intimately in defining identity for both men and women.⁷⁰⁹ The traditional Islamic portrayal of women, according to Mernissi, is filled with negativity, evident in folklore like the story of "Aisha Kandisha" in Morocco, reflecting a pervasive negative attitude towards femininity in Moroccan folk culture. She said:⁷¹⁰

In Moroccan folk culture this threat is epitomized by the belief in Aisha Kandisha, a repugnant female demon. She is repugnant precisely because

⁷⁰⁷ Mernissi, 188.

⁷⁰⁸ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 162.

⁷⁰⁹ Mernissi, 149.

⁷¹⁰ Mernissi, 42–43.

she is libidinous. She has pendulous breasts and lips and her favourite pastime is to assault men in the streets and in dark places, to induce them to have sexual intercourse with her, and ultimately to penetrate their bodies and stay with them for ever. They are then said to be inhabited. The fear of Aisha Kandisha is more than ever present in Morocco's daily life. Fear of the castrating female is a legacy of tradition and is seen in many forms in popular beliefs and practices and in both religious and mundane literature, particularly novels.

Mernissi argued that since the time of the *'Abbasīd*, traditional Islam has reinforced the connection between the sacred model identity of females (the *ḥūrīyy*) and the secular model identity of female servants, influencing sex models, female identity, and gender role-making in the Arab Muslim sexual division of labour. She believed that these linked models, sacred and secular, are associated with male success and rewards in the afterlife or on earth. Mernissi contended that this pervasive female model of identity contributes, at least partially, to the inability of Muslim technocrats and peasants to perceive women in roles beyond the sexual and as anything other than economically subordinate and dependent.⁷¹¹

Mernissi also criticized various demeaning concepts for women's identity in Islam, such as *kayd*, *fitnah*, *nushūz*, and *ḥijāb*, considering them obstacles to citizenship and expression. She highlighted the existence of *kayd* in the Muslim psyche, belittling any serious attempts by women and perceiving them with doubt and contempt.⁷¹² Mernissi associated the concept of *kayd* with *ḥijāb*, both seen as labelling women as potential sources of disorder and sedition.⁷¹³ While Islam, according to Mernissi, does not promote the thesis of women's inherent inferiority, she argued that Islamic devices are strategies to actually restrain women's power, differing from Western culture's sexual inequality rooted in the belief of women's biological inferiority.⁷¹⁴ Despite this, Mernissi observed that in many Muslim societies, negative portrayals of women extend beyond ideology into practices governed by subjugating laws.⁷¹⁵

⁷¹¹ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 72.

⁷¹² Mernissi, 55–57.

⁷¹³ Mernissi, 57.

⁷¹⁴ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 19.

⁷¹⁵ Mernissi, 11.

Mernissi criticized traditional Islam for not fostering freedom of expression, asserting that it hardly acknowledges the individual, considered it as a disturber of collective harmony.⁷¹⁶ Consequently, she championed the identity of Sakīnah, an anomaly and female symbol of freedom of expression in Islamic history, particularly for her rebellious attitude against marital control and the right to be *nushūz*.⁷¹⁷ Mernissi sought to liberate Sakīnah's memory as a symbol of modern Muslim women.⁷¹⁸ She criticized subservient Arab women who lost their freedom and pride by adhering to restricted religious commandments. In contrast, Mernissi praises the achievements of *jawārī* from various conquered countries, such as Persians, Romans, and Turks, who managed to attain positions of power through learning, poetry, and seduction when not constrained by religious injunctions.⁷¹⁹

Mernissi argues, particularly in the context of Moroccan society, that Muslim societies perpetuate, assure, and lay the groundwork for gender inequality, which subsequently leads to political inequality, affirming it as the cornerstone of cultural identity.⁷²⁰ She believes that the pursuit of dignity, democracy, human rights, and active participation in political and social affairs, as gleaned from her readings of scholars such as Ibn Hishām, Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn Sa‘ad, and at-Ṭabarī, originates from Islamic tradition rather than being borrowed from Western values.⁷²¹ Mernissi criticizes contemporary Muslim communities for betraying the Prophet's ﷺ vision of an ideal community by portraying women as impure and declaring them strangers to places of worship. She said:⁷²²

We are certainly a long way from the Prophet's mosque, open to all, welcoming all those interested in Islam, including women. Already showing cracks from the political *ḥijāb* which hides the caliph and distances him from the faithful, the mosque now suffers another betrayal of Muhammad's ideal community: women are declared strangers to the place of worship. Women, who had the privilege of access to the mosque as *ṣaḥabiyyah*,

⁷¹⁶ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 22.

⁷¹⁷ Mernissi, 193.

⁷¹⁸ Mernissi, 194.

⁷¹⁹ Mernissi, 195.

⁷²⁰ Mernissi, 23.

⁷²¹ Mernissi, viii.

⁷²² Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 82–83.

Companions of the Prophet, very quickly became the polluting, evil beings they had been in the *jāhiliyyah*, the pre-Islamic era.

She urges women to craft their own narrative of the past, emphasizing that the act of writing history is a highly coded and serious undertaking that has historically been exclusive to men.⁷²³ This, according to her, would enable women to forge a more empowering identity and express themselves freely. Mernissi stresses the importance of imagination and individual opinions, advocating for the Muslim community to find its security beyond the constraints of stifled free thought.⁷²⁴ She questions why Muslims persist in adhering to sex-role models and identities rooted in the medieval past instead of creating ones that would dynamically reshape their perception of themselves as sexual beings.⁷²⁵

Mernissi expresses her preference for empowering Arab identity through three imperatives for sexual change in Muslim life: through imperative of movement, exemplified by movements like the Muslim male feminist movement aiming to improve the sexual division of labour; the imperative to embrace Arab identity through Arab nationalism in the face of Western domination; and lastly, the imperative to embrace Muslim identity, viewing religion as a comforting cradle for a cosmic ideology.⁷²⁶ She reiterates the importance of Arab-Muslim ethnocentricity as the most meaningful aspects of modernization, placing a greater emphasis on similar political collectivism rather than racial considerations. She said:⁷²⁷

But I believe that Arab-Muslim ethnocentricity, dismissed by Lerner as a complication, is one of the most meaningful features of modernization. Being Arab and being Muslim influences institutions and sexual interaction alike.

She further said:⁷²⁸

A peculiar feature of the concept of being Arab is that many people and nations who never thought of themselves as Arab have claimed to be so since the Second World War. Nowadays being Arab is primarily a political,

⁷²³ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, xii.

⁷²⁴ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 91.

⁷²⁵ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 73.

⁷²⁶ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 13.

⁷²⁷ Mernissi, 16.

⁷²⁸ Mernissi, 16.

not a racial, claim. According to Anouar Abdel-Malek, Egyptians before the thirties took great pride in being Egyptians, the inheritors of the civilization of the ancient pharaohs, and they emphasized their difference from Arabs. The predominantly Berber origin of the Moroccan population is no secret and was used for demagogic purposes by the French colonizers interested in aggravating indigenous divisions. The division between ‘Berbers’ and ‘Arabs’ was a handy one. But many countries, like Egypt and Morocco, found they needed to unite as Arabs in the face of Western domination. This they did, in their distress, under the banner of Arab nationalism.

Mernissi contends that the Prophet's ﷺ action of changing the *Qiblah* is a shrewd expression of Arabic nationalism, suggesting that the Prophet ﷺ sought to nationalize or arabicize the Judeo-Christian heritage.⁷²⁹ She envisions the shift in *Qiblah* as the Prophet's ﷺ political initiative to inject originality into his preaching, infused with elements of Arabic nationalism.⁷³⁰ Thus, Mernissi emphasized the intersectionality of Arab, Muslim, and female identities as crucial for understanding women's issues in the Arab world.

4.2.2 Equality in Feminism

While Mernissi herself was considered a feminist, she objectively held a critical stance towards feminism, specifically addressing its Eurocentrism and inequality. Her critique extended to Western feminism for its Eurocentric approach and the marginalization of third-world feminists. Mernissi reflected on being as indebted to Western feminists in her own intellectual development. Nonetheless, she argued that despite Western feminists expressing a desire for systematic change and gender equality, the underlying racist and imperialist ideologies persisted, resulting in a supremacist colonial pattern of interaction affecting non-white feminists, even those with similar academic credentials. Mernissi said:⁷³¹

But if you carefully ask yourself (as I often have) why an American or French feminist will think that I am less clever than she in grasping patriarchal degradation schemes, you realize that it gives her an immediate control of the situation; she is the leader and I the follower. She, in spite of

⁷²⁹ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 66–67.

⁷³⁰ Mernissi, 66.

⁷³¹ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 16.

her claimed desire to change the system and make it more egalitarian for women, retains (lurking deep down in her subliminal ideological genes) the racist and imperialist Western male distorting drives. Even when faced with an Arab woman who has similar diplomas, knowledge, and experience, she unconsciously reproduces the supremacist colonial pattern.

Mernissi also drew parallels between conservative religious Arab male leaders and provincial western feminists, highlighting their shared inability to recognize feminist elements within Islam.⁷³² She argued against the notion that Islamic feminism is an imported element from Western ideologies and she emphasized its roots in Arab lands. Mernissi expressed concern that this perspective implied a demeaning portrayal of Arab women as semi-idiotic, submissive subhumans in patriarchally organized degradation and institutionalized deprived movements. She criticized the belief among Western feminists that Arab women were subservient, obedient slaves, only discovering consciousness-raising and revolutionary ideas when exposed to the supposedly enlightened women of the West.⁷³³

She also condemned the stereotypical Western portrayal of Muslim women's sexuality. Throughout her Westward tour, she received interviews with over a hundred Western journalists and observed that many Western men would smile when uttering the word "harem." She questioned the appropriateness of such smiles when referring to a term synonymous with confinement, highlighting the harem as a cruel institution that severely restricted women's rights. She said:⁷³⁴

During that tour, I was interviewed by more than a hundred Western journalists and I soon noticed that most of the men grinned when pronouncing the word "harem." I felt shocked by their grins. How can anyone smile when invoking a word synonymous with prison, I wondered. For my grandmother Yasmina, the harem was a cruel institution that sharply curtailed her rights.

Mernissi also encountered significant differences in perspective and approach compared to Western feminists. In her initial interaction with an American feminist group,

⁷³² Mernissi, 16.

⁷³³ Fatema Mernissi, "Morocco: The Merchant's Daughter and the Son of the Sultan," in *Sisterhood Is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*, ed. Robin Morgan (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 11, 13, 15.

⁷³⁴ Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems*, 2.

she faced criticism for wearing jewellery and makeup, accused of conforming to patriarchal norms in advertising and products. In response, Mernissi argued that her choices were essential, stemming from her background in a country with a tradition of veiling, where declaring the existence of her body was a necessary assertion denied to her.⁷³⁵ The divergence in views on the body became a focal point between Mernissi's feminism and that of Western feminists, as articulated in her work "Beyond the Veil." She contended that while Western women focused on disclaiming the body in pornographic mass media as a central feminist concern, Muslim women, including herself, viewed the body as an essential claim in their movement for liberation. She said:⁷³⁶

We have seen that the Muslim ethic is against women's ornamenting themselves and exposing their charms; veil and walls were particularly effective anti-seduction devices. Westernization allowed ornamented and seductively clad female bodies to appear on the streets. It is interesting that while Western women's liberation movements had to repudiate the body in pornographic mass media, Muslim women are likely to claim the right to their bodies as part of their liberation movement.

Additionally, Mernissi differed from Western feminists in her perspective on men. While the prevailing Western feminist idea was that women had to struggle against men, Mernissi who originating from a harem with only women, sought to be with men. She believed liberation involved working, thinking, and sharing everything with men.⁷³⁷ Through these contrasting perspectives, Mernissi recognized the distinct limitations of what the Western feminist movement offered her, as they were not engaged in the same battle and issues.

Despite critiquing the feminists she encountered in the United States during that period, Mernissi acknowledges her indebtedness to them. She asserts that she learned valuable elements from them, including analysis, lobbying, organizational skills, and societal influence.⁷³⁸ These techniques became instrumental when she returned to Morocco, when she actively participating in two collectives' movements—Approches and Femmes

⁷³⁵ Mernissi, "'Fatima Mernissi.' Interview by Serge Ménéger," 101.

⁷³⁶ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 168.

⁷³⁷ Mernissi, "'Fatima Mernissi.' Interview by Serge Ménéger," 101–2.

⁷³⁸ Mernissi, 98–99, 102.

Marocaines Citoyennes de Demain.⁷³⁹ Here, Mernissi organized workshops where feminists from both the West and the East converged to exchange ideas. Her efforts aim to decentre feminism and advocate for intersectionality. By highlighting the agency and resistance of indigenous women, her work disrupted the prevailing myth that placed the West as the exclusive origin of feminism. This process involves a deliberate 'decentering' of feminism, challenging the notion that feminism has a singular essence or origin.

Mernissi reflects on her experiences during her trip to Germany and France for discussions meant to establish dialogue during the war yet noting a palpable freeze in her Northern colleagues' Europeanness and her own frozen Arabism. She observes the participants' unfortunate inability to overcome the boundary that kept them from truly seeing and understanding each other's differences without letting those differences evoke fear.⁷⁴⁰ In the concluding chapters of her book "Islam and Democracy," Mernissi envisions a future where the *gharīb*, the strange, and the stranger, cease to evoke fear.⁷⁴¹ Mernissi emphasizes that as long as differences remain frightening, boundaries or *hudūd* will persist as the governing principle. Mernissi argues that the global feminist sisterhood can only materialize when feminists bridge both class and cultural gaps, openly sharing their consciousness with women from diverse social strata within their own societies.⁷⁴² Her work serves as an invitation to transcend boundaries based not just on gender but also on nationality and territory.

4.2.3 An Analysis from the Islamic Perspective

Islam is a comprehensive belief system acknowledging the absolute sovereignty of Allāh ﷻ, encompassing various aspects of life—personal, social, moral, and spiritual.⁷⁴³ It promotes a holistic approach, integrating faith with actions and ethics, transcending mere ritualistic practices. Islam not only defines a set of religious customs but plays a pivotal

⁷³⁹ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 129.

⁷⁴⁰ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 6.

⁷⁴¹ Mernissi, 170.

⁷⁴² Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 16.

⁷⁴³ Zamir Akhtar Khan, "Islam: A Deen Not Mere Religion," *The Dialogue* 4, no. 1 (2009): 101.

role in shaping the identity of Muslims. Importantly, its arrival did not obliterate local cultures; instead, it enriches and safeguards them from negative influences. Islamic identity fosters and empowers local identities, emphasizing unity within the diverse *ummah*, surpassing cultural, national, racial, gender, and skin colour differences. Ethnicities like Arab and Malay, for instance, find a harmonious blend of Islam with their cultural heritage.

Religion not only became functional and familiar at the local level but also dynamically engaging, helping to foster stable indigenous Muslim identities. This enabled Muslims to establish deep roots and make lasting contributions wherever they settled.⁷⁴⁴ The identity and unity within the Muslim *ummah* extends beyond physical borders, transcending cultural disparities in regions like the Malay communities, India-Pakistan, Africa, and the West. This concept challenges the Westphalian nation-state system, presenting the Islamic notion of a universal *ummah* as an antithesis to enclosed boundaries.⁷⁴⁵

The challenge to Muslim identity, as observed by Mernissi, has been a long subject of discussion among Muslim scholars, including Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, Isma‘īl Rājī al-Fārūqī, Mohd Kamal Hassan, and Malik Badri.⁷⁴⁶ Numerous initiatives, mirroring Mernissi's call for Muslims to reconstruct their identity by delving into the rich Muslim history and reducing dependence on the West, have been undertaken by Muslim scholars and non-scholars across various disciplines. Efforts are being made to reclaim and revive Muslim identity to counter Western influences.⁷⁴⁷

The restoration of the Islamic perspective across all realms of knowledge is seen as pivotal in reclaiming Muslim identity, given that Islam encompasses every dimension of life. For instance, in the field of education, institutions like the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) and the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) have

⁷⁴⁴ Umar Faruq Abd-Allah, “Islam and the Cultural Imperative,” *ICR Journal* 1, no. 1 (December 1, 2009): 10, <https://doi.org/10.52282/icr.v1i1.10>.

⁷⁴⁵ Maidul Islam, “Umma and the Dilemma of Muslim Belonging in Modern South Asia,” *St Antony’s International Review* 12, no. 2 (2017): 27, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26229172>.

⁷⁴⁶ All of these scholar particularly addresses on the issue of education.

⁷⁴⁷ It is to be noted that Mernissi’s works that call on the revival of Islamic identity were written between the 70s to 90s, in which all of the effort done by Muslim mentioned here was still in inception or in progress and yet to arrive to it maturity.

been established to reclaim the Islamic worldview within the educational philosophical dimension. Their mission involves Islamizing secularized Western knowledge and contextualizing Islamic revealed knowledge to align with the contemporary era.

Mernissi's call for Muslims to actively contribute to technological progress and express their identity has found resonance in various *ḥalāl* and *sharīah* compliant industries globally. The establishment of institutions like the Islamic Development Bank, Tabung Haji, and Islamic banks such as Faisal Islamic Bank of Egypt, Kuwait Finance House, and Bank Islam Malaysia Berhad reflects efforts to reintegrate Muslim values into the financial sector.⁷⁴⁸ The growth of *Ḥalāl* industries, spanning food and beverages, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and tourism, represents a worldwide initiative to infuse Islamic values and identity in the field, catering to the religious requirements and commitments of 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide.⁷⁴⁹

Mernissi also shed light on the unjust assignment and stigmatization of gender roles in certain Muslim cultures, which adversely affects both men and women. She argues that Islamic traditional systems link gender identity closely to sexuality and the economy, citing historical practices that draw parallels between the secular identity of women and their sacrality significance. This is illustrated through comparisons between female slaves (*jarīyyah*) and female attendees in heaven (*ḥūrīyy*).⁷⁵⁰ While acknowledging that Mernissi's

⁷⁴⁸ Novan Fatchu Alafianta, Muhammad Abdul Aziz, and Jaya Sahputra, “A Historical Review of the Development of the Islamic Banking System (An Analytical Study),” *Al-Iktisab: Journal of Islamic Economic Law* 5, no. 2 (2021): 137–45.

⁷⁴⁹ Vira Aulia and Nur Azizah, “A Historical Review on Halal Industry in the World: Challenge and Improvement Opportunities,” *Multidisciplinary Reviews* 7, no. 1 (2023): 1, <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2024020>.

⁷⁵⁰ According to Islamic law, a slave is entitled to receive support from their master, encompassing provisions such as shelter, food, clothing, and medical care. The stipulation is that this support should match the prevailing standards within the locality. Additionally, it is recommended that a slave be provided with the same quality of food and clothing as their master. Building upon the aforementioned Islamic principles regarding slaves, it can be asserted that female slaves in Islam were often treated similarly to free individuals. In fact, Mernissi herself acknowledged instances where the sons of *jarīyyah* ascended to rule Islamic dynasties, sometimes even surpassing the opportunities available to legal princes. Some *jawāri* managed to attain the status of queens. A noteworthy provision in Islamic law is that a female slave who bears her owner's child becomes an *umm al-walad* and gains automatic freedom upon the owner's death. The child, in turn, is also automatically free at birth and considered equal to the owner's other children. The *Qur'ān* includes several verses aimed at regulating slavery and encourages the emancipation of slaves. Many Muslims interpret the *Qur'ān* as advocating the gradual abolition of slavery. See Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Slavery and Islam* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2020), 72–72, 87–88, 106, 111, 114, 119.

arguments do have some merit, this study contends that her viewpoint is one-dimensional and isolated, lacking a comprehensive portrayal of Islamic gender identity assignment. Mernissi's focus on cultural influences on Islamic teachings may not objectively represent the authentic Islamic system and identity of women. It is essential to recognize, in Islam, the rewards for women in heaven also encompass receiving male servants, derived from the reciprocal understanding of the term "azwāj". This term is translated as companions or spouses, applicable to both male and female.⁷⁵¹ Allāh ﷻ said:⁷⁵²

﴿وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا لَّهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا ظَلِيلًا﴾

As for those who believe and do good, We will admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow, to stay there for ever and ever. There they will have pure spouses, and We will place them under a vast shade.

The promised rewards for both men and women are tailored to their respective inclinations, serving as a source of encouragement and motivation. Men are naturally drawn to women, children, treasures of gold and silver, fine horses, cattle, and fertile land.⁷⁵³ Conversely, women are inclined towards beautiful items and luxurious goods. Thus, the rewards they will receive in paradise are precisely the things they most cherish. Furthermore, both men and women are assured by Allāh ﷻ that they will be granted whatever they desire in paradise. Allāh ﷻ said:⁷⁵⁴

﴿ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُحْبَرُونَ يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِحَافٍ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ ۗ وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ ۗ وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ﴾

Enter Paradise, you and your spouses, rejoicing. Golden trays and cups will be passed around to them. There will be whatever the souls desire and the eyes delight in. And you will be there forever.

⁷⁵¹ Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, "Bidadari Dalam Al-Qur'an Perspektif Qirā'ah Mubādalah" (UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, 2022), 47–49; Ala'i Nadjib, "Reciprocity in Quran and Hadith: A Study on Qiraah Mubadalah," in *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Recent Innovations (ICRI2018)* (Jakarta, 2018), 1972–74.

⁷⁵² Şūrah al-Nisā', 4:57.

⁷⁵³ See Şūrah 'Ālī 'Imrān, 3:14.

⁷⁵⁴ Şūrah al-Zukhruf, 43:70-71.

Hence, the highlighted verse underscores that the rewards in paradise will align with our deepest desires. The rewards mentioned by Allāh ﷻ also acknowledge the natural inclinations of men towards women. Accordingly, men will be rewarded in alignment with their natural desires, similar to how women will be rewarded according to theirs.

In another issue, Mernissi raised concerns on the association of “*kayd*,” “*fitnah*,” and “*nushūz*” as potentially demeaning Islamic concepts for women. However, it is essential to note that these concepts are limited to negative characteristics and are not a permanent attribution of women. Conversely, positive concepts like *ṣāliḥah* exist to promote good characteristics and values in women.⁷⁵⁵ Similarly, negative concepts like “*dayyūth*” and “*nushūz*” also apply to men who shirk their responsibilities, while positive concepts like *ṣāliḥ* exist to encourage positive characteristics and values in men.⁷⁵⁶ Therefore, the concepts that was criticized by Mernissi are not intrinsic to the identity of Muslim women, yet they are labels associated with negative traits that women can stay away from. These labels do not define the entire identity of Muslim women but serve as a deterrent against adopting undesirable characteristics.

Furthermore, recognizing Islam as a *dīn* that guides us in ethics and morality implies an acknowledgment of certain traits deemed immoral and unethical by Islamic principles. Embracing Islam requires adherence to these established rules and concepts. To illustrate, just how as a citizen of a nation or state must conform to the nation’s rules—such as abstaining from drugs and gambling—failure in doing so would classify the individual with a negative portrayal such as being label as a wrongdoer or criminal. Being a member of a particular religion, country, organization, or group entails making a commitment to adhere to its terms and regulations. The distinction between good and bad is an established aspect of all ethical principles and beliefs.

⁷⁵⁵ The concept of “*ḥijāb*” will be discussed on chapter 4.3.1 “Veiling, Sexual Segregation and *Ḥudūd*” while “*nushūz*” is discussed in chapter 4.4.2 “Wifehood and Motherhood”.

⁷⁵⁶ In the Arabic book “*Lisān al-‘Arab*,” a *dayyūth* is described as a family leader, including husband and male *māḥrams* such as brothers, who lack jealousy towards their family. Based on this definition, a *dayyūth* husband is someone who loses jealousy or concern for his family members who commit sins, thereby allowing them to fall into major sins. Being a *dayyūth* is akin to giving one’s wife and children the freedom to commit sins. See Muḥammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-‘Arab*, vol. 3 (Qāhirah: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2002), 463.

In response to Mernissi's attempt to present Sakīnah's memory as evidence of *nushūz* in Islam—an argument championing freedom of expression and symbolizing modern Muslim women—this study, on the other hand, questions the story's authenticity.⁷⁵⁷ Even if the account is deemed true, it is viewed as an anomaly that does not accurately reflect Islamic teachings. Many anomalies can be found in Islamic history to support diverse ideas, but they are not integral to authentic Islamic teachings and beliefs of the majority of Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ have given warning on this in a well-known *ḥadīth*.⁷⁵⁸

افْتَرَقَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى إِحْدَى وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً فَوَاحِدَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ وَافْتَرَقَتِ النَّصَارَى عَلَى ثِنْتَيْنِ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً فَأَحَدَى وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ وَوَاحِدَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَتَفْتَرِقَنَّ أُمَّتِي عَلَى ثَلَاثٍ وَسَبْعِينَ فِرْقَةً فَوَاحِدَةٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَثِنْتَانِ وَسَبْعُونَ فِي النَّارِ. قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ هُمْ قَالَ " الْجَمَاعَةُ "

“The Jews split into seventy-one sects, one of which will be in Paradise and seventy in Hell. The Christians split into seventy-two sects, seventy-one of which will be in Hell and one in Paradise. I swear by the One Whose Hand is the soul of Muhammad, my nation will split into seventy-three sects, one of which will be in Paradise and seventy-two in Hell.” It was said: “O Messenger of Allāh, who are they?” He said: “The *jamā‘ah*.”

The term *Jamā‘ah*, as defined here, pertains to a collective where the majority of Muslims, mujtahids, and scholars converge in consensus on matters of creed, jurisprudence, and morals. The majority of Muslim scholars agree that *nushūz* is a negative trait in Islam, one that should neither be glorified nor promoted. They unanimously affirm that the *Qur‘ān* and *ḥadīth* prescribe clear reprimands or punishments for it.⁷⁵⁹ Hence, Mernissi's narrative clearly stands in opposition to the views of the majority of Muslims and deviates from

⁷⁵⁷ Mohammad-Reza; Naji and Marziya Mohammad-Zadeh, “Sakina Bint Husayn,” in *Encyclopaedia of the World of Islam*, vol. 24 (Encyclopaedia Islamica Foundation, 2017).

⁷⁵⁸ Muḥammad ibn Yazīd Al-Qazwīnī Ibn Mājah, “Bāb Iftirāq Al-Umam,” in *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, ed. Muḥammad Fu‘ād ‘Abd Al-Baqī, vol. 2 (Ḥalab: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyyah, 2010), 1322 (ḥadīth 3992).

⁷⁵⁹ You will find that the majority of works in Islamic jurisprudence and *tafāsīr* comprehend this characteristic of *nushūz* as negative. See Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī, *Al-Umm*, vol. 6 (Madīnah: Dār al-Wafā’ li al-‘Uba‘ah wa al-Nashru wa al-Tawzi‘, n.d.), 492–500; Ibn Qudāmah Al-Maqdisī, *Al-Mughnī*, vol. 10 (Riyādh: Dār al-‘Olām al-Kutub, 1997), 259–70; Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ Al-Bayān ‘an Ta’wīl Āy Al-Qur‘ān*, vol. 2 (Bayrūt: Mu‘assasah al-Risālah, 1994), 452–70; Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Al-Qurtubī, *Al-Jāmi‘ Li Ahkām Al-Qur‘ān*, vol. 6 (Bayrūt: Mu‘assasah al-Risālah, 2006), 282–99; Wahbah Mustafā Al-Zuhaylī, *Tafsīr Al-Munīr* (Dimashq: Dār al-Fikr, 2009), 72–79.

normative Islamic teachings. Furthermore, the authenticity of the story of Sakīnah, as narrated by Mernissi, is also subject to dispute.⁷⁶⁰

This study observes that Mernissi's critique of Islamic identity, especially her assertion that the Islamic concept of gender identity reinforces gender inequality, appears to arise from a misunderstanding between cultural practices and authentic Islamic teachings. For example, Islam does not forbid women from attending mosques; on the contrary, it encourages their active participation in seeking knowledge for their own benefit. The only stipulation is the observance of necessary *adāb* (etiquette) while doing so. Despite this, Mernissi's criticism holds value in bringing attention to the challenges faced by Muslim women and advocating for improvements in their treatment within the community.

This study also acknowledges Mernissi's strong commitment to empowering the Arabic-Islamic ethno-religious narrative, particularly in her attempt to connect the Prophet's ﷺ political decisions with an Arabic nationalist motive. Nonetheless, the motive she attributes remains a theoretical assumption based on her personal opinions and views. The true teaching of Islam posits that all Muslims constitute one ummah (nation), unified by the worship of Allāh ﷻ as the sole God. Allāh ﷻ said:

﴿إِنَّ هَدْيِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ﴾

Indeed this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so worship Me.

In another verse, Allāh ﷻ emphasizes that the best person is not determined by skin colour or nationality, but by piety and righteousness. Allāh ﷻ states:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most

⁷⁶⁰ Naji and Mohammad-Zadeh, "Sakina Bint Husayn."

noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.

The Prophet ﷺ also similarly emphasized the unity of the ummah and the equality of all humankind in his sermon delivered during the *Hijjat al-Wadā'* (Farewell Pilgrimage). He stated:⁷⁶¹

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، أَلَا إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، وَإِنَّ أَبَاكُمْ وَاحِدٌ، أَلَا لَا فَضْلَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى عَجَمِيٍّ، وَلَا لِعَجَمِيٍّ عَلَى عَرَبِيٍّ، وَلَا أَحْمَرَ عَلَى أَسْوَدَ، وَلَا أَسْوَدَ عَلَى أَحْمَرَ إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَى، أَلَبَلَّغْتُ؟

O people, your Lord is one and your father Adam is one. There is no favour of an Arab over a foreigner, nor a foreigner over an Arab, and neither white skin over black skin, nor black skin over white skin, except by righteousness. Have I not delivered the message?

Thus, the intended objective of Islām, as taught by the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, is not the superiority of any tribe or nation but the piety to Allāh ﷻ. Differences in ethnicity, nationality, or gender—whether Arab, Malay, Persian, Caucasian, African, male, or female—are creations of Allāh ﷻ and do not confer any inherent value. These differences are a test for humankind, to encourage them to know and treat each other with kindness. The only criterion for being esteemed in the sight of Allāh ﷻ is the attainment of good deeds and piety. Thus, while Mernissi theoretically proposes an Arabic-Islamic ethnoreligious narrative of the Prophet's ﷺ actions, this remains merely a theory. It does not align with the Islamic mission of establishing a unified *ummah* based on the belief in the oneness of Allah ﷻ.

On the other hand, this study is in agreement with Mernissi's claim that the quest for dignity, democracy, human rights, and active engagement of women in political and social matters indeed traces its roots to Islamic tradition. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitation of those quests in Islam. In Islam, the pursuit of the forementioned ideals should adhere to Islamic guidelines and should not overpass the boundaries established by Islam. Islamic teachings consistently advocate for moderation in approach and understanding. For even countries such as United States of America that are

⁷⁶¹ Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, "Ḥadīth Rajulin Min Aṣḥāb Al-Nabī Ṣalla Allāh 'alayh Wa Sallam," in *Musnad Al-Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 38 (Bayrūt: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 2001), 474 (ḥadīth 23489).

known for their democracy and as human rights champions, have also limited the freedom of their citizen to ensure the safety of the population. Hence, this study agrees with Mernissi's claim that Islamic tradition provides ample sources and origins for those ideals yet disagrees in regard of the degree it should be permitted without regulation.

This study acknowledges Mernissi's critical examination of feminist biases and unequal treatment, particularly regarding their Eurocentric perspectives. Mernissi's critique is valuable for highlighting intersectionality and originality within Islamic feminism. Her impartiality, critical analysis, and openness to diverse ideas are commendable, particularly in fostering objective academic discourse and reducing hostility towards unfamiliar perspectives. Additionally, this study supports Mernissi's mission to enhance cooperation between men and women, irrespective of any labels or branding attributed to her. Islamic scholarship encourages all Muslims, regardless of gender or position, to explore Islamic history and contribute findings that can provide justice and equality. However, the methodology embraced must adhere to proper Islamic discipline and standards.

While Mernissi's views on identity issues within the Muslim context are valid, her approach—particularly in attributing root causes to Islamic teachings and criticizing various Islamic concepts—is problematic. Her proposed solutions, which often adopt a secular perspective, do not align with normative Islamic teachings. Nevertheless, her commentary aids in understanding certain misconceptions held by many Muslim feminists regarding Islamic teachings and brings to light important issues related to identity and intersectionality.

4.3 AUTONOMY AND RELIGIOUS ABSOLUTISM

Most feminists generally align their understanding of autonomy with the definition provided in the field of moral psychology. It views autonomy as freedom from external control, self-governance, and the ability to act based on personal reasons and values.⁷⁶² Complete autonomy, in this context, also implies liberation from the influence and

⁷⁶² Stoljar, "Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy."

restrictive regulations of religion. Conversely, religious absolutism undermines or eliminates autonomy by necessitating strict obedience to religious decrees. This section will explore Mernissi's perspectives on aspects of Islam that she perceives as impeding autonomy, such as veiling, sexual segregation, and *ḥudūd*. Additionally, it will delve the discussion on women autonomy in public sphere, with specific focus on the discussion of the rights of women to participate in leadership roles within Islam. The chapter will critically review Mernissi's arguments and analyse them from a normative Islamic standpoint.

4.3.1 Veiling, Sexual Segregation and Ḥudūd

Mernissi offers a unique and exploratory perspective on *ḥijāb* (veiling), sexual segregation, and *ḥudūd*, intertwining these three concepts in her narrative and critiques. One key point she makes is that *ḥijāb*, or the veil, symbolizes the invisibility of women in public spaces, particularly those spaces traditionally dominated by men.⁷⁶³ According to Mernissi, Muslim tradition views the presence of women in male spaces as both provocative and offensive. She said:⁷⁶⁴

Traditionally, women using public spaces, trespassing on the *ummah* universe, are restricted to few occasions and bound by specific rituals, such as the wearing of the veil. The veil is worn by Moroccan women only when they leave the house and walk through the street, which is a male space. The veil means that the woman is present in the men's world, but invisible; she has no right to be in the street.

The veil thus becomes a symbolic boundary, rendering women present yet invisible in the realm of men, effectively denying them the right to be in public spaces.⁷⁶⁵ This male space, she argues, serves as a forbidden boundary, a *ḥudūd*, aimed at segregating women from men. Additionally, Mernissi posits that both *ḥudūd* and veiling are devised to prevent

⁷⁶³ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 97.

⁷⁶⁴ Mernissi, 143.

⁷⁶⁵ Mernissi, 143.

sexual interaction between two realms: the *ummah* or public sphere occupied by men and the domestic universe inhabited by women.⁷⁶⁶

Using the metaphor of the state's border, Mernissi argues that *hudūd* serve as protective measures for the city, guarding against individualism and curbing unbridled desires, much like ramparts defending a city.⁷⁶⁷ This safeguarding extends to the realm of the unknown, exemplified by how Muslims established *hudūd* or boundaries against the West and vice versa.⁷⁶⁸ In a similar vein, women are seen as embodiments of desire and mystery. Mernissi suggests that, within Islam, *hudūd* functions as a tool to shield passive males who are incapable of controlling their sexual urges in the presence of alluring women. This perspective explains why elderly women, deemed unattractive, may go unveiled. She said:⁷⁶⁹

The theory that seclusion in Islam is a device to protect the passive male who cannot control himself sexually in the presence of the lust-inducing female is further substantiated by verse 60 of sura 24, which explains that elderly women (supposed to be unattractive) can go unveiled.

Nevertheless, Mernissi acknowledges that sexual segregation, a key element in Islam's social control over sexuality, is eroding with the advent of the modern world and technology.⁷⁷⁰

Regarding *hijāb* or veiling, Mernissi argues that the *Qur'ān* assigns it a predominantly negative significance, signifying an individual's inability to perceive Allāh ﷻ and, in some instances, viewing it as something that diminishes human intelligence.⁷⁷¹ Additionally, Mernissi notes that certain theologians regard *hijāb* as a form of punishment. She also observes that *hijāb* is employed anatomically to denote both boundaries and protection, such as *al-ḥajiban* (eyebrow), *ḥijāb al-jawf* (*ḥijāb* of the stomach), and *ḥijāb al-bukuriyyah* (hymen or *ḥijāb* of virginity).⁷⁷² It can also convey meaning as a sort of

⁷⁶⁶ Mernissi, 140.

⁷⁶⁷ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 14.

⁷⁶⁸ Mernissi, 14.

⁷⁶⁹ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 142.

⁷⁷⁰ Mernissi, 107.

⁷⁷¹ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 97.

⁷⁷² Mernissi, 96.

spatial dimensions that delineates thresholds between distinct areas and concealing something from view, as seen in *ḥijāb al-amīr*.⁷⁷³

In the realm of politics, Mernissi introduces another meaning of *ḥijāb*—*ḥijāb al-khalifah* (caliph's veil)—an institution in political Islam that veils the caliph due to his perceived concentration of power and the ability to wield lethal force.⁷⁷⁴ Mernissi contends that this veil not only separates women but also isolates the *'āmmah* or the masses from the caliph.⁷⁷⁵ She asserts that *ḥijāb al-khalifah* firstly emerged in response to numerous assassinations attempts on the caliph, functioning as a protection and barrier to shield and filter external influences, but ultimately end disconnecting the caliph from the general masses.⁷⁷⁶ According to Mernissi, this institution represents a crucial moment in Muslim history, marking the onset of despotism. She said:⁷⁷⁷

The caliphs rapidly cut themselves off from the community and deserted the mosque-residence of Muhammad, where the leader lives and works next to the mosque. Between themselves and those they governed they raised the *ḥijāb*, literally the veil. The institution of the *ḥijāb*, that is, a curtain in the sense of a barrier that separates the sovereign from the people and impedes their access to him - which was considered by the Prophet and the first four caliphs as a grave failure in duty by the leader - was very quickly adopted in political practice.

Mernissi tries to draw a connection between *ḥijāb al-khalifah* and the *ḥijāb* of clothing, both of which she sees as male impositions on women's bodies and symbols of arbitrariness. Mernissi argues that, without the intermediary role of the *ḥijāb*, Islamic culture might have given rise to a democratic political culture.⁷⁷⁸

Mernissi also draws connections between veiling and modern politics, examining the interplay of the two phenomena: 1. the endorsement and state-enforced imposition of women's veiling as an ideal Muslim's women identity by oil *amirs* and *shaykhs* in the 1980s, and 2. the emergence of terrorism justified on religious grounds in various Muslim

⁷⁷³ Mernissi, 95.

⁷⁷⁴ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 115.

⁷⁷⁵ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 34.

⁷⁷⁶ Mernissi, 180–81.



⁷⁷⁷ Mernissi, 79.

⁷⁷⁸ Mernissi, 178–80.

capitals.⁷⁷⁹ According to Mernissi, veiling and terrorism share commonalities, particularly in how they thrive within spaces where self-expression is severely censored. Both are also used by politicians to deliberately stifle democratic processes in ensuring their own survival. She said:⁷⁸⁰

Yes, veil and terrorism have much in common when you think about it; both breed and thrive in spaces where self-expression is cruelly censored, and where the politicians have opted deliberately and in cold blood to check the democratic process as a way to ensure their survival. The veiling of women as a political ideal and terrorism are but strange, dream-like sex distorted mirror images of the same fierce garrotting of citizens' voices and the pitiless choking of their desire to self-expression. They are mirror images of the same mutilation of self-expression, but while the veil concerns women, terrorism is primarily a man's affair.

She argues that the concept of *ḥijāb* acts as impediments to citizenship by casting women as potential sources of disorder and sedition. Mernissi views *ḥijāb* not merely as a piece of fabric but as a tool favoured by politicians during crises, constituting more than a division of labour.⁷⁸¹ In her perspective, the contemporary desire to veil or *ḥijāb* women is, fundamentally, an attempt to shroud resistance in the guise of religious obedience.⁷⁸²

Mernissi argues that the revelation of the *ḥijāb* verse in the *Qur'ān* coincided with two simultaneous events and operated in two distinct realms: the intellectual realm and the material object, represented by the cloth *ḥijāb*.⁷⁸³ She posits that the Prophet ﷺ did not intend to make the *ḥijāb* mandatory for women; rather, it was imposed due to political opposition towards the end of his life, instances of sexual harassment faced by his wives, and the influence of Companions  known for their misogynistic characteristics who advocated for the *ḥijāb* as a solution.⁷⁸⁴ According to Mernissi, it was not the Prophet ﷺ himself but his misogynistic Companions  and *al-Munāfiqūn* (hypocrites) in the *Qur'ān*

⁷⁷⁹ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, vii.

⁷⁸⁰ Mernissi, xi.

⁷⁸¹ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 165.

⁷⁸² Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 85.

⁷⁸³ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 85.

⁷⁸⁴ Mernissi, 164, 170–71, 184–85.

who wanted and lead to the implementation of the ruling for women to veil.⁷⁸⁵ In her commentary, Mernissi characterizes these hypocrites as individuals unwilling to abandon *jāhiliyyah* customs, particularly misogyny, which Islam sought to eliminate.⁷⁸⁶ She then turns her attention to Islamists, contending that advocating for the *ḥijāb* today is a regression to *jāhiliyyah* customs.⁷⁸⁷

Mernissi emphasizes that her objection and aversion to *ḥijāb* is not against women who autonomously choose in wearing it but stems from the role of *ḥijāb* in obstructing transparency and how it conceals something from view. She, for example, did not object to women who choose to wear a headscarf and cover her hair and face without external pressure from politicians or husbands. In her view, such a veil is a voluntary and personal cosmetic choice related to individual grooming.⁷⁸⁸

The type of veil she opposes is inherently political, specifically referring to head coverings forcibly imposed on women by political authorities, exemplified by Imam Khomeini's July 1980 '*Ḥijāb Law*' mandating veiling for women in the state sector, as well as the enforced veil by the Saudi Arabian police.⁷⁸⁹ Mernissi provides historical examples of women rejecting veiling in Islamic history, citing the story of Sakīnah bint al-Ḥusayn and 'Ā'isha bint Ṭalḥah.⁷⁹⁰ Both Sakīnah and 'Ā'isha were outspoken against veiling and are recognized as *barza* or *barziah*, signifying their unveiled status.⁷⁹¹

⁷⁸⁵ Mernissi, 164.

⁷⁸⁶ Mernissi, 172.

⁷⁸⁷ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 115.

⁷⁸⁸ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, xi.

⁷⁸⁹ Mernissi, xi.

⁷⁹⁰ According to Mernissi, Sakīnah bint al-Ḥusayn, the granddaughter of the Prophet, gained renown for insisting on monogamy in her third marriage to the grandson of the Caliph Uthmān ibn 'Affān. She went to great lengths, prohibiting him from any involvement with other women, including his own *jawāriyy*. Sakīnah asserted her authority, ensuring he complied with her every desire. The scandalous divorce occurred when she caught him in the act with one of his supposed legitimate *jawāriyy*, acquired within the established norms. Historical records highlight Sakīnah's unveiled status, referred to as *barza*. Another notable figure of the era was 'Ā'isha bint Ṭalḥa, an aristocrat like Sakīnah and the niece of 'Ā'ishah bint Abī Bakr, the Prophet's wife. 'Ā'isha, too, defied the convention of wearing a veil, arguing that her beauty, a creation of God, should not be concealed from view. See *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 83.

⁷⁹¹ This study attempted to consult the primary sources referenced by Mernissi but was unable to find evidence indicating that Sakīnah and 'Ā'isha did not cover their hair or other parts of their *'awrah*, except for their faces. Unfortunately, Mernissi did not provide explicit publication details for the edition of the *al-Aghānī*

Mernissi raises a critical inquiry into how veiling, a symbol laden with negative connotations in the *Qur'ān*, has come to be accepted as a defining element of Muslim identity today.⁷⁹² She argues that the ruling and rationale behind the *hijāb* constitutes a blatant violation of Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which emphasizes the inherent freedom and equality of all individuals in dignity and rights, endowed with reason and conscience.⁷⁹³ According to Mernissi, universal suffrage in a democratic political system dismantles two metaphorical veils, which represent the dual thresholds of political Islam within its cosmic architecture: the *hijāb* (veil) of women and that of the caliph.⁷⁹⁴

4.3.2 Women's Autonomy and Leadership

Mernissi ardently championed women's autonomy and leadership, shedding light on the interconnectedness of women's surveillance and seclusion with the active and passive perception of female sexuality.⁷⁹⁵ Despite contending that Islam, as a religion, imposed restrictions on personal autonomy especially for women, she still portrayed the Prophet ﷺ in a positive light as a promoter of women's autonomy and rights. Mernissi observed instances of the Prophet ﷺ consulting his wives for advice and valuing their opinions, suggesting a nuanced perspective on gender dynamics within Islamic teachings.⁷⁹⁶ She argued that the Prophet's ﷺ actions, such as respecting Ummu Salamah's ﷺ rejection of his marriage proposal, demonstrated a granting of freedom of choice to women.⁷⁹⁷

book she used, making it impossible to verify her references based on the volumes and pages cited in her notes. This study utilized the 2008 third edition of *Kitāb al-Aghānī* published by Dār al-Şādir and found that al-Aşfahānī mentioned that 'Ā'isha only left her face uncovered. See 'Alī ibn al-Ĥusayn Al-Aşfahānī, *Kitāb Al-Aghānī*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, Ibrāhīm Al-Sa'āfin, and Bakr 'Abbās, 3rd editio, vol. 11 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Şādir, 2008), 122–36; 'Alī ibn al-Ĥusayn Al-Aşfahānī, *Kitāb Al-Aghānī*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, Ibrāhīm Al-Sa'āfin, and Bakr 'Abbās, 3rd editio, vol. 17 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Şādir, 2008), 34–43.

⁷⁹² Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 97.

⁷⁹³ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 185.

⁷⁹⁴ Mernissi, 178.

⁷⁹⁵ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 31.

⁷⁹⁶ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 105.

⁷⁹⁷ Mernissi, 116.

Interestingly, Mernissi asserted that Muḥammad's ﷺ Islam dismissed the idea of supervising and controlling women through a strict police system.⁷⁹⁸ She envisioned the Prophet ﷺ dreaming of a society where women could freely move around the city without harassment. She said:⁷⁹⁹

In the struggle between Muhammad's dream of a society in which women could move freely around the city (because the social control would be the Muslim faith that disciplines desire), and the customs of the Hypocrites who only thought of a woman as an object of envy and violence, it was this latter vision that would carry the day.

However, she also maintained that the fear of female self-determination and autonomy was deeply ingrained in the Muslim order and religious teachings, closely linked to the concept of *fitnah*.⁸⁰⁰

Mernissi substantiated her assertion with historical evidence, contending that self-determining women encountered disapproval within Islam. She posited examples that caliphs of Islamic civilisations exhibited a preference for *jawārī* (slave women) over *ḥurrah* (free women), citing their perceived higher obedience.⁸⁰¹ Furthermore, she interpreted the Prophet's ﷺ dismantling of 360 idols around the Kaaba during the conquest of Mecca in 630 AC as a symbolic expression of apprehension towards freedom. This unease, as Mernissi explained, emanated from the prohibition of artistic freedom to portray human faces and the exclusion of women from political realms as these actions were intricately linked to the triumph of the Monotheistic God over 360 other deities, with the most influential of those deities being goddesses. She said:⁸⁰²

Among the 360 gods of the Ka'ba, the most powerful were goddesses. These goddesses did not have the face of *rahmah*, the tenderness associated with the nurturing mother, for they wallowed in the bloodbaths of the sacrifices they demanded-sacrifices all the more cruel because useless. These goddesses did not succeed in bringing about the maternal miracle that they were supposed to guarantee. The feminine would be doubly stamped with the sign of invisibility. Women would be veiled, first because they were identified with the violence of the goddesses, and then in order to homogenize the *ummah* (community) and cleanse the city of everything that

⁷⁹⁸ Mernissi, 186.

⁷⁹⁹ Mernissi, 187.

⁸⁰⁰ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 53.

⁸⁰¹ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 87.

⁸⁰² Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 86.

smacked of the pre-Islamic disorder. We will return to that primordial scene, when Islam's social contract was concluded: peace in exchange for freedom, *rahmah* in exchange for *shirk*.

Mernissi advocates for the Sufistic or 'saints' perspective of autonomy within Islam. She observes that female saints, contrasting the emphasized passivity of women in the material world, lead intensely active lives in the supernatural realm. These supernatural women engage in a variety of actions, ranging from nurturing maternal protection to outright aggression, including the pursuit of men. Importantly, in the supernatural realm, these women do not adhere to the traditional Muslim sexual division of labour that excludes women from positions of power in religion and politics. She said:⁸⁰³

Unlike the emphasized passivity of women in the material, real worlds, supernatural women lead intensively active lives, perform all kinds of acts, from benign motherly protection to straightforward aggression, such as rape of men."

Within this supernatural sphere, women have the freedom to reject domestic roles and actively participate in both religious and political realms.⁸⁰⁴ Mernissi provides various examples of female saints who defy conventional norms, such as Imma Tiffelent, who possesses a strikingly 'unfeminine' personality and interests, and surprisingly, at some point in her saintly life, lived as a prostitute.⁸⁰⁵ Another example is Lalla Tagurrami, a Berber saint who played a strategic role in her region's history, acting as a referee in conflicts between tribes and also between tribes and central authority. Her influence was so profound and successful that the King become fearful of it and eventually imprisoned her.⁸⁰⁶

Mernissi links the concept of intellectual autonomy in Islamic tradition to the *Mu'tazilah* ideology. She commends the *Mu'tazilah* philosophy for its commitment to forthrightness, openly embracing a wide range of human knowledge including scientific treatises and Greek philosophy from the West. She said:⁸⁰⁷

The 'Abbāsid adopted the *Mu'tazilah* philosophy as their official doctrine for at least a century, the century of openness. Openness meant embracing

⁸⁰³ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 28.

⁸⁰⁴ Mernissi, 28.

⁸⁰⁵ Mernissi, 28.

⁸⁰⁶ Mernissi, 29.

⁸⁰⁷ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 35.

all human knowledge, including the scientific treatises and Greek philosophy now translated into Arabic.

Mernissi argues that the decline of the *Mu'tazilah* during the 'Abbāsīd dynasty resulted from palace intrigues, leading to the persecution of philosophers and condemnation of freethinkers as infidels and atheists. Rational thinkers were replaced with those emphasizing obedience, suppressing reflective thought. During this period, Mernissi contends that the *sharī'ah* lost its questioning and speculative dimension, creating a tradition that hinders the democratic process by tying obedience to the leader with respect for religion.⁸⁰⁸ She advocates a return to the intellectual freedom and autonomy of the *Mu'tazilah* era.

Subsequently, Mernissi critiques 20th-century Arab governments that abandoned reason as foreign after the departure of colonial powers. The dream of aligning obedience to the *imām* with obedience to Allāh ﷻ became the guiding program and law for Arab regimes rooted in the sacred.⁸⁰⁹ Mernissi promotes a secular approach to the relationship between religion and the state, arguing that Western secularism does not eliminate religion from people's lives, as evidenced by the growing number of churches in America and the enduring influence of Christianity and Judaism in the hearts of people in France and Germany.⁸¹⁰⁸¹¹

Addressing the topic of leadership, Mernissi observes that it was traditionally a male-exclusive domain in traditional Muslim societies, with women prohibited from entering male spaces. She argues that a woman in such spaces disrupts Allāh's ﷻ order, potentially inciting men to commit sin, causing them to risk their peace of mind, self-determination, allegiance to Allāh ﷻ, and social prestige.⁸¹² Despite this perspective, Mernissi points to instances in Islamic history where Muslim women actively participated in politics and leadership. She recounts the story of *Hindun* and early female Companions who swore allegiance and engaged in negotiations with military leaders, showcasing

⁸⁰⁸ Mernissi, 37.

⁸⁰⁹ Mernissi, 39.

⁸¹⁰ It is important to note that Mernissi made this observation during the 1980s and 1990s.

⁸¹¹ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 45, 65.

⁸¹² Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 144.

women's political influence in Islam.⁸¹³ Mernissi asserts that absolutism emerged when *Mu'āwiyah* transformed political Islam into a dynastic system. To further demonstrate the legitimacy of women's leadership in Islam, she presents additional historical accounts in her work, "The Forgotten Queens of Islam." This book is a response to the opposition of Pakistani fundamentalists to Benazir Bhutto's appointment as the prime minister of Pakistan in 1988. She said:⁸¹⁴

That is why, as the fundamentalists well understand, the election of Benazir Bhutto constituted a total break with caliphal Islam. It represented the dual emergence on the political scene of that which is veiled and that which is obscene: the will of women and that of the people.

According to Mernissi, the fundamentalists considered Bhutto's appointment religiously illegitimate, as no Muslim woman had previously held such a position. Mernissi's objective in writing "The Forgotten Queens of Islam" is to excavate the historical evidence of women's leadership in Islamic tradition.⁸¹⁵ Despite the absence of female caliphs in Islamic history, she highlights the existence of female sultanas and queens, providing examples such as *Sultānah* Radhiyyah of Delhi in 1236, *Malikah* Zaynab al-Nafzāwiyah of the Berbers in 1061, *Asmā' al-Ḥurrah* and *Arwā al-Ḥurrah* of the Yemens in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, 'Ā'ishah *al-Ḥurrah* or Sultana Madre de Boabdil of Granada in the 14th century, *Sultānah* Shajarat al-Durr of Egypt in 1250, *Sayyidah al-Ḥurrah* of Tetouan in 1515, and Sitt al-Mulk of the Fatimid dynasty of Egypt in 1021.⁸¹⁶ Mernissi emphasizes various titles given to female leaders and queens in Islam, such as *Sultānah*, *Malikah*, *al-Ḥurrah*, *Sitt*, and *Khatun*.⁸¹⁷ She cites examples of Muslim queens like Shajarat al-Durr, who named herself *Malikah al-Muslimīn* (Queen of the Muslims) but faced ridicule due to her gender by the 'Abbasīd Caliph, al-Musta'ṣim.⁸¹⁸ Mernissi also supports the evidence of female leadership through the story of al-Khayzurān bint 'Atā', the wife of the 'Abbasīd Caliph Al-Mahdī and mother of both Caliphs Al-Ḥādī and Hārūn

⁸¹³ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 191.

⁸¹⁴ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 2, 177.

⁸¹⁵ Mernissi, 2–3.

⁸¹⁶ Mernissi, 10–25.

⁸¹⁷ Mernissi, 10–23.

⁸¹⁸ Mernissi, 28–29.

al-Rashīd. Al- Kayzurān maintained de facto influence from 775 to 789 during the reign of her husband and sons, known for her significant impact on state affairs.⁸¹⁹

Mernissi notes that according to Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah*, the four conditions for being a Caliph are knowledge, equity (*al-‘Adālah*), competence, and physical fitness, with no specific gender condition. However, at the end of the chapter on "the caliphate and its condition," Ibn Khaldūn specifies that these criteria do not apply to women, asserting that women lack power and are under male control.⁸²⁰ Despite this assertion, Mernissi highlights that not all eligibility criteria were universally accepted in the early days of Islam. Some criteria, such as the racial origin of the caliph, were subjects of debate, with the *Khārijites*, an early Muslim sect, being the first to raise the issue of social equality in selecting the caliph. She said:⁸²¹

The *Khārijites* ('those who quit') refused to play the political game by the rules any longer, making dialogue with them impossible within the heart of Islam. When the *Khārijites* declared their disagreement with the criteria of eligibility of the leader, it came as a shock. At that time there was consensus: only an Arab had the right to lead.

Mernissi underscores that the eligibility criteria are not inherently sacred or unquestionable, as historical debates have challenged various criteria. She argues that this historical precedent demonstrates that the discourse on democracy is not a Western import but an authentic part of Islamic tradition.⁸²² This perspective allows Mernissi to question not only the sanctity of the title 'caliph' but also the traditional conflict between women and power. If the criterion of Arabness was contested in the early days of Islam, Mernissi suggests that the criterion of maleness can also be questioned today. Furthermore, she contends that if the primary criterion for the title 'caliph' is having the Friday *khuṭbah* (sermon) proclaimed in one's name or having one's name inscribed on coins, then there is no inherent incompatibility between women and the caliphate. Historical examples show that a few women heads of states had their names inscribed on coins and had the Friday *khuṭbah* delivered in their names.⁸²³

⁸¹⁹ Mernissi, 51–52.

⁸²⁰ Mernissi, 33.

⁸²¹ Mernissi, 23.

⁸²² Mernissi, 34, 45.

⁸²³ Mernissi, 88–111.

Mernissi scrutinized and condemned a *ḥadīth* attributed to the narration of Abū Bakrah رضي الله عنه, where Prophet Muḥammad's صلى الله عليه وسلم words caution against a nation entrusting its leadership to women, saying "A nation will not gain prosperity if it entrusts its leadership to women."⁸²⁴ The *ḥadīth* recounts an incident involving the Persians appointing a woman as their leader, and it discourages allowing a woman to govern a nation, suggesting that such a nation will face failure. This prohibition is rooted in the assumption that women might be emotionally driven and less adept at making accurate decisions, especially in critical situations. Mernissi argues that this *ḥadīth* was articulated after the significant defeat of ‘Āishah رضي الله عنها in the Battle of Camel. She said:⁸²⁵

Alī was chosen caliph in June AD 656 in a Medina that was in a state of total disarray. Many Muslims took up arms because they challenged his selection. ‘Ā’ishah took command of them, and, with an army of insurgents, she went forth to fight Alī at Basra a year later at the famous Battle of the Camel. Alī inflicted a crushing defeat on her, and it was after this battle that the *Ḥadīth* declaring defeat for those who let themselves be led by a woman was pronounced.

She critiques Abū Bakrah رضي الله عنه, accusing him of misogyny and asserting that his statement contains political motivations. Mernissi attempts to undermine Abū Bakrah's رضي الله عنه credibility, highlighting an incident where Caliph ‘Umar bin al-Khattab رضي الله عنه flogged him for providing false testimony about an adultery accusation involving a prominent figure.⁸²⁶ This was intended to raise doubts about the reliability of Abū Bakrah رضي الله عنه as a *ḥadīth* narrator. Mernissi also contends that many *ḥadīths* were fabricated due to political considerations.⁸²⁷

Mernissi endeavours to portray revolt and rebellion as intrinsic to Islamic tradition. She argues that the tradition of revolting against the *imām* is deeply ingrained in Islamic

⁸²⁴ Abū ‘Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘il al-Ju‘fī Al-Bukhārī, “Kitāb Maghāzi: Bāb Kitāb Al-Nabī Ilā Kisrā Wa Qayṣar,” in *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4 (Bayrūt: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987), 1610 (*ḥadīth* 4163); Abū ‘Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘il al-Ju‘fī Al-Bukhārī, “Kitāb Al-Fitan: Bāb Al-Fitnah Al-Lati Tamūju Kamawji Al-Baḥr,” in *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, vol. 6 (Bayrūt: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987), 2600 (*ḥadīth* 6686).

⁸²⁵ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women’s Rights in Islam*, 41.

⁸²⁶ Mernissi, 60–61.

⁸²⁷ Mernissi, 46.

history, illustrating personal autonomy to revolt over corrupt leaders with the case of the *Khārijites*.⁸²⁸ According to Mernissi, in theory, it is a Muslim's duty to rebel against an *imām* who makes unjust decisions. She posits that, in Islam, the ideal *imām* is one who is modest, trembling with fear before Allāh ﷻ, and terrified before those he governs, as making an unjust decision would lead him directly to hell.⁸²⁹ Mernissi emphasizes the necessity of creating new Muslim leadership that can embrace autonomous, self-reliant women for the community to progress towards a better future.⁸³⁰ Her vision includes the empowerment of Arab women and the diminishing influence of *imāms* over the masses.⁸³¹ Mernissi acknowledges instances where Islam and its historical narrative have been employed as potent political weapons, particularly in theocracies, where not everyone enjoys an equal right to speak while authorities rule in the name of Allāh ﷻ.⁸³²

4.3.3 An Analysis from the Islamic Perspective

Islam constitutes a universal belief system, emphasizing submission to Allāh ﷻ and the imperative adherence to the *sharī'ah*, along with obedience to the teachings of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. In accordance with this, Allāh ﷻ directs Muslims to wholeheartedly embrace Islamic teachings, cautioning against following Satan's footsteps, as he is an avowed enemy. The mandate regarding *ḥijāb* and the covering of the private parts (*'aurah*) is rooted in Islamic law, aiming to safeguard the honour and sanctity of Muslim women, fostering virtuous ethics, harmony, and a peaceful gender dynamic.⁸³³

Concerning Mernissi's critique of *ḥijāb*, this study finds her explorative definitions, particularly the concept of *ḥijāb al-khalīfah*, intriguing. Mernissi theorizes it as the starting point of despotism in Islam. Her criticism of how *ḥijāb* functions as a political tool and acts as *ḥudūd* holds some merit to a certain extent. The study acknowledges that Islamic injunctions like *ḥijāb*, *ḥudūd*, and segregation have been misused at times in history.

⁸²⁸ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 27.

⁸²⁹ Mernissi, 27.

⁸³⁰ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, xiv–xv.

⁸³¹ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 149–53.

⁸³² Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 85.

⁸³³ Reimia Ramadana, “Hadis Hijab Pandangan Kontemporer: Studi Terhadap Pemahaman Fatima Mernissi, Quraish Shihab, Dan Muhammad Syahrur,” *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Ushuluddin* 2, no. 1 (2022): 87.

However, dismissing them entirely and categorizing their authority as purely political is an oversimplification. This reflects a significant flaw in Mernissi's analysis, as it attempts to establish causation where a clear correlation may not be present. Moreover, Mernissi's accusation that the ruling of *hijāb* was imposed on the Prophet ﷺ by his Companions and society is problematic, as it undermines the divine nature of revelation, reducing Allāh's will and omnipotence to the whims of His creation. Verses implying the covering of *'aurah* are numerous and explicit, emphasizing the obligation of these rulings.⁸³⁴ Allāh said:⁸³⁵

﴿ وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَعْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَرِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاؤِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ التَّبِيعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْأَرْبَابَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوْ الصِّبْيَانِ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَىٰ عَوْرَتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴾

And tell the believing women to reduce (some) of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which (necessarily) appears thereof and to wrap (a portion of) their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment (i.e., beauty) except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess (i.e., slaves), or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allāh in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.

Mernissi's disparaging views on the revelation and Allāh's position as the All-Knowing and the Governor of all things is evident when she claimed that the Prophet's idea of equality is better and in clash with the *Qur'ānic* revelation. She imagined that the Prophet

⁸³⁴ See *Ṣūrah al-Nūr*, 24:30-31 and *Ṣūrah al-'Aḥzāb*, 33:59. For further discussion on Islamic ruling on *hijāb*, see 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Muḥammad Abū Shuqqah, *Tahrīr Al-Mar'ah Fī 'aṣri Al-Risālah*, vol. 4 (Kuwayt: Dār al-Qalām, 1991), 44–104.

⁸³⁵ *Ṣūrah al-Nūr*, 24:31.

ﷺ was reluctant to implement the *ḥijāb* ruling yet was forced to apply it to ensure Islam's survivability as commanded by Allāh ﷻ. Her arguments on *ḥijāb* in Islam appear subjective, selective, and speculative. The majority of Muslim scholars from the four schools of jurisprudence agree that women are required to cover their bodies in the presence of *non-maḥram* men, permitting the exposure of only certain parts such as the hands, face, and soles.⁸³⁶ Her negative stance on *ḥijāb* strongly reflects a feminist perspective and stands contrary to the views of the vast majority of Muslim scholars on its obligation.⁸³⁷

Regarding Mernissi's observations and criticisms on the issue of women's leadership in Islam, Muslim scholars hold diverse opinions on the extent of women's participation in leadership roles. They, in general, categorize women's involvement in politics into at least two main types of administrative categories although contradictions exist between the definitions and sphere of its responsibility. One is *wilāyah al-khaṣṣah* or specific jurisdiction, assigned to women due to tasks closely aligned with feminine characteristics and nature. The other is *wilāyah al-‘āmmah*, a general jurisdiction that demands a substantial workforce and high-level decision-making.⁸³⁸ The majority of Muslim scholars prohibit women's participation in the second type of administrative category, as the position for this administrative class represents the highest leadership positions for Muslim like the caliph or *imām*.⁸³⁹ However, opinions diverge on women's participation in other leadership roles, such as judges, ministers, or representatives. While the *ḥadīth* of Abū Bakrah ﷺ cited by Mernissi indicates a definite prohibition for women to hold the highest positions of power, it does not encompass and diminish the rights of

⁸³⁶ According to the Shāfi‘ī school, as noted by al-Nawawī and al-Khaṭīb al-Shirbīnī, the *‘awrah* of women encompasses their entire body except for the face and hands, with al-Muzanī also excluding the soles of the feet. This stance aligns with the majority of Mālikī and Ḥanafī schools of jurisprudence. In contrast, the Ḥanbalī school maintains that the *‘awrah* of women includes the entire body without any exceptions. See Husein Muhammad, *Fiqh Perempuan* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2019), 126–28.

⁸³⁷ Muhammad, 126–28.

⁸³⁸ Syaza Zafirah Binti Ab Rahim, Humaira Binti Zainuddin, and Nur Filzah Binti Nor Rahmat, “Kepimpinan Wanita Menurut Perspektif Al-Quran Dan As-Sunnah,” in *Konvensyen Kearifan Nusantara Ke-IV (ARIF 2023)* (Nilai: Fakulti Pengajian Quran dan Sunnah USIM, 2023), 414–16.

⁸³⁹ Mohd Baltaji, *Makānah Al-Mar’ah Fī Al-Qurān Al-Karīm Wa Al-Sunnah Al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (al-Qāherah: Maktabat al-Shabāb, n.d.), 245.

women in the other roles, such as becoming representatives, witnesses, or having managerial authority over their property and homes.⁸⁴⁰

It is crucial to discover the contextual imperative of the *ḥadīth*. The prohibition is specifically directed towards the highest positions of leadership endowed with absolute power, and scholars have engaged in debates regarding its potential extension to other leadership roles with lesser authority. In contemporary times, several Islamic countries have refrained from appointing women to the top leadership positions based on the interpretation of this *ḥadīth*. Nevertheless, scholarly opinions remain varied, particularly regarding women's eligibility for roles such as Prime Minister. Scholars like Yūsuf al-Qaradhāwī permit it under specific conditions, such as having capable advisors and a supervisory parliament.⁸⁴¹ He cites the example of the Queen of Saba', known for her wisdom and leadership in guiding her people to Allāh ﷻ, and draws parallels to the contemporary era, where a Prime Minister in a democratic system does not hold sole authoritative power but rather operates within a collective leadership structure involving various institutions.⁸⁴² In summary, while the *ḥadīth* explicitly prohibits women from holding the highest leadership positions where they possess absolute authority, it does not specifically prohibit other forms of leadership or roles where power is shared collectively with institutions.

In response to Mernissi's criticism of Abū Bakrah ﷺ personal characteristics, this study disagrees with her argument that undermines Abū Bakrah's credibility as a *ḥadīth* narrator. Abū Bakrah's ﷺ background and lineage are well-documented, establishing a solid trustworthiness connection with the Prophet ﷺ. He played a significant role in Basrah, and his honour and leadership among the Companions are widely acknowledged. Respected scholars affirm Abu Bakrah's ﷺ virtuous character, ranking him among the best

⁸⁴⁰ Bin Nasir, "Fatima Mernissi Dalam Timbangan Ilmu Hadith: Kritik Terhadap Pemikiran Dan Dakwaan Hadith-Hadith Misoginis," 140–46.

⁸⁴¹ Yūsuf Al-Qaradhāwī, *Min Fiqh Al-Dawlat Fī Al-Islām*, 3rd ed. (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Shurūq, 2001), 170–76.

⁸⁴² Nur Tasnim Binti Ismail, Bharuddin Che Pa, and Mohamad Zaidi bin Abdul Rahman, "Kerjaya Wanita Di Peringkat Pengurusan Tertinggi Negara Menurut Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis," *Journal of Hadith Studies* 3, no. 2 (2018): 17–18.

Companions due to his knowledge and righteousness.⁸⁴³ The incident involving al-Mughīrah bin Shu‘bah's ﷺ adultery is well-documented in historical and interpretational sources, and Abu Bakrah's ﷺ stance exemplified his unwavering commitment to the truth, even in the face of adversity.⁸⁴⁴ The conflicting testimonies and ‘Umar's ﷺ decision highlight the complexity of the situation but do not diminish Abu Bakrah's ﷺ credibility as a narrator. Islamic teachings uphold the belief that every Companions of the Prophet ﷺ is just (‘*adl*) without exception.⁸⁴⁵

Moreover, Mernissi's criticism of the ‘*adālah* (just or integrity) of Abū Bakrah and her attempt to disqualify him as a credible narrator of *ḥadīth* reveal her limited understanding of Islamic scholarship. Prominent scholars, such as *al-Imām* Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī, have extensively discussed these issues in his work like *al-Furūq al-Musammā Anwār al-Burūq fī Anwā’ al-Furūq*.⁸⁴⁶ He emphasized common misconceptions about the concepts of ‘*adālah al-riwāyah* (integrity in narration) and ‘*adālah al-shahādah* (integrity in testimony), particularly regarding the qualifications and conditions of the *rawīy* (narrator). Imam Solahuddin al-'Ala'i explained that the justice or integrity attributed to the Prophet's Companions does not imply their infallibility or immunity from error.⁸⁴⁷ Instead, it means that their narrations are accepted and considered trustworthy without requiring the same level of scrutiny as those from others. It is also important to note that, while some

⁸⁴³ Ibn Abd al-Barr, *Al-Isti‘āb Fī Ma‘rifah Al-Ashāb*, 1st ed., vol. 4 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Jīl, 1991), 1531; Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām Al-Nubalā*, vol. 2 (Bayrūt: Muassasat al-Risālah, 1992), 6–9.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibn Abd al-Barr, *Al-Isti‘āb Fī Ma‘rifah Al-Ashāb*, 4:1615; Abū Bakr ‘Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Shaybah al-Kufī Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaḥ Abī Shaybah*, ed. 1st, vol. 7 (Riyādh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1988), 545.

⁸⁴⁵ ‘*Adl*, is the truthfulness, integrity and honesty of the Companions ﷺ in maintaining and conveying the religion. They not only have the characteristics of piety and respect, but also have a honest nature or identity which is to protect and convey the religion correctly to the generations after them, does not hide any truth and do not lie on the Prophet ﷺ.

⁸⁴⁶ Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Idrīs Al-Qarāfī, *Al-Furūq Anwār Al-Burūq Fi Anwā’ Al-Furūq* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1998), 10–25.

⁸⁴⁷ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Kaykaldī Al-‘Alā‘ī, *Tahqīq Munīf Al-Rutbah Li Man Tsabata Lahu Sharīf Al-Suḥbah*, ed. Muḥammad Sulaymān Al-Ashqir (al-Riyādh: Dār al-Āshimāh, 1990), 86.

Companions ﷺ might err, they are distinguished by their immediate repentance to Allah ﷻ, a blessing attributed to their close companionship with the Prophet ﷺ.

Mernissi's observation of the Sufistic or 'saints' perspective on autonomy within Islam appears problematic, as she deliberately provides examples that incorrectly portray Islamic 'saints' as violating *sharī'ah* law, engaging in activities such as prostitution and raping men. However, it is crucial to note that true 'saints' of Allāh ﷻ are those who diligently adhere to His commandments. The Prophet ﷺ said:⁸⁴⁸

مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُهُ عَلَيْهِ، وَلَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالنَّوَافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَمْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا، وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَلَئِنْ سَأَلَنِي لِأَعْطَيْتُهُ، وَلَئِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي لِأُعِيذَنَّهُ

Whosoever acts with enmity towards a closer servant of Mine (*Walī*), I will indeed declare war against him. Nothing endears My servant to Me than doing of what I have made obligatory upon him to do. And My servant continues to draw nearer to Me with the supererogatory (*nawāfil*) so that I shall love him. When I love him, I shall be his hearing with which he shall hear, his sight with which he shall see, his hands with which he shall hold, and his feet with which he shall walk. And if he asks (something) of Me, I shall surely give it to him, and if he takes refuge in Me, I shall certainly grant him it.

Abū Madyan al-Maghribī emphasized that steadfast adherence to the *Sharī'ah* is a key characteristic of a saint of Allāh ﷻ.⁸⁴⁹ Without this adherence, any miraculous occurrences (*al-karāmah*) are not genuine and are instead forms of deception. Ibn Daqīq al-‘Ayd further underscored that a saint of Allāh ﷻ is someone who strives to obey Allāh ﷻ through the *Sharī'ah* revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.⁸⁵⁰ From this understanding, we can deduce that only by steadfastly following the commandments of the *Sharī'ah* can one truly be

⁸⁴⁸ Abū ‘Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘il al-Ju‘fī Al-Bukhārī, “Kitāb Al-Riqā’: Bāb Al-Tawāḍu,” in *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, vol. 5 (Bayrūt: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987), ḥadīth 6502.

⁸⁴⁹ Ahmad ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn ‘Ilān, *Sharḥ Al-Ḥikam Al-‘Uthiyyah Li Shaykh Sīdī Abī Madyan Al-Tilmasānī Al-Maghribī* (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Āfāq al-‘Arabiyyah, 2012), 280.

⁸⁵⁰ Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī Ibn Daqīq Al-‘Ayd, *Sharḥ Al-Arba‘īn Al-Nawawiyyah Fī Al-Aḥādīth Al-Ṣaḥīḥah Al-Nabawiyyah* (Bayrūt: Mu’assasah al-Rayyān, 2003), 127.

considered a true saint of Allāh ﷻ. This stands in contrast to Mernissi's claim that a saint of Allāh ﷻ possesses ultimate autonomy and can engage in acts considered sinful by *Sharī'ah* such as prostitution and raping men.

This study also acknowledges Mernissi's assertion that religion has, to some extent, been wielded as a tool by authorities. However, it disagrees with the idea that secularization is the solution, as Islam emphasizes itself as a *dīn* that encompasses all dimensions of life, including politics. This study also considers Mernissi's views on rebellions as radical, problematic and unorthodox. Scholars have discussed rebellion in Islam (*al-Bughāh*) and generally regard it as forbidden.⁸⁵¹ It is an obligation of the masses to obey the ruler in matters that fall under his command as to prevent greater harm to the *ummah*. However, it is to be noted that the prohibition of *al-Bughāh* specifically pertains to revolts involving violence and force and does not encompass peaceful demonstrations, activism and argumentative debates.

Mernissi's call to revisit the spirit of *Mu'tazilah* and adapt their openness and their embrace of a wide range of human knowledge worth to be taken into consideration, as long as it does not mean to simultaneously upholding *Mu'tazilah's* creeds that contradicts the creeds of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*. It is a commendable characteristic in Islam to embrace any beneficial knowledge and practices, even if it comes from deviant groups or non-Muslims. Allāh ﷻ has reminded us:⁸⁵²

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوْمِينَ لِلّٰهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ؕ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلٰٓى ءَآلٍ ؕ تَعَدَّلُوا ؕ اَعْدِلُوا هُوَ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى ؕ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ؕ﴾

O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allāh; indeed, Allāh is Acquainted with what you do.

⁸⁵¹ Mohammad Nidzam Abdul Kadir, "Keabsahan Ulil Amri Dengan Kaedah Rampasan Kuasa Dalam Aspek Maqasid Syariah," *Jurnal Hadhari* 6, no. 2 (2014): 86–88.

⁸⁵² *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, 5:8.

This verse of the *Qur'ān* demands a fair attitude and openness in objectively evaluating all arguments or views, even if they come from enemies, opponents, misguided groups, or non-Muslims. *Imām* al-Qurṭubī mentioned that this verse emphasizes the need to be just towards people you like or dislike, even towards non-Muslims.⁸⁵³ Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (better known as Hamka) further emphasized that being just and embracing goodness are true characteristics of a Muslim, even if being just benefits those you dislike and brings loss to those you like.⁸⁵⁴ This verse is not limited to justice in jurisdiction but also includes embracing any positive culture, practices, and knowledge that help to prosper humankind as a whole. Thus, this study agrees with Mernissi's call for Muslims to be rational and open to foreign ideas and knowledge, as long as they do not pertain to matters of creed and fundamental Islamic beliefs.

4.4 DECONSTRUCTION OF THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY INSTITUTION

Feminist ideology aims to dismantle the traditional family structure, with some taking an extreme stance by attributing a political significance to sex and viewing pregnancy and motherhood as primitive and the root cause of societal issues.⁸⁵⁵ Certain feminists also see heterosexual family setups and motherhood as socially and politically constructed, arguing that men, through the family system, have imposed norms in sexual activities and marriage to subjugate women. Islamic feminists, including Mernissi, to a certain extent, assert that the traditional family institution was founded on the subordination of women. This section will delve into Mernissi's critiques on the traditional family structure, particularly examining topics such as virginity, sanctity, wifeness, and motherhood in Islam. The chapter will also scrutinize Mernissi's arguments and provide a normative Islamic perspective on the matter.

⁸⁵³ Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsir Al-Qurṭhubi*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Al-Ḥifnāwī and Maḥmūd Ḥāmīd 'Uṣmān, vol. 6 (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2007), 264.

⁸⁵⁴ Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 4th ed., vol. 3 (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001), 1643.

⁸⁵⁵ Ellen Willis, "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism," in *No More Nice Girls: Countercultural Essays* (Wesleyan University Press, 1992), 117–50.

4.4.1 Virginity and Sanctity

When it comes to virginity and sanctity, Mernissi notes an unequal and distinct societal standard for men and women. She observes sexuality as a highly adaptable human characteristic, one that societies have consistently manipulated to achieve their objectives that often result in significant harm.⁸⁵⁶ Mernissi observes that sexual desire was extensively regulated by religious law in the early years of Islam. She argues that the connection in the Muslim mindset between sexuality and the *sharī'ah* has played a pivotal role in shaping the legal and ideological fundamentals of the Muslim family structure, consequently influencing relations between the sexes.

Mernissi critiques the disparity in the consequences of premarital intercourse for men and women. She highlights society's perception of the deflowered virgin as a lost woman, contrasting it with the man who emerges from the same experience as a legendary phoenix—purified, more virile, and more respected. Mernissi describes this phenomenon as a form of psychological schizophrenia, an all-encompassing contradiction so profound that neither individual men nor entire societies can accept it without risking self-destruction. She said:⁸⁵⁷

Men transform themselves into dirt to pollute their partners, and by the same token they turn the sexual act into an act of destruction and degradation. The deflowered virgin becomes a lost woman, but the man, like the legendary phoenix, emerges from the fray purer, more virile, better respected. In psychopathological terms, this is known as schizophrenia: a contradiction so total, so all-embracing that neither individual men nor whole societies can accept it as valid without destroying themselves.

Mernissi observe that the patriarchal sexual act is childish and rooted in the man's unresolved fear of insignificance relative to the life-giving mother. Mernissi argues that society has yet to mature enough to view sexual pleasure as a relationship between equals, instead society is using it as a mechanism for establishing hierarchy, enforcing power, and ultimately leading to dehumanization.⁸⁵⁸ Mernissi pointedly criticized the excessive significance placed by men on women's virginity, noting the emergence of sexual

⁸⁵⁶ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 37.

⁸⁵⁷ Mernissi, 38.

⁸⁵⁸ Mernissi, 38.

technologies like artificial virginity created to fulfil male ideals of womanhood. She highlights the hypocrisy wherein men seek brief sexual encounters before marriage but embark on a frantic quest for an untouched virgin once they decide to marry.⁸⁵⁹

According to Mernissi, the societal view that sexual experience is inherently degrading not only diminishes women but also tarnishes the reputation of any men connected to them through blood or marriage. To genuinely honour virginity, Mernissi suggests that men should be honest with themselves, abstaining from extramarital sexual contacts and refraining from pre-marital relations.⁸⁶⁰

Mernissi contends that the disparity in the notion of virginity stems from the ideological foundations of the traditional Muslim family, which confines women exclusively to monogamy and the regulation of sexual instincts. In contrast, men face no such restrictions; they are free to have as many partners as they desire. Alongside the allowance for four legal wives, each man possesses the right to maintain as many concubines as his financial means allow. Additionally, the practice of repudiation empowers him to change his legal sexual partners at will.⁸⁶¹

4.4.2 Wifhood and Motherhood

In her exploration of gender equality in Islam, Mernissi extensively focuses on the Islamic regulations concerning wifhood and motherhood. Broadly, she asserts that conventional Islamic directives pertaining to these roles are oppressive to women, forming the basis of male dominance in Muslim marriages.⁸⁶² Mernissi argues that the connection between sexuality and *sharī'ah* in the Muslim mindset has profoundly influenced the legal and ideological evolution of Muslim family structures. The permanence of family structures is presumed in Islam, to be divinely sanctioned and unalterable. She stated:⁸⁶³

⁸⁵⁹ Mernissi, 36.

⁸⁶⁰ Mernissi, 36.

⁸⁶¹ Mernissi, 40.

⁸⁶² Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 19.

⁸⁶³ Mernissi, 18.

The link in the Muslim mind between sexuality and the Sharī‘ah has shaped the legal and ideological history of the Muslim family structure and consequently of relations between the sexes. One of the most enduring characteristics of this history is that the family structure is assumed to be unchangeable, for it is considered divine.

According to Mernissi, the Islamic ideology of social order relegates women to a subservient position under the authority of other male family members.⁸⁶⁴ She asserts that Allāh ﷻ views women as a potentially destructive element and advocates for their spatial confinement, limiting their involvement to domestic matters. The access of females to non-domestic spaces thus is placed under male control.⁸⁶⁵ Mernissi argues that a respectable man, beyond acquiring economic power, is one who also exercises control over the sexual behaviour of his wife, daughters, and sisters, preventing any actions that could tarnish the family uprightness.⁸⁶⁶ In Islam, Mernissi contends, women experience spatial confinement and are materially provided for by the men who possess them, with this support exchanged for complete obedience and the fulfilment of sexual and reproductive duties.⁸⁶⁷

Mernissi contends that individuals within the domestic realm (husband, wife, and in-laws) are primarily viewed as sexual beings, defined by their anatomy rather than their faith.⁸⁶⁸ This group is not harmoniously united but rather divided into two categories: those who wield power, namely men, and those who yield, namely women. Mernissi argues that the principles governing the *ummah* are at odds with those guiding Muslim families. While the *ummah* emphasizes equality, reciprocity, aggregation, unity, communion, brotherhood, love, and trust, the Muslim family operates on principles of inequality, lack of reciprocity, segregation, separation, division, subordination, authority, and mistrust. She stated:⁸⁶⁹

The symbolism of sexual patterns certainly seems to reflect society’s hierarchy and power allocation in the Muslim order. Strict space boundaries divide Muslim society into two sub-universes: the universe of men (the *ummah*, the world religion and power) and the universe of women, the domestic world of sexuality and the family. The spatial division according

⁸⁶⁴ Mernissi, 19.

⁸⁶⁵ Mernissi, 19.

⁸⁶⁶ Mernissi, 149.

⁸⁶⁷ Mernissi, 169.

⁸⁶⁸ Mernissi, 139.

⁸⁶⁹ Mernissi, 138.

to sex reflects the division between those who hold authority and those who do not, those who hold spiritual powers and those who do not. The division is based on the physical separation of the *ummah* (the public sphere) from the domestic universe. These two universes of social interaction are regulated by antithetical concepts of human relations, one based on community, the other on conflict.

Mernissi strongly critiques polygamous marriage, suggesting that it implies a man's sexual drive necessitates involvement with multiple partners to alleviate his physical and emotional sexual tension.⁸⁷⁰ She argues that polygyny reinforces men's self-perception as primarily sexual beings, highlighting the sexual aspect of marital unions.⁸⁷¹ According to Mernissi, polygyny serves as a means for men to humiliate women by implying their inability to satisfy their husbands.⁸⁷² Additionally, she contends that the *Qur'ān*, which justifies polygyny, also grants men the unrestricted right to possess as many concubines as 'your right hand possess.'⁸⁷³ In her opposition to polygyny, Mernissi provides historical examples of women rejecting both polygyny and the veil.⁸⁷⁴ These instances are exemplified by the two prominent figures from Arab nobility, Sakīnah bint al-Ḥusayn and 'Ā'isha bint Ṭalḥa, who consistently appear in historical records.

Moreover, Mernissi critiques the power of repudiation or divorce that men hold over women in Islam. According to her, similar to polygyny, repudiation has an instinctual foundation. However, while polygyny addresses the intensity of the male's sexual drive, repudiation deals with its instability.⁸⁷⁵ Mernissi argues that repudiation serves to prevent men from losing interest in sexual relations due to boredom. Its purpose is to secure a constant supply of new sexual partners within the bounds of marriage, guarding against the temptation of engaging in extramarital relationships.⁸⁷⁶

She contends that the exclusive grant of polygyny and repudiation to men was an innovation in seventh-century Arabia.⁸⁷⁷ To support this assertion, she presents examples

⁸⁷⁰ Mernissi, 48.

⁸⁷¹ Mernissi, 48.

⁸⁷² Mernissi, 48.

⁸⁷³ Mernissi, 48.

⁸⁷⁴ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 83.

⁸⁷⁵ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 49.

⁸⁷⁶ Mernissi, 49.

⁸⁷⁷ Mernissi, 50.

of stories wherein the Prophet ﷺ was rejected and 'repudiated' by three women, incidents that Muslim historians attempted to disguise to avoid embarrassment to the Prophet's ﷺ history. Mernissi uses these instances to argue that women also have the ability to repudiate their spouses.⁸⁷⁸ She sees the practices of *tamlik* and *khulu'* as remnants of pre-Muslim sexual practices that empower women with self-determination and freedom in dissolving marriages.⁸⁷⁹

In the context of Morocco, Mernissi criticizes the Moroccan law on repudiation, pointing out the absence of any checks on a husband's desire to dissolve the marital bond. The judge's role, she argues, is merely to register the husband's desire without contesting it. She said:⁸⁸⁰

The striking thing about Moroccan divorce is that there is no check whatsoever on the desire of the husband to break the marital bond. The judge's role is limited simply to registering that desire, never contesting it.

Mernissi contends that both polygyny and repudiation serve as oppressive mechanisms for both genders. She asserts that any restrictions or limitations on a man's right to such practices, even if ostensibly aimed at women alone (such as seclusion), are essentially attacks on the male's potential for sexual fulfilment.⁸⁸¹ Mernissi's arguments on polygyny and repudiation align with her broader agenda of advocating for gender equality. Additionally, she criticizes the *'iddah* practices, viewing them as a harsh penalty for newly divorced women, especially those who are menopausal and face the additional disadvantage of being middle-aged in a society that highly values youthfulness.⁸⁸² While acknowledging the *'iddah* roles as important evidence of biological paternity, Mernissi also sees it as an Islamic restriction on female sexual rights, given the absence of a comparable period instituted for men.⁸⁸³

⁸⁷⁸ Mernissi, 53.

⁸⁷⁹ Mernissi, 61–62.

⁸⁸⁰ Mernissi, 119.

⁸⁸¹ Mernissi, 173.

⁸⁸² Mernissi, 63.

⁸⁸³ Mernissi, 81.

Mernissi vehemently opposes the concept of *nushūz*. She criticizes the negative definition of *nushūz* or *al-nāshiz* as women who rebel against their husband's will. Conversely, Mernissi views *nāshiz* positively as a declaration of a woman's individuality, a departure from merely aligning herself with someone else's will.⁸⁸⁴ She dejectedly observes how *nushūz*, within Islam, is often associated with *fitnah* or disorder. Mernissi argues that the concept of *nushūz* contradicts the definition of citizenship in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as it restricts the individual's will, irrespective of gender, as sovereign on the political scene.⁸⁸⁵ Mernissi advocates for Sakīnah's identity, emphasizing her rebellious stance against marital control and the right to express *nushūz*. She endeavours to emancipate Sakīnah's memory as a symbol for modern Muslim women. She said:⁸⁸⁶

She made one of her husbands sign a marriage contract that officially specified her right to *nushūz*, that rebellion against marital control that so tormented the *fuqahā'*. She claimed the right to be *nāshiz*, and paraded it, like her beauty and her talent, to assert the importance and vitality of women in the Arab tradition.

Interestingly, Mernissi observes a distinctive triangular dynamic between a husband, his wife, and his mother. She considers the man's mother or the wife's mother-in-law to be one of the significant hindrances to conjugal intimacy, especially when sons are overly involved with their mothers, leading to concerns about their masculinity and wariness of femininity. She said:⁸⁸⁷

In Muslim societies not only is the marital bond weakened and love for the wife discouraged, but his mother is the only woman a man is allowed to love at all, and this love is encouraged to take the form of lifelong gratitude.

Mernissi notes the influential role of elderly women, such as mothers-in-law, over younger individuals. Drawing from her interviews, Mernissi argues that in traditional families, it is the mother, not the son, who takes the lead in initiating marriages and making decisions about the creation of her son's new family, contrary to the official expectation for the son's father to play this role.⁸⁸⁸ She suggests that the intense involvement of elderly

⁸⁸⁴ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 193–94.

⁸⁸⁵ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 177.

⁸⁸⁶ Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 193–94.

⁸⁸⁷ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 121.

⁸⁸⁸ Mernissi, 122.

women in their sons' lives is driven by societal pressure on them to renounce their sexual selves and conjugal futures.⁸⁸⁹ Mernissi contends, with reference to Moroccan traditions, that in a traditional setting, a mother-in-law's involvement with her son can extend to preventing him from being alone with his wife.⁸⁹⁰

She asserts that the triangular relationship of mother, son, and wife acts as a trump card in the Muslim array of legal, ideological, and physical barriers, ultimately subordinating the wife to the husband and fostering mistrust, violence, and deceit in heterosexual relationships.⁸⁹¹ Mernissi also argues that some modern laws require the wife's submission to their mother-in-law.⁸⁹² Additionally, she suggests that the Islamic traditional family system institutionalizes an Oedipal split between love and sex in a man's life. Men are encouraged to love the woman with whom they cannot engage in sexual intercourse, their mothers, while being discouraged from lavishing affection on the woman with whom they do engage in sexual intercourse, their wives.⁸⁹³ Nonetheless, Mernissi points out that modern men and women now live more closely and interact more than ever before, partly due to the decline of factors such as the presence of the mother-in-law and sexual segregation.⁸⁹⁴

In a broader sense, Mernissi acknowledges the intricate religiopolitical dynamics within traditional Islamic families that lead to the oppression of wives. This intricate form of oppression finds support in official legislation rooted in religious influences. Mernissi argues that in numerous Muslim societies, female inferiority is not merely an ideological concept but is manifested through oppressive laws and practices.⁸⁹⁵ Specifically addressing Moroccan Family Law, Mernissi contends that the ongoing issue in Morocco and other Muslim societies is not just an ideology of female inferiority but a system of laws and customs that perpetuates women's subjugated status. Central to this issue are family laws founded on male authority. Despite the withdrawal of many institutions from the control of

⁸⁸⁹ Mernissi, 125.

⁸⁹⁰ Mernissi, 132.

⁸⁹¹ Mernissi, 135.

⁸⁹² Mernissi, 129.

⁸⁹³ Mernissi, 122.

⁸⁹⁴ Mernissi, 171.

⁸⁹⁵ Mernissi, 11.

religious law (such as business and finance), family laws have remained under its influence, with seventh-century laws based on male authority being reinstated in modern legislation.⁸⁹⁶

4.4.3 An Analysis from the Islamic Perspective

Mernissi's advocacy for a fair examination of the concepts of sanctity and virginity in Muslim society deserve consideration. She questions the unjust treatment of women on matters of sanctity, where women face shame if they lose their sanctity and virginity, while men are celebrated if they manage to take a girl's virginity. Mernissi's critique seems to be directed at the Moroccan community of her time, which exhibited this unfairness. Nevertheless, Islam as a religion requires both genders to adhere to the principles of sanctity for both men and women. Allāh ﷻ said:⁸⁹⁷

﴿ إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّامِينَ وَالصَّامَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴾

Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allāh often and the women who do so - for them Allāh has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.

In this verse, Allāh ﷻ places both men and women who safeguard their sanctity on equal footing in terms of rewards and position. In other verses, Allāh ﷻ initially instructs Muslim men to lower their gaze, followed by a directive for Muslim women to cover their private

⁸⁹⁶ Mernissi, 11.

⁸⁹⁷ Sūrah al-Aḥzāb, 33:35.

parts. Thus, the *Qur'ān* uniformly enjoins both men and women to lower their gaze and preserve their chastity. Allāh ﷻ said:⁸⁹⁸

﴿ قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴾

Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allāh is [fully] Aware of what they do.

Followed by this verse:⁸⁹⁹

﴿ وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاؤِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرَ أُولِي الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَىٰ عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴾

And tell the believing women to reduce (some) of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which (necessarily) appears thereof and to wrap (a portion of) their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment (i.e., beauty) except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess (i.e., slaves), or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allāh in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed.

Imām al-Qurṭubī, in his interpretation of this verse, emphasized the need for both men and women to protect their eyes and private parts from anything that could harm their chastity and dignity. Al-Qurṭubī also extensively discussed the legal rule of covering private parts

⁸⁹⁸ Sūrah al-Nūr, 24:30.

⁸⁹⁹ Sūrah al-Nūr, 24:31.

to maintain purity derived from this verse.⁹⁰⁰ Similarly, Hamka,⁹⁰¹ stressed the importance of men and women in guarding their senses to prevent uncontrolled lust and in choosing responsible ways to satisfy their desires, such as through marriage or steadfastness in fasting.⁹⁰² Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī, in his interpretation, also mentioned the obligation for men and women to avert their gaze from what is not permissible to see, including all things forbidden in *Sharī'ah* and anything that might lead to *fitnah*.⁹⁰³

The safeguarding of sanctity aims to ensure the future formation of familial institutions that are responsible, harmonious, and meaningful. Sex is not merely a temporary satisfaction but a continuation of human life, reproduction, and the duty of humans as Allāh's ﷺ vicegerent on Earth. In this understanding, Islam does not oppose the desires of men and women but provides a path that allows for the release of those desires in a controlled and responsible manner. This aligns with Islam's significant emphasis on protecting the rights and lineage of descendants, as expressed in the five objectives of *Sharī'ah*—protecting religion, life, descendants, property, and reason.⁹⁰⁴ As a result, Islam advocates for marriages built on the principles of *ma'rūf* and kindness.

Islam prohibits premarital sexual intercourse and grants both men and women the right to choose their spouses. Each individual is required to have a clear intention of a marriage proposal and acceptance, which either party can propose and initiate the marriage. Consequently, there are no issues regarding sanctity, as both are given the freedom to independently choose their spouses and be responsible for their choices. Mernissi's generalization that all men are predatory and take pride in destroying the chastity of women is merely her assumption, perhaps influenced by her community. It is not based on Islamic

⁹⁰⁰ Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsir Al-Qurṭhubī*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Al-Ḥifnāwī and Maḥmūd Ḥāmīd 'Uṭsmān, vol. 12 (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2007), 572.

⁹⁰¹ Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah.

⁹⁰² Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 4th ed., vol. 18 (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001), 4924.

⁹⁰³ Wahbah Mustafa Al-Zuhaylī, *Tafsir Al-Munir*, 3rd ed., vol. 9 (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2018), 505.

⁹⁰⁴ Ibrāhīm 'ibn Musā 'ibn Muḥammad Al-Shāṭibī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt Fi Uṣūl Al-Fiqh*, ed. Abū 'Ubaydah Mashūr ibn Ḥasan, vol. 2 (Dār 'Ibn 'Affān, 1997), 20.

teachings; on the contrary, Islam reminds both men and women to safeguard their honour and emphasizes that virtuous individuals will naturally attract each other. Allāh ﷻ said.⁹⁰⁵

﴿ الْحَبِيبَاتُ لِلْحَبِيبِينَ وَالْحَبِيبُونَ لِلْحَبِيبَاتِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ
أُولَئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴾

Wicked women are for wicked men, and wicked men are for wicked women. And virtuous women are for virtuous men, and virtuous men are for virtuous women. The virtuous are innocent of what the wicked say. They will have forgiveness and an honourable provision.

Mernissi's attempt to link women's monogamy to the conflicting perspectives between men and women on sanctity and virginity lacks strong evidence and does not demonstrate a clear causation. Additionally, she portrays polygyny negatively, characterizing it as oppressive and a tormenting tool used by husbands on their wives. In doing so, she appears to forget or downplay the concept of justice in Islam. Polygyny in Islam necessitates justice, encompassing fair conduct by the husband across all dimensions, including economic and interpersonal treatment. The practice of polygyny is subject to various regulations and ethical considerations to address the issues Mernissi highlighted. Furthermore, monogamy is not recommended if a man fears he cannot uphold justice among his wives and is forbidden if he believes that practicing polygyny would lead to oppressing his wives. In some countries such as Malaysia, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran, and Singapore, court permission for polygyny is required to ensure the husband's ability to maintain justice.⁹⁰⁶ Allāh ﷻ emphasizes this justice in *Sūrah al-Nisā'*:⁹⁰⁷

﴿ وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَقْسُطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ
وَرُبْعًا فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ذَلِكَ آذَنًا أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ﴾

If you fear you might fail to give orphan women their 'due' rights 'if you were to marry them', then marry other women of your choice—two, three, or four. But if you are afraid you will fail to maintain justice, then 'content

⁹⁰⁵ Sūrah al-Nūr, 24:26.

⁹⁰⁶ Raihanah Haji Abdullah, "Poligami Di Malaysia," *Jurnal Syariah* 5, no. 2 (1997): 170, <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JS/issue/view/625>.

⁹⁰⁷ Sūrah al-Nisā', 4:3.

yourselves with' one or those 'bondwomen' in your possession. This way you are less likely to commit injustice.

Mernissi also considered repudiation as oppressive, but it becomes challenging to fully accept her argument on the oppressive nature of repudiation when she herself acknowledges the practices of *tamlik* and *khulu'* in Islam. Both *tamlik* and *khulu'* are systems quite similar to repudiation, granting the wife the power of self-determination and freedom in dissolving marriages, just as repudiation does. Perhaps, one aspect of Mernissi's critique that warrants consideration is the absence of a monitoring device on husband's desire to dissolve the marital bond, allowing men to repudiate women and divorce them impulsively. Nevertheless, similar to polygyny, Islam provides regulations and rulings on repudiation to safeguard it against misuse. Islam put limitation on the number of repudiations allowed, specifying when it is allowed to be proclaimed, along with the requirement to have a judge's ruling for it to be legally manifested (in some countries).⁹⁰⁸

Contrary to Mernissi's assertion about the unfairness of *'iddah* and the absence of a similar period for men, the response lies in establishing evidence of paternity, as even Mernissi herself acknowledged. According to Hamka, this is why husbands are prohibited from repudiating their wives during their menstrual period, and they must wait until the pure phase to ensure the wife's womb is free from the husband's seed.⁹⁰⁹ Islam emphasizes the importance of preserving parentage and lineage, considering it one of the five essential necessities (*al-dharūriyyāt al-khams*) that must be safeguarded for the well-being of humanity.⁹¹⁰ The *'iddah* also serves to protect the wife, with the husband remaining responsible for providing food, shelter, and clothing throughout this period. Additionally, the *'iddah* period offers a time of calm and reflection for both spouses, allowing them to reconsider and potentially mend their marriage. In Islam, *'iddah* is a system designed to safeguard the spouses, their marriage and the lineage of their children. It also ensures the husband fulfils his responsibilities and obligations to his wife and encourages contemplation for both partners before the divorce becomes finalized.

⁹⁰⁸ Abdullah, "Poligami Di Malaysia," 170.

⁹⁰⁹ Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, vol. 2 (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1987), 205.

⁹¹⁰ Sa'ad Yūsuf Maḥmūd Abū 'Azīz, *Ādāb Al-Hayāh Al-Zawjiyyah Fī Al-Islām* (al-Qahīrah: Maktabah al-Tawfiqiyah, n.d.), 315.

Mernissi observes the concept of *nushūz* for Muslim women as an obstacle to self-determination and autonomy. However, Mernissi overlooks that *nushūz* is merely a concept used to identify negative characteristics, determined by religion (not by the husband), and must be proclaimed by a judge rather than deliberately labelled. Furthermore, the Islamic concept of *nushūz* is not exclusive to wives but also applies to husbands. For instance, a husband can be considered *nushūz* if he fails to provide his wife with her rights, neglects responsibilities both outwardly and inwardly, such as not providing *nafaqah*, and treats her with cruelty. This is as stated in *al-Fiqh al-Manhājī* where, “A husband who oppresses his wife and not liking her, like not giving her the right of the night, *nafaqah* or did violent acts upon her by words or actions, the wife should give advice to her husband and remind him of his responsibility.”⁹¹¹ *Shaykh* ʾIbrāhīm Baijūriy explains the *nushūz* of a husband in his book, stating it involves not fulfilling obligatory responsibilities like treating the wife well, providing *nafaqah*, clothes, and other basic needs. If a husband exhibits bad behaviour, including unjustified physical abuse, it is permissible to file a complaint with a judge for *taʿzīr* punishment.⁹¹² Thus, *nushūz* is a concept applicable to both genders, based on their behaviour, and serves to ensure that one's authority or freedom does not extend to the point of harming others.

In response to Mernissi's assertion that the concept of *nushūz* in Islam contradicts the provision of individual freedom as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), this study seeks to underscore that by relying on the UDHR's definition of human rights, Mernissi has inadvertently undermined her own appreciation of cultural diversity and the intersectionality of human experiences.

Critics have also contended that the UDHR is ethnocentric, attempting to impose Western culture as universal values for all societies worldwide. For instance, the American Anthropological Association, in 1947, opposed the idea of the universality of the proposed declaration of human rights, arguing that different societies possess distinct ethical and

⁹¹¹ Muṣṭafā Al-Khin, Muṣṭafā Al-Bughā, and ʿAlī Al-Sharbajī, *Al-Fiqh Al-Manhajīyy ʿalā Madhhabi Al-ʿImām Al-Shāfiʿī*, vol. 4 (Damshiq: Dār al-Qalam li al-ʿUabāʿah wa al-Nashru wa al-Tawzīʿ, 1992), 106.

⁹¹² Ibrāhīm bin ʿAhmad Al-Bājuriyy, *Hāshiyah Al-Bājuriyy*, ed. Mahmūd Ṣāliḥ Al-Ḥadīdī (Lubnan: Dār al-Minhāj, 2016), 2251.

belief systems.⁹¹³ In response to the UDHR, various international communities have developed alternative human rights declarations that reflect their cultural and religious perspectives such as The African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), issued in 1981 by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI), released in 1990 by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Arab Charter of Human Rights (ACHR), released in 1994 by the League of Arab States (LAS), and The ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD), adopted in 2012 by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).⁹¹⁴

Even prior to the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights, Islam had already recognized human rights within the framework of *Sharī'ah*. Islam posits that freedom is a manifestation of liberation from all forms of ownership and devotion except to Allāh ﷻ. Allāh created humans and gave them a special status above other creatures, honouring them with human dignity (*al-karāmah al-insāniyyah*) to prepare them as rulers (*khalīfah*) in this world. In Islam, human rights are achieved through *al-ḥurriyyah al-fīṭriyyah*, meaning freedom through adhering to one's natural disposition. Al-Būṭī noted that only by fulfilling the natural disposition of humans as servants of Allāh ﷻ can human dignity be fully realized.⁹¹⁵

The Islamic concept of human rights stands in contrast to the Western notion of human rights, which centres on humans as the ultimate reference point. Western human rights, as embodied in the UDHR, are anthropocentric and secular, focusing solely on humans as the sole proprietors of themselves without accountability to Allāh ﷻ. Therefore, the fundamental difference between human rights in Islam and in the West lies in their source of reference: Islam bases human rights on divine principles, whereas the West bases them on human-centred, secular values.

⁹¹³ American Anthropological Association, "Statement on Human Rights," *American Anthropologist* 49, no. 4 (1947): 539–43.

⁹¹⁴ Nik Muhd Marzuki Hj. Muhd Nor, Raihanah Hj. Abdullah, and Wan Zainira Wan Bakar, "Perbezaan Pendekatan Hak Asasi Manusia: Suatu Sorotan Literatur," *Journal of Shariah Law Research* 5, no. 1 (2020): 9.

⁹¹⁵ Muḥammad Sa'īd Ramaḍān Al-Būṭī, *Ḥurriyyat Al-Insān Fī Ḍil 'Ubūdiyyatihi Lillah* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir, 2006), 119.

Mernissi's criticism of how Islamic family structures and social order seemingly relegate women to a subservient position under the authority of other male family members appears one-sided. Following her logic, men could similarly be viewed as a 'slave' of their wives and families due to their responsibility in providing them housing, food, and protection. Nonetheless, ultimately it must be noted that subservient relationships in the family is not a part of Islamic teaching. Islam emphasizes subservience only to Allāh ﷻ and encourages mutual love and respect between a husband and wife. The relationship between spouses should not be based on enmity but of peaceful interaction, compassion and love that results in tranquillity, contentment and comfort. Allāh ﷻ said:⁹¹⁶

﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا تَغَشَّاهَا حَمَلَتْ حَمْلًا خَفِيًّا فَمَرَّتْ بِهِ فَلَمَّا أَثْقَلَتْ دَعَوَا اللَّهَ رَبَّهُمَا لَئِنْ آتَيْتَنَا صَالِحًا لَنُكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴾

He is the One Who created you from a single soul, then from it made its spouse so he may find comfort in her. After he had been united with her, she carried a light burden that developed gradually. When it grew heavy, they prayed to Allāh, their Lord, "If you grant us good offspring, we will certainly be grateful.

Although the husband is granted a degree of authority within the family, this does not permit him to assume a master's role or declare superiority over his wife. This authority is accompanied by responsibilities and is intended to ensure the protection, harmony, and direction of the family. Al-Marāghī posited that men possess this authority due to two primary virtues: a natural virtue (*fiṭriy*) characterized by physical strength and cognitive capabilities, and an acquired virtue (*kasbiy*) defined by their ability to earn a livelihood and work.⁹¹⁷ Muḥammad 'Abduh asserted that the sole advantage men have over women is their physical strength, which aids in providing and protecting the family.⁹¹⁸ Consequently, men are tasked with the responsibility of providing for women and leading the household. Additionally, husbands are obligated to fulfil various rights towards their wives as outlined

⁹¹⁶ Ṣūrah al-'A'rāf, 7:189.

⁹¹⁷ Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Al-Marāghī, *Tafsīr Al-Marāghī*, trans. Bahrūn Abu Bakar and Hery Noer Aly Semarang (Semarang: PT. Karya Toha Putra, 1986), 40–41.

⁹¹⁸ Al-Sayyid Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍhā, *Tafsīr Al-Manār*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1973), 68–70.

in the *Qur'ān* and the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet ﷺ. These rights include the right to dowry, maintenance, good communication, guidance and instruction, marital property, among others.

Scholars hold various opinions on the meaning of *Qiwāmah* (generally understood as household leadership) as stated in *Sūrah al-Nisā'*, verse 34, which is often cited as evidence that Islam assigns different statuses to men and women. Nevertheless, Al-Sh'arāwī considers the roles of men and women within the system of *Qiwāmah* to be complementary. Men efficiently utilize their physical strength and resoluteness to seek sustenance and cope with physical hardships, while women utilize their qualities of affection, meekness, and emotional sensitivity to meet familial needs.⁹¹⁹ This perspective is supported by scientific studies indicating biological differences in cognitive function between males and females. According to the “empathizing-systemizing” theory, men's brains are generally more dominant in analysing, comprehending, and assembling based on systemic processes, whereas women's brains are more dominant in empathy and emotional processing.⁹²⁰

Mernissi's claim that Allāh ﷻ views women as potentially destructive elements, justifying their spatial confinement and limited involvement in domestic matters, lacks basis. In reality, both genders are equally treated with rules and regulations to align their desires in a righteous way. Mernissi highlighted the story of the governor's wife desiring Yusuf ﷺ, emphasizing the *Qur'ān's* portrayal of the destructive elements of women. It is important to note that the story also highlighted the cunningness and destructive elements of Yusuf's ﷻ brothers, all of whom are males. The issue here is not about gender but a highlight of human desires that can manifest with any gender and position. Additionally,

⁹¹⁹ Muḥammad Mutawallī Al-Sha'rāwī, *Al-Khawāṭir*, vol. 3 (al-Qāhirah: Akhbār al-Yawm, 1997), 2193.

⁹²⁰ The empathizing–systemizing (E–S) theory, created by Simon Baron-Cohen, explains differences in how men and women think and the basis of autism. It uses two measures: the Empathy Quotient (EQ) for empathic thinking and the Systemizing Quotient (SQ) for systematic thinking. The theory suggests that people with autism have trouble with empathy but are often good at systemizing. See Simon Baron-Cohen, Michael Lombardo, and Helen Tager-Flusberg, *Understanding Other Minds: Perspectives from Developmental Social Neuroscience*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 102–5.

Mernissi should also consider the story of Lut ﷺ in the *Qur'ān*, which highlights the wickedness of the Sodom men while also showcasing the wickedness of Lut's ﷺ own wife and son. Both men and women have the potential to be good and bad, Allāh ﷻ said:⁹²¹

﴿وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا﴾

And by the soul and ‘the One’ Who fashioned it. Then with ‘the knowledge of’ right and wrong inspired it! Successful indeed is the one who purifies their soul, and doomed is the one who corrupts it!

Islam does not prescribe fixed, inherent labels based on gender; rather, it evaluates individuals based on their characteristics and deeds. Individuals, irrespective of being male or female, who exhibit negative attitudes and deeds are labelled negatively, while those who display positive attitudes and deeds are labelled positively. Moreover, these characteristics are not permanent; they can change when an individual adopts positive attitudes and deeds and discards negative ones.

Mernissi also observes a distinctive triangular dynamic between the husband, the wife, and the husband’s mother in Moroccan custom where the mother become queen of the family controlling the relationship between both spouses. Mernissi admitted that this should not be the mother but the father of the husband who should have the larger role in the family. Nonetheless, Islam discourage outer intervention of family members including from the in-laws or even one’s own mother and father. Husband should be independent and need to provide accommodation for his family. The elders of the family should provide guidance and not intervention to the young couple. Simultaneously, on other hand, the young couple should respect and be good to their parents including the in-laws. Familial relationships should become a means and place of refuge, meeting and residence. Under the auspices of the household, there is a meeting between hearts, which is a meeting established on the base of friendship, love, mutual sympathy, mutual protection, mutual kindness, guardianship and preserving self-purity. That's why the *Qur'ān* describes the

⁹²¹ Ṣūrah al-Shams, 91:7-10.

household with a delicate and soft picture, which is a picture of a relationship that radiates from a sense of love and kindness. Allāh ﷻ said:⁹²²

﴿ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً
وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴾

And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.

In the verse above, Allāh ﷻ employs three key terms to conceptualize the nature of marriage: *sakīnah* (peace), derived from the word root *litaskunū*, *mawaddah* (love and affection), and *rahmah* (mercy). *Imām* al-Ṭabarī noted that the establishment of a marital bond between husband and wife fosters a sense of *mawaddah* between the partners. This *mawaddah* subsequently evolves into *rahmah*, a compassionate feeling that motivates them to act kindly towards each other.⁹²³ Al-Rāzī further elucidated this concept by illustrating that when a father sees his child hungry or sick, he strives to provide the best food and treatment for the child, driven by the *rahmah* he feels for them.⁹²⁴

Although the verse primarily addresses the relationship between husband and wife, an indirect interpretation suggests that peace, love, affection, and mercy are intended for the family as a whole. ‘Abdullāh Nāsih ‘Ulwān provided a significant interpretation of *rahmah*, explaining that it represents the compassion Allāh ﷻ instils in both parents to educate and raise their children. He emphasized that parents should be compassionate and gentle towards their children, as this feeling is crucial in the educational process and the formation of a child's identity.⁹²⁵ Without a sense of mercy, parents may become harsh and unkind, leading their children to deviate from their innate nature. Conversely, compassionate parents will nurture compassionate and loving children, who in turn will treat others, including their spouses and in-laws, with compassion and love. Compassionate

⁹²² Ṣūrah al-Rūm, 30:21.

⁹²³ Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ Al-Bayān ‘an Ta’wīl Āy Al-Qur’ān*, vol. 10 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1999), 176.

⁹²⁴ Fakhr al-Dīn Al-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Kabīr*, vol. 2 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 100.

⁹²⁵ ‘Abdullāh Nāsih ‘Ulwān, *Tarbiyyah Al-Awḷād Fī Al-Islām*, vol. 1 (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Salām lī al-Ṭiba‘ah wa al-Nashr, 1985), 54.

parents will also reciprocate their children's love with mercy, creating an ecosystem of love and mercy within the family.

Acknowledging Mernissi's criticism, this study concurs that many family disputes arise due to the intervention of mothers-in-law, as supported by existing research.⁹²⁶ However, this intervention is primarily cultural and is not rooted in Islamic teachings. Mernissi attempted to link Islamic teachings, which emphasize a son's devotion to his mother, to the Oedipus complex as a cause for these issues. However, her assertion is merely theoretical and lacks empirical and experimental evidence, thus failing to demonstrate any causation or correlation. Furthermore, the Oedipus complex has been widely criticized by many psychologists and psychiatrists for its lack of empirical basis.⁹²⁷ Consequently, Mernissi's claim that the Oedipus complex causes a triangular negative relationship between the husband, the wife, and the husband's mother lacks substantial evidence. In Islam, as previously mentioned, relationships between spouses and their in-laws should be a responsible two-way dynamic, with everyone equally contributing to maintaining family harmony and fostering love. Nonetheless, credit is due to Mernissi for shedding light on this issue.

4.5 LAW AND CULTURAL CONFLICT

Both feminists and Islamic feminists contend that traditional laws and cultures have been shaped by the patriarchal norms of their era. They argue that contemporary power structures are influenced and perpetuated by patriarchal institutions and cultures that reinforce male superiority while subjugating females. Discussions within this framework often touch on

⁹²⁶ Astri Dwi Andriani, Destiana Husnul Chotimah, and Ahmad Fauzi Yuzillah, "Strategi Komunikasi Menantu Perempuan Dengan Mertua Perempuan Dalam Menghadapi Konflik Keluarga," *IKOMIK: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Dan Informasi* 3, no. 1 (2023): 58–69.

⁹²⁷ The Oedipus complex posits that young boys experience sexual desire towards their mothers and perceive their fathers as rivals for their mother's affection. For refutation of this theory, see Joseph M.D. Wolpe and Stanley M.A. Rachman, "Psychoanalytic 'Evidence': A Critique Based on Freud's Case of Little Hans," *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 131, no. 2 (1960): 135–48; Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, *Homicide* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 150–55.

conflicts in law and culture that have had adverse effects on women, particularly in areas such as extremism, violence (including militarism), and reproductive rights and healthcare.

Instances of militarism, including war, disproportionately impact women and children, with studies indicating that nearly 90% of war casualties are civilians, predominantly women and children.⁹²⁸ Within the realm of domestic violence, research has shown that approximately 30% of women who opt for abortions cite abuse as a primary reason for their decision.⁹²⁹ Reproductive rights encompass legal provisions safeguarding individuals' freedom and protection in matters of sexual and reproductive health. However, the implementation of these rights can vary across countries and involve aspects such as abortion rights, birth control, female genital mutilation issues, access to high-quality medical treatment, and the right to obtain accurate information on reproductive diseases and technology.⁹³⁰

This section will explore Mernissi's perspectives on law and cultural conflicts, with a specific focus on topics such as extremism, violence, and women's reproductive rights and healthcare in Islam. Additionally, it will critically examine Mernissi's arguments and provide an analysis from a normative Islamic standpoint.

4.5.1 Extremism and Violence

Mernissi firmly opposed extremism and violence, tackling related issues across diverse fields such as family law, international relations, and Islamic fundamentalism. She underscored the interplay between the state, democracy, dictatorship, and the emergence of extremism and violence. Notably, she faced staunch opposition from extremists, notably recalling a 1984 incident in Penang, Malaysia, where she was baselessly accused by an

⁹²⁸ “Stockholm International Peace Research Institute,” in *SIPRI Yearbook 1999* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1–10.

⁹²⁹ T.W.; Leung et al., “A Comparison of the Prevalence of Domestic Violence between Patients Seeking Termination of Pregnancy and Other Gynecology Patients,” *International Journal Gynaecol Obstet* 77, no. 1 (2002): 47–54; Kaye D., “Domestic Violence among Women Seeking Post-Abortion Care,” *International Journal Gynaecol Obstet* 75, no. 3 (2003): 323.

⁹³⁰ R. J. Cook; M.F Fathalla, “Advancing Reproductive Rights Beyond Cairo and Beijing,” *International Family Planning Perspectives* 22, no. 3 (1996): 115–21.

uninformed individual of presenting ideas without proper sources, despite her assurance of having valid sources that went unchecked by the accuser.⁹³¹

Within the realm of family law, Mernissi scrutinized the insufficient oversight of domestic violence against women. She advocated the perspective that, in dealing with unruly wives, physical discipline with no lasting harm is considered the final recourse, a notion proposed by the Prophet ﷺ. She stated:⁹³²

The duty of the man to command his wife is embodied in his right to correct her by physical beating. The *Qur'ān* itself recommends this measure, but only as a last resort. If his wife rebels, the husband is instructed to scold her and then to stop having sexual intercourse with her. Only if these measures fail should he beat her to make her obey. The right of correction, which was thought likely to be used to excess by husbands, was restricted by the Prophet (who was very kind to his wives) to 'decent' proportions.

Mernissi also contended that the Muslim sexual dynamic imposes a greater psychological toll on men in seeking sexual satisfaction compared to women. This distinction arises from societal conditioning, where women accept sexual restrictions as 'natural,' while men are instilled with expectations of thorough sexual fulfilment.⁹³³ The differing socialization of men and women contributes to their distinct approaches to handling sexual frustration.

Mernissi observes the contemporary state's shift in diminishing male authority within the family by facilitating employment and education opportunities for women—roles traditionally assumed by men in the traditional system. Mernissi suggests that the decline in male authority could lead to the emergence of disgruntled men who may try to compensate for their perceived inadequacy by exerting oppression over their families. She suggested:⁹³⁴

In the short run the reduced power of the head of the family produces tension in the family such that resentful males are likely to compensate by oppressing their wives and children. But in the long run, it is likely to generate increasing male-female rapprochement in the face of the common and increasingly similar preoccupations of their daily reality.

⁹³¹ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 193.

⁹³² Mernissi, 111.

⁹³³ Mernissi, 173.

⁹³⁴ Mernissi, 174.

Despite acknowledging the potential short-term harm, Mernissi argues that reducing the authority of the head of the family could eventually foster compromise between men and women over time. She suggests that this shift has already resulted in enhanced collaboration among young couples, reinforcing the marital bond in response to the limitations of the system.⁹³⁵

Mernissi observes that the first Gulf War exposed the influence of petrodollar-driven Islam and the investments of oil-rich countries, notably led by Saudi Arabia, in bolstering conservative and extreme right-wing movements. This strategic support aims to undermine civil society, with the veiling of women playing a crucial role.⁹³⁶ From the Gulf War, Mernissi discerned that the subordination of women occurs as collateral damage in a larger war—the battle against democracy orchestrated by Arab *amirs* and *shaykhs*.⁹³⁷ Women become victims due to their disorganization and powerlessness. Mernissi illustrates numerous historical instances of Muslim rulers oppressing women to quell political crises, hunger riots, or revolts, even when women have no direct involvement.⁹³⁸

Mernissi argues that veiling and terrorism share common ground, thriving in environments where self-expression is brutally suppressed, and politicians deliberately undermine democratic processes for their survival.⁹³⁹ She critiques the dual nature of Arab countries that introduce reservations or amendments to international conventions, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, incorporating *Shari'ah* aspects that she believe are clashing with international definitions of equality. She stated:⁹⁴⁰

What do we understand from reading the text of this reservation? Not much, since the equality ensured in Article 16 in no way "prejudices" the *Shari'ah* if that is interpreted to guarantee a "just balance." It is precisely this lack of clarity which characterizes the modern Arab state and which has led to confusion and the fundamentalist violence that we know today.

⁹³⁵ Mernissi, 174.

⁹³⁶ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, viii.

⁹³⁷ Mernissi, vii.

⁹³⁸ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 154–55.

⁹³⁹ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, xi.

⁹⁴⁰ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 66.

She asserts that Islam has sacrificed and rejected individual freedom and liberty to ensure peace and absolute justice for all—men and women, masters and slaves, Arabs and non-Arabs.⁹⁴¹

Mernissi also condemns the allocation of funds by Arab countries towards militarism, advocating instead for the redirection of these resources to address youth unemployment, including women.⁹⁴² By establishing economic and educational foundations for the youth, Mernissi asserts that societal issues like crime, violence, and extremism can be effectively tackled. She argues that a strong nation is one where its people are equipped with education and high-tech skills, rather than a population armed and ready for conflict.⁹⁴³ Mernissi argues that women were the most fervent voices protesting against war.⁹⁴⁴ She also recognizes Islam's efforts to eradicate violence by abolishing the *jahīliyyah* goddess system and asserts that the historical practice of child killings during the time of *jahīliyyah* was intricately linked to the sacrifices made for the *jahīliyyah* goddess.⁹⁴⁵ Mernissi also sees technology, such as Satellite TV and other information technologies, as essential tools in combating extremism.⁹⁴⁶

4.5.2 Reproductive Rights and Healthcare

Mernissi's exploration of reproductive rights and healthcare was limited, primarily focusing on the imperative of effectively managing economic and educational resources amid the burgeoning Arab population during her era. She argues that addressing the population explosion and resource scarcity causing extreme poverty in the Arab world should not involve coercing women to take contraceptive pills. Instead, Mernissi advocates empowering women to participate in building their economic and political autonomy through education.⁹⁴⁷

⁹⁴¹ Mernissi, 110.

⁹⁴² Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, viii.

⁹⁴³ Mernissi, 8.

⁹⁴⁴ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 2.

⁹⁴⁵ Mernissi, 120.

⁹⁴⁶ Mernissi, xx.

⁹⁴⁷ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, xiii.

Mernissi criticized those who wrongly placed blame on women for the population explosion, asserting that women were unfairly accused of having too many children, leading to insufficient funds for adequate health and education facilities and high unemployment rates. In her view, this responsibility should fall on the states rather than individual women. She sarcastically said:⁹⁴⁸

Once again, women are the source of all problems. They it is who thwart the projects conceived and constructed by a wonderfully caring state. Arab women, particularly those who have curiously taken it upon themselves to remain illiterate (you get the impression listening to these sorts of ideas that women do everything within their power, despite the efforts of the ministries concerned, to stay illiterate), are the source and cause of all obstacles to development. Inadequate health and educational facilities are all, like unemployment, stealthily engineered by women.

Mernissi points out that Arab women, unlike their Western counterparts, appear to resist state efforts to promote contraceptive methods. She attributes this resistance to the concepts of harem and *hijāb*, which dictate a division of labour between the state and the head of the family. Only the head of the family, or harem, possesses exclusive rights over the bodies of women, maintaining a monopoly on their sexuality and reproduction. Mernissi also notes that antenatal care programs in Muslim states are predominantly monopolized by male elites, characterizing it as a direct intervention into the harem—a domain traditionally reserved for women and their sexuality.⁹⁴⁹

Mernissi argues that the most effective solution to address the population explosion in the Arab world is through the education of women, emphasizing it as the optimal form of birth control. She cites a statistical study demonstrating a correlation between women's education and the number of children they have. She also stated:⁹⁵⁰

If these states had developed comprehensive global strategies to fight female illiteracy in the eighties, instead of financing orders of obedience marketed as religious tradition, the problem of demographic pressure would also have been solved.

⁹⁴⁸ Mernissi, 46–52.

⁹⁴⁹ Mernissi, 46–52.

⁹⁵⁰ Mernissi, xiii.

According to Mernissi, educated women are more likely to plan their futures with a focus on quality of life for themselves and their children, leading to a reduction in pregnancies. Additionally, she criticizes the undue importance placed on women's virginity by men, pointing out the existence of various sexual technologies, such as artificial virginity, created to fulfil male ideals of womanhood.⁹⁵¹ Mernissi contends that many Moroccan women, including herself, advocate for egalitarian partnerships and control over their own reproductive capacities, challenging traditional family systems.⁹⁵²

4.5.3 An Analysis from the Islamic Perspective

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, extremism is defined as "the quality or state of being extreme" or "advocacy of extreme measures or views."⁹⁵³ Extremism is a term derived from the word "extreme," which means reaching a state of high or the highest degree. The suffix "-ism" is added to describe the quality of a situation that is at a high or extreme level.⁹⁵⁴ An extremist is someone who adheres to extreme views or ideologies and is then translated through fanatical, radical, and dogmatic actions.⁹⁵⁵ Based on this root word, it can be concluded that the meaning of extremism involves views or ideologies, acts or extreme behaviour of individuals or groups that have a tendency to damage individuals, society, and institutions or inflict violence. Islam is against any form of extremism, as Allāh ﷻ has reminded in *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*:⁹⁵⁶

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَحْرِمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴾

O believers! Do not forbid the good things which Allāh has made lawful for you, and do not transgress. Indeed, Allāh does not like transgressors.

⁹⁵¹ Mernissi, 36.

⁹⁵² Mernissi, *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women*, 1989, 7–13.

⁹⁵³ "Extremism," Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/extremism>.

⁹⁵⁴ Kartini Aboo Talib @ Gapar Khalid, Muhammad Helmy Abd., and Ahmad Munawar Ismail, "Ekstremisme: Maksud Dan Konteks Keganasan," *Jebat: Malaysian Journal of History, Politics & Strategic Studies* 46, no. 2 (2019): 151–52.

⁹⁵⁵ Khalid, Abd., and Ismail, 151–52.

⁹⁵⁶ *Sūrah al- Mā'idah*, 5:87.

Hamka, in his interpretation of this verse, emphasizes the importance of avoiding extremism and excess in both life and religion. He advises against emulating priests who entirely neglect their worldly rights and responsibilities, as well as those who become excessively indulgent, forgetting their duties to the hereafter.⁹⁵⁷ Allāh ﷻ frequently warns against transgression, as exemplified in *Sūrah al-Baqarah*, verse 190, and *Sūrah al-A'raf*, verse 55.

Extremism is considered a negative aspect in the Islamic perspective on ethics, while the commendable virtue of moderation that was prevalent throughout Islamic history is highly valued and promoted. The concept of moderation, known as *wasatiyyah*, entails adhering to principles of justice, tolerance, and dignity.⁹⁵⁸ It involves promoting what is right and discouraging what is wrong. *Wasatiyyah* embodies the essence of "justice" or "*al-'adālah*," ensuring that everything is placed in its rightful and appropriate position. This principle extends to granting individuals their rightful entitlements, such as giving women their as rights as advocated by Islamic teachings, which encourages providing equal opportunities in education, economics, and politics.

It is crucial to recognize that the categorizations of Muslim moderates, fundamentalists, and radicals are often framed within a predominant Western paradigm. This lens tends to label secularized and westernized Muslims as moderates, characterized by an inclusive worldview, while traditional Muslims are often labelled as fundamentalists due to their perceived exclusive stance. Additionally, Muslims who oppose Western and non-Islamic intellectual and geopolitical dominance are frequently branded as radicals or even militants.⁹⁵⁹ When examining Mernissi's attempt to associate veiling with terrorism, it becomes evident that this effort is influenced by the Western perspective rather than being approached from an Islamic standpoint. However, Mernissi's critique of certain Muslim states, which exploit religion to suppress civil society and misallocate budgets to trivial

⁹⁵⁷ HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 2001, 3:1845–55.

⁹⁵⁸ Muhammad Haniff Hassan, "Wasatiyyah as Explained by Prof. Muhammad Kamal Hassan: Justice, Excellence and Balance," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 6, no. 2 (2014): 30.

⁹⁵⁹ Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, "Containing Muslim Extremism and Radicalism," *Sari - International Journal of the Malay World and Civilisation* 28, no. 1 (2010): 243–44.

matters, holds validity. Such concerns warrant thorough and comprehensive field investigations.

Mernissi's critique of the divergent interpretations of equality between international conventions such as CEDAW and the *Sharī'ah* is valid. In the *Sharī'ah* perspective, equality is intricately linked with the concept of justice derived from revealed texts, rather than based on human assumptions. From an Islamic standpoint, justice is a fundamental aspect of human rights, with one of the primary purposes of the *Qur'ān's* revelation being to establish and ensure justice globally. In contrast, the understanding of equality in international conventions is influenced by the constantly evolving Western perspectives and philosophies. These perspectives may change according to the Western worldview, potentially conflicting with certain aspects of the Islamic understanding of justice.

Given that the Western perspective is subject to change according to human whims, Muslims must remain steadfast in their principles, guided by the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth*. The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ reminded us during the *Hijjat al-Wadā'* (Farewell Pilgrimage):⁹⁶⁰

تَرَكْتُ فِيكُمْ أَمْرَيْنِ، لَنْ تَضِلُّوا مَا تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا: كِتَابَ اللَّهِ، وَسُنَّةَ نَبِيِّهِ

I leave behind me two things, the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* and if you follow these you will never go astray.

Failure to adhere to the guidance of the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth* results in the loss of the ethical and moral principles that Islam provides. Nevertheless, this does not imply a wholesale rejection of positive values from the West. On the contrary, Muslims should adopt positive aspects from other cultures, provided they do not conflict with Islamic principles.

Regarding Mernissi's critique on domestic violence against women, it is imperative to acknowledge that inflicting excessive physical harm on a wife contradicts the fundamental principles and understanding of marriage in Islam. Islamic teachings

⁹⁶⁰ Mālik ibn Anas, "Bāb Al-Nahā 'an Al-Qawl Bi Al-Qadr," in *Muwaṭṭa' Al-Imām Mālik*, vol. 6 (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1991) (ḥadīth: 1874).

emphasize fostering interactions rooted in love and compassion between husband and wife.

Allāh ﷻ said.⁹⁶¹

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً
وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾

And one of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find comfort in them. And He has placed between you compassion and mercy. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect.

Beyond the *Qur'ānic* verses, there are numerous *ḥadīth* of the Prophet ﷺ emphasizing the importance of treating one's wife with kindness and respect. In a *ḥadīth* reported by 'Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه, Prophet ﷺ stated:⁹⁶²

أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا أَحْسَنُهُمْ خُلُقًا، وَخَيْرًاكُمْ خَيْرًاكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ

The believers who show the most perfect faith are those who have the best behaviour, and the best of you are those who are the best to their wives.

In the context of addressing a rebellious wife (*nushūz*), Islamic scholars have outlined several conditions for the permission to resort to physical discipline. Firstly, the primary objective is to educate wives and encourage them to fulfil their marital duties and obligations. It is important to note that lighter measures, such as giving advice or temporary isolation, should be exhausted before resorting to physical discipline. Secondly, if physical discipline becomes necessary, it must be extremely light and non-harmful, such as using a *siwāk* (toothbrush) or similar gentle means. It is strictly prohibited to inflict any form of damaging or harmful blows, such as those causing permanent disability, bleeding, broken bones, bruising, or severe pain.⁹⁶³ Furthermore, striking the face or easily vulnerable parts of the body, conducting such actions outside the confines of the household, or repeatedly targeting one area of the body is strictly forbidden. If the wife continues to be disobedient

⁹⁶¹ Sūrah al-Rūm, 30:21.

⁹⁶² Abū Zakaria Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Dimashqī Al-Nawawī, “Bāb Wasiyyah Al-Nisā’,” in *Riyād Al-Ṣālihīn* (Damshiq: Dār 'Ibn Kathīr, 2007), 111.

⁹⁶³ Darul Azka and M. Zainuri, *Potret Ideal Hubungan Suami Isteri 'Uqūd Al-Lujjayn Dalam Disharmoni Modernitas ʿan Teks-Teks Religius Lajnah*, ed. Syahrowardi, Agus Ibrahim A. Hafidz, and Thohari Muslim (Kediri: Lajnah Bahtsul Masa-il Madrasah Hidayatul Muftadi-ien, 2006), 80.

or fails to fulfil her husband's rights despite these measures, the matter should be brought before a judge for resolution, rather than taking matters into one's own hands.⁹⁶⁴ Considering these conditions, it is evident that Islam prohibits any form of abuse or torment towards wives within the institution of marriage.

Concerning reproductive rights and healthcare, Islam ensures that every woman has the right to guaranteed health, encompassing the entire reproductive process from menstruation to intimate relations, pregnancy, and childbirth. This right is not solely based on reproductive rights but also on the inherent dignity and rights of women as human beings. There is even an opinion within Islamic thought that, although a wife has a duty to fulfil her husband's sexual needs, this obligation can be waived if it poses a health risk to her.⁹⁶⁵

In Islam, the use of reproductive technology and the selection of family planning methods must adhere to Islamic teachings, follow guidelines from authoritative bodies, and involve consultations with medical experts. The Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) has published guidelines on the use of reproductive technology based on current advancements.⁹⁶⁶ These guidelines ensure that chosen reproductive technologies or family planning methods do not harm individuals or the community.

Studies on the effectiveness of family planning in Malaysia highlight the importance of such measures in reducing the rates of maternal and infant mortality due to complications.⁹⁶⁷ As reproductive technology aligns with the objective of protecting human life, which is one of the five objectives of *Sharī'ah*—alongside protecting religion, life, descendants, property, and reason—Islam supports the improvement of women's reproductive health through such technologies.⁹⁶⁸

⁹⁶⁴ Azka and Zainuri, 50–54, 80–81.

⁹⁶⁵ Ibrāhīm ibn 'Alī Al-Shīrāzī, *Muhadhdhab Fī Fiqh Al-Imām Al-Shāfi'ī*, vol. 2 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr, 1980), 303.

⁹⁶⁶ “E-Sumber Maklumat Fatwa,” JAKIM, 1984, <http://e-smaf.islam.gov.my/e-smaf/index.php/main/mainv1/fatwa/pr/15239>.

⁹⁶⁷ Wan Mohd Rahimi Bin Rahim and Ahmad Kamal Ariffin Mohd Rus, “Program Perancang Keluarga Dalam Perkhidmatan Kesihatan Awam Di Semenanjung Malaysia, 1957-1975,” *SEJARAH* 23, no. 2 (2014): 100.

⁹⁶⁸ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt Fi Uṣūl Al-Fiqh*, 2:20.

Hence, this study concurs with Mernissi's view that education is crucial in addressing reproductive issues, as it empowers women to make informed choices that benefit their health and save lives. Additionally, educated women are more likely to engage in public discourse, advocate for policy changes, and access healthcare services effectively, thereby reducing maternal mortality and improving family health outcomes. The empowerment derived from education extends beyond reproductive health, fostering economic independence and enhancing women's participation in various sectors. This holistic improvement underscores the importance of education as a fundamental tool for advancing gender equality and ensuring the sustainable development of society as a whole.

4.6 FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY

The 'feminization of poverty' has emerged as a significant concern for government bodies, social scientists, politicians, and feminists across the political spectrum. This term refers to the circumstance where women make up a disproportionately large percentage of the world's impoverished population.⁹⁶⁹ According to UNIFEM, it is defined as "the burden of poverty borne by women, especially in developing countries".⁹⁷⁰ However, the term itself is a subject of debate and has been interpreted in various contrasting ways.

Poverty can be understood as a lack of resources, capabilities, or freedoms necessary for attaining a standard quality of life, while "feminization" may signify gender-biased influence in this context. It can also be viewed as an action or a process of becoming more feminine. Consequently, the feminization of poverty denotes a poverty issue that has become "more common or intense among women or female-headed households."⁹⁷¹

⁹⁶⁹ Martha; Chen et al., "Progress of the World's Women 2005: Women, Work and Poverty," 2005, 30–40; Sylvia Chant, "Re-thinking the 'Feminization of Poverty' in Relation to Aggregate Gender Indices," *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 7, no. 2 (2006): 201–20.

⁹⁷⁰ Chen et al., "Progress of the World's Women 2005: Women, Work and Poverty," 37.

⁹⁷¹ Marcelo; Medeiros and Joana Costa, "What Do We Mean by 'Feminization of Poverty'?", *International Poverty Centre*, 2008, <http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCOnePager58.pdf>.

A study published in 2016 highlighted that Muslims are among the world's poorest, with women and children being the most affected.⁹⁷² This section will delve into Mernissi's perspective on the feminization of poverty, specifically addressing women's economic challenges, discrimination, and their position in the domestic economy within Islam. Furthermore, it will critically review Mernissi's arguments and analyse them from an normative Islamic standpoint.

4.6.1 Women's Economic Issues

Mernissi argues that the economy plays a crucial role in empowering women. She underscores the significance of prioritizing employment and education over unnecessary expenses like military allocations.⁹⁷³ In her writings, Mernissi highlights the pivotal role of education for both women and the broader community.

In examining the historical circumstances contributing to the economic inactivity of women in Morocco, Mernissi highlights the role of French colonizers in perpetuating female slavery, even after officially ending it through forceful measures. She notes that the promotion of local warlords, known as *caids*, by the French also promoted slaveholders.⁹⁷⁴ These wealthy *caids*, supported by the French administration, replicated the grandeur of the Muslim Golden Age in Baghdad under the *'Abbasīds* at the local level, acquiring harems and *jawārī* using surplus wealth confiscated from the governed people. She mentioned that wealthy *caids*, supported by the French administration:⁹⁷⁵

... reproduced at the local level the pomp of the Muslim Golden Age of Baghdad under the Abbasids. The harem and the *jawārīyy* (plural of *jāriyah*) were brought with the surplus confiscated from the people that they governed.

⁹⁷² Bige Saatçioğlu, Özlem Sandıkcı, and Aliakbar Jafari, "Poverty and Socioeconomic Injustice in Muslim Geographies," in *Islam, Marketing and Consumption: Critical Perspectives on the Intersections*, ed. Aliakbar Jafari and Ozlem Sandikci (London: Routledge, 2016), 59–77.

⁹⁷³ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 168–69.

⁹⁷⁴ In contemporary usage, the term 'Caid' refers to an official affiliated with the Ministry of Interior. Historically, *Caids* were often individuals from affluent families, acknowledged as prominent figures, and entrusted with administrative, judicial, and financial responsibilities. Additionally, they sometimes served as leaders within their tribes.

⁹⁷⁵ Mernissi, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 1)," 84.

Contrary to breaking with this practice and mentality, the post-independent administration's tourism policies created a new phenomenon, further contributing to the enslavement of poor women—the peasant woman as a *sheikha* or dancer. Mernissi contends that the state's preference for rural tourism not only degraded folklore as a commercial commodity but also contributed to the demeaning perception of the peasant woman, emerging as "woman-entertainment." The unregulated rural modernization project led to a massive rural exodus into Moroccan cities, bringing women lacking appropriate skills for urban work—illiterate and without professional training. The *sheikha*, Mernissi argues, becomes a modern version of the historical *jāriyah*.⁹⁷⁶

Mernissi describes the importation of *sheikhas* into the city as a characteristic of independent Morocco, where peasant women dance at evening parties for the urban bourgeoisie. *Sheikhas*, in her view, represent a more democratic version of the *Jawāri* from the past. While the role of women as entertainment was previously reserved for a few powerful individuals, she contends that in today's modern world, for a fee of 800 dirhams (about 200 dollars), a *sheikha* can travel from Ain Leuh to Rabat, offering a small-time official in the capital the fantasy of being Ḥarūn al-Rashīd for a few hours—a vivid male and female fantasy.⁹⁷⁷

Mernissi also voiced criticism based on her observations on affluent executives who exploit the poverty of women. She highlights instances where executives in their forties and fifties sit in their luxury cars outside girls' schools and colleges, engaging in the seduction of young girls. This cycle of seduction, she contends, will persist as long as the economic prospects of these young girls remain blocked and overshadowed by externally determined economic factors. Mernissi said:⁹⁷⁸

In a country where fathers are unemployed and where women's education is poor, promotion by means of a man remains the only effective way of 'carving oneself a place in the sun'. Often, when men seduce young women" they play on all the advantages which are precisely what women are looking

⁹⁷⁶ Mernissi, 94–95.

⁹⁷⁷ Mernissi, 95–96.

⁹⁷⁸ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 43.

for: money and a secure job in the modern sector with all that that means in terms of prospects of comfort.

What exacerbates the situation is the tendency to blame the young girls for their vulnerability rather than holding accountable the adult males who exploit the conditions of unemployment and poverty. Mernissi underscores that the seduction of young women in Morocco by older men is rooted in a distinct class dynamic. She points out the extreme case of maids being seduced and subsequently abandoned to the challenges of maternity wards within the public health service.⁹⁷⁹

In her research, Mernissi identifies six factors that might have contributed to the under recognition of women's economic roles in Morocco: 1. The sexual division of labour as dictated by sacred texts, particularly the *Qur'ān*, which regulates daily life. 2. The blossoming of slavery during the Golden Age of the Muslim empire. 3. The climatic conditions of the Mediterranean basin, especially its famines and epidemics, enabling the persistence of female slavery until the twentieth century. 4. The aggressive and unregulated introduction of capitalist technology during the colonial period. 5. The petit-bourgeois conceptualization of women's issues by the Arab nationalist movement, both at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. 6. The emergence of a petit-bourgeois women's movement after independence and its impact on the perception of women's manual labour in the poorer class.⁹⁸⁰

Mernissi also highlighted the perception that empowering women economically is viewed as a challenge to the traditional male role. She argues that certain societal codes and rules within some Muslim communities strongly link masculinity to men's economic success. The act of women earning a salary is often perceived as masculine, challenging the traditional privilege and responsibility of men as primary earners. This shift is seen as a threat to masculinity, with men potentially being labelled as more feminine. She said:⁹⁸¹

Moreover, since the (Moroccan) *Code* defines earning a salary as a man's role, a woman who earns a salary will be perceived as either masculine or castrating. If the privileges of men become more easily accessible perceived

⁹⁷⁹ Mernissi, 44.

⁹⁸⁰ Mernissi, 67.

⁹⁸¹ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 171.

accessible to women, then men will be perceived as becoming more feminine.

Mernissi contends that economic factors significantly shape the dynamic between men and women. Men who cannot fulfil the traditional duty of providing for the family while allowing their wives to work under the supervision of another male may perceive themselves, in terms of their masculinity, as akin to a pimp or a cuckold. Despite the perceived harm in the short run, Mernissi believes that this trend could ultimately lead to a reconciliation between men and women, bringing long-term benefits with the involvement of the state.⁹⁸²

Mernissi argues that achieving women's liberation is a substantial undertaking. For true liberation to occur, society must not only offer women employment opportunities but also shoulder the responsibility of providing childcare and sustenance for all workers, irrespective of gender. She proposes implementing a system of kindergartens and communal canteens as viable solutions. She stated:⁹⁸³

A society that decides to liberate women not only has to provide them with jobs, but also has to take upon itself the responsibility for providing child care and food for all workers regardless of sex. A system of kindergartens and canteens is an indispensable investment promoting the liberation of women from traditional domestic chains.

Regarding the escape from poverty, Mernissi observes that the rise in refugees and migrations stems from profound desperation. The choices individuals make to face immense dangers during immigration reflect a pursuit of hope and a desire to escape prolonged misery. For them, the prospect of seeking hope, even at the risk of death, is preferable to remaining in or enduring extended suffering.⁹⁸⁴

Mernissi's study on subaltern Moroccan women reveals their conscious awareness of oppression, stemming from an evaluation of their marginalization, prejudice, and the accompanying humiliation they endure. While women have historically voiced feelings of

⁹⁸² Mernissi, 174.

⁹⁸³ Mernissi, 165.

⁹⁸⁴ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, x.

injustice and frustration, Mernissi notes a shift in the nature of their complaints, now predominantly taking on a political and economic character.⁹⁸⁵

According to Mernissi, a notable transformation in women's self-perception and images of femininity in the Arab world is evident. The emphasis now lies on economic issues, including complaints about illiteracy, unemployment, economic exploitation, inflation, and uncertainty about jobs and pay, alongside traditional themes of procreation and men's love.⁹⁸⁶

Mernissi's overarching objective is to highlight that, within these complaints, women are increasingly inclined to identify solutions to their problems. Her interviews with peasant women in Morocco illustrate their ability to articulate their own development objectives. A crucial finding of her study is that peasant women, much like their male counterparts, have developed an authentic endogenous development plan through their experiences as "guinea pigs" in the policies of rural modernization imposed by urban centres. Mernissi's research indicates that poor rural and urban working women view education as a pivotal solution to address their marginalization.⁹⁸⁷

4.6.2 Discrimination and Domestic Economy Dilemma

Mernissi delves into the multifaceted theme of discrimination against women, particularly focusing on their roles in both the domestic and economic spheres. She highlights the societal stigmas faced by working housewives, portraying how husbands often viewed their wives' employment outside the home as a reflection of their own failure. This perception, rooted in traditional gender norms, contributes to the marginalization of women in the workforce.⁹⁸⁸ She also explores the challenges posed by Muslim traditions, where women

⁹⁸⁵ Mernissi, "The Degrading Effect of Capitalism on Female Labour in a Third World Economy: The Particular Case of Craftswomen in Morocco," 56.

⁹⁸⁶ Mernissi, 56.

⁹⁸⁷ Mernissi, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 1)," 77; Mernissi, "The Degrading Effect of Capitalism on Female Labour in a Third World Economy: The Particular Case of Craftswomen in Morocco"; Mernissi, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 2)."

⁹⁸⁸ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 64–65.

in male spaces are deemed provocative and offensive.⁹⁸⁹ Consequently, as societal modernization demands that women have the freedom to navigate public spaces for employment and education, it exposes many women to the risk of public harassment as they trespass into these spaces.⁹⁹⁰

Mernissi extends her critique to the effects of colonization and a precapitalist economic system, which further devalues women's labour and perpetuates gender disparities.⁹⁹¹ She scrutinizes the downgrading of domestic labour within the capitalist framework and the disregard for the economic contributions of women in sectors such as crafts and agriculture.⁹⁹² She emphasizes the significant but often overlooked domestic daily labour of poor women, portraying it as essential to the functioning of the broader economy. She said:⁹⁹³

But the colossal daily labour of these women is usually unpaid. One of the most common statuses among the primary sector, or at least among its women, is 'family aid', which means unpaid worker.

Mernissi strongly criticizes economic planning that unjustly considers women working within households as inactive.⁹⁹⁴ She contends that this perspective is flawed, particularly when applied to Moroccan women of the poor classes, who are consistently engaged in labour.⁹⁹⁵ Mernissi reveals how women's statistical invisibility becomes a tool for their exploitation, allowing the state and its development programs to evade responsibility for addressing their needs. This critique aligns with her analysis in "Woman in the Muslim Unconscious," emphasizing the exploitation of the female body through its statistical invisibility.⁹⁹⁶

⁹⁸⁹ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 150.

⁹⁹⁰ Mernissi, 143, 146.

⁹⁹¹ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 14; Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 157.

⁹⁹² Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 157.

⁹⁹³ Mernissi, 157–58.

⁹⁹⁴ Mernissi, 159.

⁹⁹⁵ Mernissi, 157.

⁹⁹⁶ Ait Sabbah, *Woman in the Muslim Unconscious*, 15.

The continuity of this issue is evident in "Beyond the Veil," where Mernissi condemns the classification of rural women working fourteen hours a day as inactive.⁹⁹⁷ In "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development," she highlights a contradiction between statistics and the actual experiences of rural women.⁹⁹⁸ While statistics categorize the population into various segments, Mernissi argues that the villagers only recognize two categories: active individuals and those who are unemployed. The term 'housewives' lacks relevance for villagers, as women's undeniable activity and contribution are marginalized.

Mernissi attributes the failure of statisticians and planners to recognize rural women's labour and address their needs to their upper-class perspective. She points out that, for these male planners, technocrats, economists, and statisticians—often urban-dwelling and educated—the only economically contributing woman is the one holding diplomas, mirroring their own privileged status.⁹⁹⁹ She said:¹⁰⁰⁰

For these male planners, technocrats, economists, and statisticians, often living and having studied in the city (even if they were originally from rural areas), the only woman who contributes to the economy is the one who, like them, has diplomas. The economic contribution of illiterate women is perceived as non-existent, as not producing value. This blindness of the planners of rural development is partly responsible for this specifically discriminatory effect of the rural "modernization" program on women—that is, the concentration of landholding and the omnipresence of the state in the process of production.

Mernissi's critiques on modernization challenge the prevailing myth within the discourse of postcolonial states and the national bourgeoisie. In "The Degrading Effect of Capitalism," she asserts that modernization, particularly with its market and banking systems, remains foreign to illiterate women and effectively excludes the female proletariat from the modern capitalist framework. Mernissi contends that the discourse of modernization overlooks the interests of poor women, revealing instead the priorities of the

⁹⁹⁷ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 193.

⁹⁹⁸ Mernissi, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 1)," 74.

⁹⁹⁹ Mernissi, 73, 74.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Mernissi, 70.

dominant group—the native bourgeois minority that perpetuates the colonial capitalist system.¹⁰⁰¹

Moreover, Mernissi points out the nonregulatory nature of modernization, suggesting that this lack of regulation serves capitalist interests. While the state celebrates rural modernization projects for bringing significant facilities like electric energy and water distribution to the rural world, Mernissi's interviews expose that these benefits primarily favour state farms and bourgeois landowners. The daily burdens of peasant people, especially women, such as fetching water and collecting firewood, remain unaddressed. Consequently, this contributes to a high dropout rate among rural girls and widespread female illiteracy in rural areas.¹⁰⁰²

In her criticism of "corrupted modernity" in "Doing Daily Battle," Mernissi condemns the post-independence project of Moroccanization, which ostensibly aimed at decolonization. Instead, she identifies it as a cornerstone in the construction of a 'capitalist' Morocco. The transfer of lands confiscated from peasants during the French Protectorate to "Moroccan owners" after independence, according to Mernissi, is discriminatory, benefiting only bourgeois owners and perpetuating the colonial marginalization of peasants—particularly women. This process allows the urban bourgeoisie to step into the shoes of colonizers through the purchase of lands, effectively continuing the colonization project and reinforcing the disregard for female workers.¹⁰⁰³

Mernissi is driven by a clear objective, as outlined in her work "Women's Work: Religious and Scientific Concepts as Political Manipulation in Dependent Islam." Her primary goal is to challenge medieval religious concepts and selective Western scientific, economic, and statistical categories retained by technocrats when addressing women's work. In this study, she calls for a re-evaluation of conceptual tools to better assess and integrate female labour in households and informal sectors into national accounts. Mernissi urges local planners to recognize the limitations of their statistical androcentric research

¹⁰⁰¹ Mernissi, "The Degrading Effect of Capitalism on Female Labour in a Third World Economy: The Particular Case of Craftswomen in Morocco," 55, 56.

¹⁰⁰² Mernissi, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 2)," 71, 107.

¹⁰⁰³ Mernissi, *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women*, 1988, 261.

and concepts, emphasizing that these should not be treated as ultimate truths but rather need to be improvised and reformulated.¹⁰⁰⁴

In "Etat planification nationale et discours scientifique sur la femme," Mernissi goes further, contending that scientific discourse can express misogynistic perspectives and align with a specific political choice—patriarchy and male supremacy. She points out the silent complicity of statistical discourse in obscuring reality, especially regarding women's economic agency. This complicity, she argues, is evident in the production of numbers or data without accompanying commentary, as any commentary risks pushing technicians to analyse reality, which may contradict official rhetoric.¹⁰⁰⁵

Mernissi's activism extends beyond academic discourse to practical initiatives addressing poverty. One such project involves female carpet weavers in the Moroccan High Atlas region.¹⁰⁰⁶ Mernissi's activism as an organic scholar and activist seeks to reconsider development and globalization and their impact on impoverished women in Morocco. Mernissi's hands-on involvement demonstrates her commitment to translating her academic insights into tangible efforts to improve the economic conditions of women, particularly those facing poverty.

4.6.3 An Analysis from the Islamic Perspective

The advent of Islam has granted women greater freedom in terms of ownership of wealth and businesses. A Muslim woman is entitled to her own independent economic resources, beyond the control of her husband, and her father is not permitted to take possession of her property. Whether married or unmarried, a woman can freely buy, retain, and sell property. She possesses the authority, similar to a man, to make decisions regarding her property without any constraints.¹⁰⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰⁴ Mernissi, "Women's Work: Religious and Scientific Concepts as Political Manipulation in Dependent Islam," 214.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Mernissi, "Etat Planification Nationale et Discours Scientifique Sur La Femme," 74, 94–95.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 10.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Malik Kamran et al., "Socio-Economic Role of Women in Islamic Perspective: A Critical Review," *Webology* 19, no. 3 (2022): 3701.

In Islamic tradition, both the Prophet ﷺ and his wife, Khadijah رضي الله عنها, were actively engaged in business, with Khadijah رضي الله عنها serving as a model for Muslim women in the business realm. The early days of Islam also saw the involvement of several outdoor working women, such as Ummu al-Mundhir bint al-Qays رضي الله عنها and Asmā' binti Makhzumah bin Jandal رضي الله عنها, who sold old dates and perfumes in the market, respectively.¹⁰⁰⁸ Women during the time of the Prophet ﷺ pursued various professions, exemplified by Zainab bint Jahsh رضي الله عنها, a leather tanner, Ummu Sulaym bint Milhān رضي الله عنها, known for reliable bridal make-up, and Ummu 'Atiyyah رضي الله عنها, a medicine brewer.¹⁰⁰⁹ Hence, Islam does not seek to restrict women's participation in the economy but rather empowers them with their economic rights.

Addressing the issue of women's exploitation linked to poverty, as observed by Mernissi, Islam vehemently opposes such exploitation, particularly in the realms of sexual entertainment, pornography, prostitution, and the abuse of minors, whether perpetrated by influential individuals or the state. One of the conditions for any economic activity to be considered valid is that it must not involve anything forbidden in Islamic teaching (*Sharī'ah*). *Shaykh* Muḥammad al-Zuḥaylī stated that it is impermissible to engage in any work that is forbidden, as deriving benefits from something prohibited is also prohibited. Consequently, it is not permissible to accept payment or wages for economic activities such as teaching sorcery or engaging in prostitution.¹⁰¹⁰ In this regard, Allāh ﷻ explicitly mentions in *Sūrah al-Nūr*:¹⁰¹¹

﴿وَلَيْسَتَعْفِيفَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّى يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ
الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا وَعَاثُوهُمْ مِّن مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ilhaamie Abdul Ghani Azmi, "The Implementation of Islamic Business Practices of Women Traders: A Study in An Islamic State in a Developing Country," *Global Journal Al Thaqafah* 4, no. 2 (2014): 19.

¹⁰⁰⁹ N. Najwah, *Wacana Spiritualitas Perempuan Perspektif Hadis* (Yogyakarta: Cahaya Pustaka, 2008), 17–18; U. Farida, *25 Perempuan Teladan: Para Istri, Putri & Sahabat Perempuan Nabi* (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2015), 117–25.

¹⁰¹⁰ Muḥammad Al-Zuḥaylī, *Al-Mu'tamad Fī Al-Fiqh Al-Shāfi'ī*, vol. 3 (Dimashq: Dār al-Qalam, 2011), 219.

¹⁰¹¹ *Sūrah al-Nūr*, 24:33.

ءَاتَلِكُمْ وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَتَيِّتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَ مَحْصَنًا لِيَتَّبِعُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَمَنْ يُكْرِهِنَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠١٣﴾

But let them who find not (the means for) marriage abstain (from sexual relations) until Allāh enriches them from His bounty. And those who seek a contract (for eventual emancipation) from among whom your right hands possess - then make a contract with them if you know there is within them goodness and give them from the wealth of Allāh which He has given you. And do not compel your slave girls to prostitution, if they desire chastity, to seek (thereby) the temporary interests of worldly life. And if someone should compel them, then indeed, Allāh is (to them), after their compulsion, Forgiving and Merciful.

Shaykh Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī, in his commentary on this verse, emphasizes that Allāh ﷻ prohibits believers from acquiring wealth through illicit means, specifically highlighting the absolute prohibition of prostitution and adultery. Forcing individuals to engage in adultery or become commercial sex workers is strictly forbidden, irrespective of the individual's consent. Al-Zuhaylī observes that contemporary society exhibits phenomena similar to those of ancient times, where women are exploited to stimulate the tourism industry, attract customers, and serve as promotional and advertising tools through their sexualized appearance, practices that are prohibited in Islam.¹⁰¹²

According to Hamka, this verse condemns a reprehensible custom that prevailed during the era of *jāhiliyyah*. During this time, female slaves were forced by their masters to commit adultery and become prostitutes. The money earned from these acts was collected by the masters, despite the fact that many of these women originally desired to lead pure and decent lives. They were coerced into this life solely because they were not free. Islam denounces this practice and upholds the dignity and rights of every individual, regardless of their status as slave or free man.¹⁰¹³

Engaging in exploitation and committing adultery is prohibited in Islam. Islamic teachings, therefore, encourage the endorsement of policies and initiatives that empower women to escape dire economic circumstances that might lead them to such prohibited

¹⁰¹² Al-Zuhaylī, *Tafsir Al-Munir*, 2018, 9:525.

¹⁰¹³ HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 2001, 18:4937.

activities. Islam permits women to work or engage in activities aligned with their feminine nature, provided these do not contravene Islamic law by causing harm, slander, or defamation.¹⁰¹⁴ Women may work as long as they cover their 'aurah, dress modestly, do not cause fitnah, have permission from their guardians (such as their father or husband), and engage in work suitable to their nature as women.¹⁰¹⁵ Housewives are also allowed to work, provided they fulfil their responsibilities as wives and mothers.

Islam recognizes the significant contributions of women in domestic roles and opposes the discrimination and underestimation faced by housewives and women working in informal sectors. In a *ḥadīth*, the Prophet ﷺ commends Asmā' bint Yazid al-Anṣāriyyah ؓ for her inquiry about the position of a housewife and elucidates how they are rewarded by Allāh ﷻ:

أَسْمَاءُ بِنْتُ يَزِيدَ الْأَنْصَارِيَّةِ مِنْ بَنِي عَبْدِ الْأَشْهَلِ، أَهْمَا أَتَتْ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَهُوَ بَيْنَ أَصْحَابِهِ، فَقَالَتْ: يَا أَبِي أَنْتَ وَأُمِّي، إِنِّي وَافِدَةٌ لِلنِّسَاءِ إِلَيْكَ، وَأَعْلَمُ - نَفْسِي لَكَ الْفِدَاءُ - أَمَا إِنَّهُ مَا مِنْ امْرَأَةٍ كَأَيِّنَةٍ فِي شَرْقِي وَلَا غَرْبِي سَمِعَتْ بِمَخْرَجِي هَذَا أَوْ لَمْ تَسْمَعْ إِلَّا وَهِيَ عَلَى مِثْلِ رَأْيِي، إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَعَثَكَ بِالْحَقِّ إِلَى الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ فَأَمَّا بِكَ وَيَا لَاهِكَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَكَ، وَإِنَّا مَعَشَرَ النِّسَاءِ مَحْضُورَاتٌ مَقْضُورَاتٌ، فَوَاعِدُ بُيُوتِكُمْ، وَمَقْضَى شَهَوَاتِكُمْ، وَحَامِلَاتُ أَوْلَادِكُمْ، وَإِنَّكُمْ مَعَاشِرَ الرِّجَالِ فَضَلْتُمْ عَلَيْنَا بِالْجُمُعَةِ وَالْجُمَاعَاتِ، وَعِيَادَةِ الْمَرْضَى، وَشُهُودِ الْجَنَائِزِ، وَالْحَجِّ بَعْدَ الْحَجِّ، وَأَفْضَلُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ، وَإِنَّ الرِّجَالَ مِنْكُمْ إِذَا أُخْرِجَ حَاجًّا أَوْ مُعْتَمِرًا وَمُرَابِطًا حَفِظْنَا لَكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ، وَعَزَلْنَا لَكُمْ أَنْوَابًا، وَرَبَّبْنَا لَكُمْ أَوْلَادَكُمْ، فَمَا نُشَارِكُكُمْ فِي الْأَجْرِ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: فَالْتَفَتَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَى أَصْحَابِهِ بِوَجْهِهِ كُلِّهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: " هَلْ سَمِعْتُمْ مَقَالََةَ امْرَأَةٍ قَطُّ أَحْسَنَ مِنْ مَسْأَلَتِهَا فِي أَمْرِ دِينِهَا مِنْ هَذِهِ؟ " فَقَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَا ظَنَّنَا أَنَّ امْرَأَةً تَهْتَدِي إِلَى مِثْلِ هَذَا، فَالْتَفَتَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَيْهَا، ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهَا: " انصُرِي فِي آيَتِهَا الْمَرْأَةَ، وَأَعْلِمِي مَنْ خَلَقَ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ أَنَّ حُسْنَ تَبَعُلٍ إِحْدَاكُنَّ

¹⁰¹⁴ Adawiyah Ismail and Salasiah Hanin Hamjah, "Kefahaman Terhadap Kedudukan Wanita Bekerjaya Menurut Islam," *Jurnal Al-Hikmah* 4 (2012): 6.

¹⁰¹⁵ 'Abd al-Rabb Nawwāb Al-Dīn, 'Amal Al-Mar'ah Wa Mawqif Al-Islām Minhu (al-Manṣūrah: Maṭābi' al-Wafa', 1986), 116–22.

لِرُؤُوسِهَا، وَطَلَبَهَا مَرْضَاتِهِ، وَاتِّبَاعَهَا مُوَافَقَتَهُ تَعْدِيلُ ذَلِكَ كُلُّهُ " قَالَ: فَأَدْبَرَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ وَهِيَ تُهْلَلُ
وَتُكَبَّرُ اسْتِيشَارًا

Asmā' bint Yazid al-Anṣāriyyah ؓ came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: "O, Prophet of Allāh! You are dearer to me than my parents. My Muslim women have deputed me as their representative to talk to you on their behalf. Verily you are the Prophet of Allāh for both men and women. We stay for most part of our time within the four walls of our houses. We remain pinned to our duties of fulfilling the sexual desires of men, bearing children for them and looking after their homes. Notwithstanding all this, men excel us in getting rewards for things which we are unable to do. They go and say their daily *Ṣalāh* and weekly *Jumu'ah* in the *masjīd*, visit the sick, attend the funerals, perform *Hajj* after *Hajj* and above all, fight in the way of Allāh. When they go for *Hajj* or *Jihād*, we look after their property, bring up their children and weave cloth for them. Do we not share their rewards with them?". Muḥammad ﷺ addressing the *Ṣahābah* ؓ sitting round him, said; "Did you ever hear a woman asking a better question?" Muḥammad ﷺ addressing 'Asmā' ؓ said; "Listen attentively, and then go and tell the ladies who have sent you that when a woman seeks the pleasure of her husband and carries out her domestic functions to his satisfaction, she gets the same reward as the men get for all their services to Allāh." Asmā' ؓ after hearing this, returned very happy.¹⁰¹⁶

This *ḥadīth* explicitly states that women who work as housewives will receive rewards comparable to those of men, despite not participating in the same activities. Although the tasks and responsibilities of men and women differ, both are regarded as important and equally valued in Islam. The contributions of housewives and their domestic work are considered vital and are acknowledged on par with the duties performed by men. *The Qur'ān*, in this context, also highlights the similar rewards bestowed upon men and women for their efforts. Allāh ﷻ said:¹⁰¹⁷

﴿وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا﴾

¹⁰¹⁶ Abū Bakar 'Ahmad bin al-Ḥussayn Al-Bayhaqī, "Ḥuquq Al-'Awlād Wa Al-'Ahlayn," in *Shu'ab Al-Īmān*, vol. 6 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000), 416.

¹⁰¹⁷ *Sūrah al-Nisā'*, 4:124.

And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer - those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged, (even as much as) the speck on a date seed.

According to Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī, this verse serves as an encouragement for both men and women to enthusiastically fulfil their deeds of obedience and religious obligations. It contains a promise from Allāh ﷻ for those who engage in righteous actions.¹⁰¹⁸ Whoever performs pious deeds, whether male or female—deeds that align with the *Qur’ān* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ—while fulfilling their obligations and believing in Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger, will lead a good life in this world and receive rewards in the afterlife for their good deeds.

Hamka, based on this verse, stated that the competition to do good on the basis of faith is equally entitled and equally obligatory for both men and women. The only distinction lies in the specific tasks, which may vary due to differences in personal abilities or circumstances.¹⁰¹⁹ In another verse, Allāh ﷻ also mentions:¹⁰²⁰

﴿مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward (in the Hereafter) according to the best of what they used to do.

Hamka, in his interpretation of this verse, stated that in terms of righteous deeds and faith, the position of men and women is equal. Each is equally capable of nurturing faith in their heart and performing good deeds. Thus, women are no less responsible than men in upholding their faith in Allāh ﷻ. Consequently, both men and women, through their faith and good deeds, are promised by Allāh ﷻ a blessed and good life “*ḥayātan ṭayyibah*”.¹⁰²¹

¹⁰¹⁸ Wahbah Mustafa Al-Zuhaylī, *Tafsir Al-Munir*, 3rd ed., vol. 7 (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2018), 471–72.

¹⁰¹⁹ Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 4th ed., vol. 2 (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001), 1443.

¹⁰²⁰ *Sūrah al-Nahl*, 16:97.

¹⁰²¹ Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 4th ed., vol. 5 (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001), 3960.

Thus, both men and women will receive rewards commensurate with their actions, irrespective of gender. Echoing the verse mentioned earlier, Islam prohibits systemic discriminatory policies and economic planning based on gender or class, as observed by Mernissi in the post-independence projects of Moroccanization and modernization. Statesmen and policymakers bear the responsibility of ensuring equitable wealth distribution among all citizens, recognizing that they will be held accountable to Allāh ﷻ for their entrusted duties and responsibilities.

Mernissi's proposal for a women's economic empowerment program and her critique of the state's future improvements in this area are justifiable for enhancing the well-being of women and Muslim families at large. Enabling women to pursue educational and economic empowerment, coupled with state support in childcare and workers' sustenance, such as kindergartens and communal canteens, as suggested by Mernissi, could contribute to the overall family well-being. This approach might enhance the quality of interactions among family members, allowing both spouses to have more time for each other and focusing on their children, as some responsibilities are assumed by the state.

4.7 WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Education and empowerment are inseparable facets that significantly contribute to women's success and economic empowerment. Both feminists and Islamic feminists passionately advocate for women's right to education and strive to combat illiteracy. Education is a global imperative, and eradicating illiteracy is essential, as it constitutes a blatant violation and embarrassment of the human rights enshrined in laws and treaties worldwide. If knowledge equates to strength, illiteracy signifies individual and societal vulnerability. In the future, the affluent will be those rich in knowledge and information, while the impoverished will lack knowledge and possess few skills and competencies.

Mernissi, as a scholar and activist, underscores the paramount importance of knowledge and how educational opportunities propelled her to her current status. This section will explore Mernissi's perspective on education as a means of women's empowerment, delving into the privileges and challenges faced by educated women.

Additionally, it will critically review Mernissi's arguments and provide an analysis from a normative Islamic standpoint.

4.7.1 Education for Empowerment

Mernissi strongly emphasizes the significance of education in empowering women, recounting her grandmother's fervent dedication to ensuring her grandchildren were educated. In Mernissi's educational journey, she reflects on the prevailing illiteracy that her grandmother, rooted in her own generation's missed opportunities, considered an inevitable fate for women.¹⁰²²

Despite scepticism about the state's commitment to women's education, Mernissi's grandmother persistently woke her and her sister at dawn, insisting they attend school. In the face of their explanations regarding the school starting late, her grandmother remained determined, expressing a dream for them to read the *Qur'ān* and excel in mathematics. According to her grandmother, mastering both the *Qur'ān* and mathematics was crucial, as it held the key to empowerment, echoing the political dimension of education in their generation.¹⁰²³ Mernissi argues that, for women in her generation, higher education was not a luxury but a vital opportunity for survival and liberation from the pervasive contempt towards women that characterized traditional societal structures a few decades ago.¹⁰²⁴ She commends the nationalist movement in Morocco for introducing education for girls. Mernissi said:¹⁰²⁵

Nationalists held a particularly optimistic belief in Morocco's ability to rejuvenate its structures, revitalize itself, shake off futile anachronisms, and bridge the centuries separating it from the industrial world. By 1942 schooling for women, unthinkable a few decades before, was advocated by the nationalists as a necessity. They wanted to defeat the French at any cost, even if it meant interfering in the family structure.

¹⁰²² Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, xxiv.

¹⁰²³ Mernissi, xxiv.

¹⁰²⁴ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 159.

¹⁰²⁵ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 154.

Mernissi observes the modern state's takeover of education and the economy from the authority of traditional male heads of the family. The state now implements a nationwide school system and provides individual salaries for working wives, daughters, and sons.¹⁰²⁶ According to Mernissi, a major issue in Muslim states, especially in the 90s, is illiteracy, particularly among women.¹⁰²⁷ She criticizes Arab countries for disproportionately allocating resources to military expenditures while neglecting the crucial aspects of providing employment and education domestically.¹⁰²⁸ Additionally, Mernissi believes that addressing the challenges of population explosion during her time could be tackled through education.¹⁰²⁹ She stresses that education plays a pivotal role in rationalizing reproductive activity, being a determining factor in lowering birth rates. Mernissi said:¹⁰³⁰

And, by the beginning of the eighties, all the studies carried out in Morocco, particularly the survey on contraceptive use, had already shown the direct link between education and family planning: 'The level of fertility falls with each rise in the level of education'. Now, it is precisely this direct causal link between family planning and women's education which leads us to doubt the state's determination to plan rational development based on a scientific planning of resources, since this would have meant making the ending of women's illiteracy a priority.

Her publication "Chahrazad n'est pas marocaine," focused on the Moroccan state in the late 1980s, Mernissi advocates for increased commitment to girls' education, particularly in rural areas.¹⁰³¹ She argues that a significant hindrance to the well-being and empowerment of rural women is illiteracy. Drawing a contrast with Scheherazade, who used her knowledge to save her life, Mernissi highlights that illiterate women lack access to valued, salaried positions, leading to the English translation of the title "Sheherazade is not a Moroccan: Otherwise, she will be a salaried worker." Her primary goal is to encourage

¹⁰²⁶ Mernissi, 172.

¹⁰²⁷ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, xii.

¹⁰²⁸ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 168–69.

¹⁰²⁹ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, xiii.

¹⁰³⁰ Mernissi, 58.

¹⁰³¹ Mernissi, *Chahrazad n'est Pas Marocaine: Autrement Elle Serait Salarée*.

the state to actively promote women's education, emphasizing the need for internal dialogue rather than condemning from an external standpoint as seen in the Marxist tradition.¹⁰³²

While advocating for democracy and unrestricted access to education, Mernissi does not exempt Western countries from criticism. She contends that countries like the USA also grapple with educational inequality, where quality education is reserved for the affluent elite, often private, and marginalized groups like black American face exclusion. However, she notes that knowledge in Western countries is more accessible to the masses, and decision-making is more broadly shared compared to Arab countries. She said:¹⁰³³

But in spite of the blatant inequalities in the American system, knowledge is more accessible to the masses and decision-making more widely shared: two facts which mean that the American brain functions with fewer fetters than those which shackle and paralyse its Arab counterpart.

Mernissi underscores that the true battleground, which she calls "*'Ummu al-Ma'ārik*," is not the one where Arabs fight against the Americans but the one where they combat illiteracy, affecting both men and women.¹⁰³⁴ She argues that two pivotal realms of cultural activity, specifically in education—university research and media, have seen active participation from qualified female elites.¹⁰³⁵ This engagement has effectively raised awareness of the challenges currently faced by women.

In Mernissi's examination of subaltern Moroccan women, she uncovers their conscious recognition of oppression. These women now articulate complaints extending beyond traditional themes of procreation and men's love, encompassing pressing economic concerns and education. Issues such as illiteracy, unemployment, economic exploitation, inflation, and uncertainty about jobs and pay have become prominent in their narratives. This shift represents a significant transformation in women's self-perception and images of femininity in the Arab world.¹⁰³⁶ Furthermore, Mernissi notes a growing inclination among women to identify solutions to their problems. According to her studies, poor, rural and

¹⁰³² Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 65–66.

¹⁰³³ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 9.

¹⁰³⁴ Mernissi, 10.

¹⁰³⁵ Mernissi, 58.

¹⁰³⁶ Mernissi, "The Degrading Effect of Capitalism on Female Labour in a Third World Economy: The Particular Case of Craftswomen in Morocco," 56.

urban working women specifically highlight education as a crucial remedy to address their marginalization.¹⁰³⁷

4.7.2 Privileges and Educated Women's Issues

Mernissi delves into various aspects concerning educational privileges and challenges faced by educated women, particularly within the context of Morocco during her era. She asserts that the emergence of elite educated women remains predominantly an urban phenomenon, primarily confined to the middle class, leaving a significant portion of poor women excluded from this advantageous situation. She stated:¹⁰³⁸

However, though an elite of educated women has emerged, this remains an intrinsically urban phenomenon, and one limited particularly to the middle classes. The mass of poor women are still far removed from this happy condition.

Mernissi criticizes the disparities in available knowledge within institutions, especially in modern subjects like mathematics and science, where the preparation of knowledge varies between the affluent and the impoverished. She argues that employment opportunities are closely tied to the mastery of modern knowledge.¹⁰³⁹

In her work "Doing Daily Battle," Mernissi interviews two women residing in a 'harem,' one as a mistress and the other as a maidservant, underscoring the discrepancy in their harem experiences based on their class positions.¹⁰⁴⁰ Rhouni argues that Mernissi's objective in these interviews is to highlight the vast gap created by education and diplomas, easily accessible only to bourgeois women, between the educated or usually bourgeois and the illiterate and mostly poor women. Moreover, Mernissi contends in her subsequent study, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development," that this dichotomy reflects a hierarchical division in the third world between the educated and the illiterate—those with

¹⁰³⁷ Mernissi, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 1)," 77; Mernissi, "The Degrading Effect of Capitalism on Female Labour in a Third World Economy: The Particular Case of Craftswomen in Morocco"; Mernissi, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 2)."

¹⁰³⁸ Mernissi, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, 58.

¹⁰³⁹ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 80–81.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Mernissi, "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 1)," 96.

access to expertise and technology, thus possessing power and decision-making abilities, and those without.¹⁰⁴¹

Mernissi also notes the negative societal image of educated women. Many Moroccan judges identify a woman's advanced education and salary as factors causing dissent within couples and escalating the risk of confrontation and divorce. Mernissi observes that research conducted by a Ph.D. graduate from Rabat's Muhammad V University, analysing 3,000 files of a Casablanca court's cases related to family conflicts, indicates that women's work outside the home and earning an income are identified as sources of conflict.¹⁰⁴² She also highlights that relatively well-educated women encounter difficulties in marriage and remarriage, while working women who earn income outside their homes are more likely to become focal points of household conflict.¹⁰⁴³

4.7.3 An Analysis from the Islamic Perspective

Islam places a considerable emphasis on education, highlighting its significance, classification, and benefits directly and indirectly through numerous verses and Prophetic traditions. In fact, the revelation of the first surah of the *Qur'ān*, *Sūrah al-'Alaq*, delivered by Jibra'il ﷺ to the Prophet ﷺ, can be viewed as a declaration of war against illiteracy. It serves as an encouragement for people, particularly Muslims, to actively pursue knowledge, recognizing it as a fundamental element of education. Allāh ﷻ said:¹⁰⁴⁴

﴿ أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴾

Read, 'O Prophet,' in the Name of your Lord Who created - created humans from a clinging clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who taught by the pen— taught humanity what they knew not.

¹⁰⁴¹ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, 107.

¹⁰⁴² Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, xxvii.

¹⁰⁴³ Mernissi, xxvii.

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Sūrah al-'Alaq*, 96:1-5.

Imām al-Qurṭubī, in his commentary on this verse, emphasized the significance of literacy and education as essential for the advancement of civilization. He explained that the verse reflects Allāh's ﷻ command to Muslims to learn both writing and reading, as these skills are crucial for comprehending revealed knowledge and disseminating it to others.¹⁰⁴⁵ Allāh ﷻ has glorified humankind by bestowing knowledge upon them, lifting them from the darkness of ignorance into the light of understanding. Knowledge, which can be produced through reason, speech, or writing, distinguishes Prophet Adam ﷺ from the angels and is a true honour bestowed by Allāh ﷻ upon humanity. Hamka, in his *tafsīr*, also highlighted that this verse demonstrates the high value Islam places on literacy skills, as they are the means through which one can access the vast knowledge of Allah in this world.¹⁰⁴⁶

Mernissi's emphasis on the significance of education resonates with Islamic teachings, which consider the pursuit of knowledge as a religious obligation.¹⁰⁴⁷ The value Mernissi's grandmother placed on acquiring both religious and worldly knowledge aligns with the Islamic call to seek such knowledge. As co-vicegerents of Allāh ﷻ in this world, men and women are required to seek knowledge for the effective administration of the world. The understanding of this world leads to the acknowledgment of Allāh ﷻ as the Almighty and Omnipotent. Allāh ﷻ said:¹⁰⁴⁸

﴿ إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴾

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the day and night there are signs for people of reason. ‘They are’ those who remember Allāh while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth ‘and pray’, “Our Lord! You

¹⁰⁴⁵ Wahbah Mustafa Al-Zuhaylī, *Tafsir Al-Munir*, 3rd ed., vol. 15 (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2018), 598–600.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 4th ed., vol. 10 (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001), 8060–61.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Mohamad Johdi Salleh, “The Principles of Education in Islam,” in *International Seminar on Philosophy of Education and Islamic Civilisation* (Singapore, 2008), 3.

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Ṣūrah al-‘Alī-‘Imrān*, 3:190-191.

have not created ‘all of’ this without purpose. Glory be to You! Protect us from the torment of the Fire.

According to *Imām* al-Qurṭubī's analysis of this verse, one of the fundamental roles of reason, granted to all humanity, is to facilitate contemplation and reflection upon the worldly signs provided by Allāh ﷻ.¹⁰⁴⁹ In his interpretation, Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī stresses the obligation of humans to ponder the marvels of the heavens and the earth. This act, he contends, is an expression of genuine faith, as it unveils the evidence of Allāh's ﷻ as the sustainer of all creation.¹⁰⁵⁰ Al-Zuhaylī further posits that authentic faith must be rooted in compelling arguments and evidence that engender certainty in the heart, rather than relying solely on imitation or inherited beliefs. Similarly, Hamka, drawing from this verse, encourages individuals to employ their intellects in observing and reflecting upon the natural world. He underscores that every aspect of creation is imbued with signs, serving as a testament to the magnificence of Allāh ﷻ, the Creator of the universe.¹⁰⁵¹

The educational principle in Islam advocates the integration of scientific knowledge and faith in Allāh ﷻ, creating a cohesive identity for the Islamic tradition and knowledge. The combination of these two forms of knowledge shapes the identity of the Islamic tradition and knowledge, encompassing spiritual, material, emotional, ethical, social, intellectual, purposeful, and meaningful aspects. Islam encourages both men and women to engage in knowledge-seeking without discrimination based on class, race, or gender. Much like Mernissi emphasis on the empowering role of knowledge for women, Islam has long underscored how knowledge elevates the status of individuals regardless of gender. Allāh ﷻ said:¹⁰⁵²

﴿ أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَنِيتٌ عَائَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُوا رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ ۗ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي
الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴾

Is one who is devoutly obedient during periods of the night, prostrating and standing (in prayer), fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his

¹⁰⁴⁹ Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsir Al-Qurṭhubi*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Al-Ḥifnāwī and Maḥmūd Ḥāmīd ‘Utmān, vol. 4 (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2007), 768.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Wahbah Mustafa Al-Zuhaylī, *Tafsir Al-Munir*, 3rd ed., vol. 2 (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2018), 545–48.

¹⁰⁵¹ HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 1987, 2:1032–35.

¹⁰⁵² *Ṣūrah al-Zumār*, 39:9.

Lord, (like one who does not)? Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" Only they will remember (who are) people of understanding.

In his analysis of this verse, Wahbah Al-Zuhaylī emphasized Allāh's ﷻ emphasis on the disparity between individuals based on their faith and practices, drawing a parallel between this discrepancy and the contrast between those who possess knowledge and those who do not, as well as between those who obey and those who disobey Allāh ﷻ.¹⁰⁵³ Al-Zuhaylī contends that Muslims who practice their knowledge and integrate it into their lives are deemed knowledgeable, contrasting with those who neglect to do so and are akin to ignorant individuals. Consequently, disbelievers and disobedient individuals, are considered ignorance, despite any expertise they may possess in worldly matters. Al-Zuhaylī suggests that only discerning believers can grasp and internalize these distinctions, thereby deriving lessons from them. Meanwhile, Hamka, in his interpretation of the verse, asserts that the essence of all knowledge lies in recognizing Allāh ﷻ as the Creator. He stresses that irrespective of the extent of one's knowledge, failure to acknowledge Allāh ﷻ as the Creator renders their knowledge devoid of true value, tantamount to ignorance.¹⁰⁵⁴

Nonetheless, restricting and discriminating against education contradicts Islamic teachings. Islam prohibits discrimination in education based on class, race, gender, and religion. All individuals, regardless of their background or beliefs, should be afforded equal opportunities for education, as it ultimately leads them to a deeper understanding of Allāh ﷻ. According to Nāsih 'Ulwān, both historical and contemporary Muslim scholars and jurists agree that seeking knowledge is obligatory and that women have the same educational opportunities as men. Women have the right to education, especially given their role in educating their children, who will form the next generation. He emphasizes that the knowledge women should pursue is not limited to religious studies but also encompasses worldly knowledge, drawing a parallel to the early days of Islam, when many Muslim women excelled in both religious and general knowledge.¹⁰⁵⁵

¹⁰⁵³ Wahbah Mustafa Al-Zuhaylī, *Tafsir Al-Munir*, 3rd ed., vol. 12 (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2018), 229–32.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah HAMKA, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, 4th ed., vol. 8 (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001), 6250.

¹⁰⁵⁵ 'Ulwān, *Tarbiyyah Al-Awlad Fī Al-Islām*, 1:134–38.

However, as observed by Mernissi, discrimination in education does exist in many Muslim communities. A 2018 study of 151 countries revealed that places with a higher Muslim population consistently exhibited lower female educational attainment and wider gender gaps on average.¹⁰⁵⁶ Nonetheless, these disparities are not rooted in Islamic teachings but rather in societal issues where the principles of Islam are not fully implemented. This study, therefore, concurs that women should be given their educational opportunities, as Islam commended.

Addressing Mernissi's observations on the challenges faced by educated women, especially concerning marriage, remarriage, and the potential conflicts arising from their material work status, Islam introduces the concept of "*al-Kafā'ah*" as a solution in ensuring household harmony. Etymologically "*Al-Kafā'ah*" means equal, comparable, and matching, and is employed when seeking a spouse.¹⁰⁵⁷ The Prophet ﷺ stated:¹⁰⁵⁸

تُنكحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ لِمَاهَا وَحَسَبِهَا وَجَمَاهَا وَلِدِينِهَا، فَاطْفُرُ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرَبَّتْ يَدَاكَ

A woman may be married for four things: her wealth, her lineage, her beauty and her religious commitment. Seek the one who is religiously committed, may your hands be rubbed with dust (i.e., may you prosper).

Islam encourages compatibility between husband and wife in various aspects, including social position, economic and family background, health and physical condition, religiosity, and conduct, to ensure a harmonious relationship. This approach aims to prevent conflicts and tensions arising from differing statuses and feelings of inferiority, as highlighted by Mernissi.¹⁰⁵⁹ It is important to note that while "*al-Kafā'ah*" (compatibility) is highly encouraged in Islam, it is not obligatory. Nonetheless, Muslim jurists highly recommend *al-Kafā'ah* as a guiding principle in marriage to achieve *sakīnah* (peace),

¹⁰⁵⁶ David McClendon et al., "Women's Education in the Muslim World," *Population and Development Review* 44, no. 2 (2018): 313.

¹⁰⁵⁷ A. W. Munawir, *Kamus Al-Munawir Arab-Indonesia Terlengkap* (Surabaya: Pustaka Progresif, 1997), 1221.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Naysābūrī Muslim, "Kitāb Al-Riḍā': Bāb Istihbāb Nikāh Ūāt Al-Dīn," in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Bayrūt: al-Turāth al-'Arabī, n.d.), 680 (*ḥadīth* 1466).

¹⁰⁵⁹ Nurhanisah Hadigunawan et al., "Kafaah: Impak Perbezaan Sosial Terhadap Kesejahteraan Rumah Tangga," *Jurnal Pengurusan Dan Penyelidikan Fatwa* 26, no. 2 (2021): 314, <https://jfatwa.usim.edu.my/index.php/jfatwa/article/view/424>.

mawaddah (love and affection), and *rahmah* (mercy).¹⁰⁶⁰ The challenges of finding spouses with complete compatibility, particularly in the context of employment and poverty issues observed by Mernissi in the Moroccan community, are acknowledged. Despite these challenges, the principle of *al-Kafā'ah* serves as a valuable reference for preventive measures to avoid disputes arising from the aforementioned issues.

4.8 CONCLUSION

The female issues put forward by Mernissi's was based on clear evidence of women's condition in our time. Some practices in several countries and customs were indeed proven to be misogynistic and unfair to women. Mernissi's practical demands in allocating national budgets on women's education, improving employability and healthcare, and to fairly include domestic economy in national statistics are all rightly justified. Nonetheless, several issues related to criticism of the conceptual assignment of gender roles seem to conflict with normative be against Islamic teachings.

In general, topics from this chapter can be divided into practical and conceptual issues. Practical issues such as the issue of economy and education as argued by Mernissi deserve acknowledgement and agrees with the concept of justice in Islam. On the other hand, Mernissi's criticism on conceptual issues for example the concept of *nushūz*, implementation of the *ḥijāb* ruling, and gender roles and responsibility in family institution are quite problematic and conflict with normative Islamic teachings. There exist some issues of disagreement even among Islamic scholars such as the issue of women in leadership and public places that deserve in-depth and careful discourse to ensure the rights of women are upheld and no oppression occurs.

Reviewing all of the discussions in this chapter, we can observe the relationship of Mernissi's perspective on the Islamic concept of gender equality from the issues mentioned above. Mernissi's approaches and methodologies as stated in chapter 3 are also apparent in

¹⁰⁶⁰ Maziyyatul Muzayyanah Samsul Muawan and Supri Sudin, "Analisis Konsep Kafa'ah Terhadap Keharmonian Suami Dan Isteri Dalam Konteks Isu-Isu Semasa Di Negara Brunei Darussalam," *Malaysian Journal Of Islamic Studies (MJIS)* 7, no. 2 (2023): 55–61.

her discussion of these issues. These chapters put a conceptualization discussion from chapter 3 into practical evidence and show concrete examples.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the final discussion based on the research findings and a prospective conclusion with suggested recommendation based on the viability of this study. As indicated in Chapter 1, the main objectives of this study were: (i) To analyse the objectives and aims of Islamic feminism in its pursuit of gender equality; (ii) To examine Fatema Mernissi's viewpoint regarding the Islamic concept of gender equality; (iii) To investigate Fatema Mernissi's methodology and approach when dealing with gender equality issues in Islam; (iv) To assess the standpoint of Fatema Mernissi in relation to contemporary global issues of gender equality. Hence, the structure of this chapter followed the sequence of the objectives mentioned.

To begin with, in the analysis of the objectives and goals of Islamic feminism in its pursuit of gender equality, this research explored the epistemological and historical backdrop of Islamic feminism. The study observed the varied definitions provided by different Islamic feminists, noting a common objective: to offer a feminist or women's perspective on Islam. The diversity within the spectrum of Islamic feminism leads to distinct definitions and ideas regarding the gender equality project. Although Islamic feminist definitions generally share similarities, they exhibit diverse perspectives and encompass multiple disciplines of knowledge. Consequently, this study placed emphasis on elucidating the most prominent ideas within Islamic feminism.

Secondly, the study delved into Fatema Mernissi's viewpoints on the Islamic concept of gender equality, categorizing them into various themes or topics. Mernissi's perspectives on Islamic concepts of gender equality were derived from an understanding of her works and literature, incorporating insights from other scholars' reviews of her contributions.

Thirdly, the research presented an examination of Fatema Mernissi's methodology and approach when addressing gender equality issues in Islam, drawing from her available works and interviews. Her respective methodology and approach were established through detailed discussions, as presented in Chapters 3 and 4.

Fourthly, the research evaluated Fatema Mernissi's stance concerning contemporary global issues of gender equality, along with commentary on these issues from a normative Islamic perspective. Extracting her collective views and critiques from various works, the study engaged in a thorough discussion of her views.

Hence, the exploration of the epistemological and historical background of Islamic feminism, Mernissi's perspectives on the Islamic concept of gender equality, as well as her stance on contemporary global issues of gender equality, has been discussed and analysed from a normative Islamic perspective.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study acknowledges Fatema Mernissi as an undeniable pioneer in the discourse on Islamic feminism concerning gender equality. Numerous works, analyses, and commentaries have reviewed and scrutinized her views and arguments, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Islamic feminist movement, female activists, and scholars. Her role as a scholar-activist has significantly enhanced the discussion of gender equality issues in Islam, both theoretically and practically, offering insights reflective of the realities faced by Muslim women. Her ideas and thoughts find acclaim among both Muslim and non-Muslim communities, contributing to a nuanced understanding of intersectionality within feminist thought.

However, her stance on the Islamic concept of gender equality poses challenges. Her methodologies, predominantly rooted in her background as a sociologist, strongly prioritize rationality and a secular approach to issues. Consequently, her secularistic perspective is employed as a guide in evaluating the concept of gender equality in Islam. She dismisses or demystify revealed knowledge and considered it as merely religious and

excludes it as the primary evidence for her analysis. As a result, her epistemological foundation for Islamic feminist theory relies solely on a secularized, logical, rational, and scientific approach.

The foundation of the Islamic concept of gender equality is primarily rooted in revealed knowledge. Science, logic, and rationality are not independent entities but are guided by an understanding of this revealed knowledge. Modern methodologies and approaches align with religious knowledge derived from the *Qur'ān* and Prophetic traditions. However, it is essential to emphasize that Islam does not diminish the importance of rationality and modern secular methods. As a condition of being Muslim, certain concepts within Islam require adherence as part of the faith. It is crucial to recognize that rationality and modern secular methods, as utilized by Mernissi, are valuable to ensure alignment with the objectives of Islamic justice and wisdom. Revealed knowledge, in itself, is not independent but relies on rationality and scientific methods to comprehend its meaning. Nevertheless, the application of rationality and scientific methods must adhere to Islamic discipline, placing revealed knowledge in its rightful position. Mernissi's outlook on the concept of gender equality in Islam can be summarized as follows:

- i. Mernissi views the concept of gender equality in Islam as oppressive and unequal.
- ii. Mernissi perceives the traditional Islamic family structure as founded on the subordination of females.
- iii. Mernissi posits that there exists a distinct concept of gender equality envisioned by Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and those *Qur'ānic* verses revealed by Allāh ﷻ.

It is crucial to acknowledge the two phases in Mernissi's intellectual development: the secular feminist position and the Islamic feminist position. However, from the perspective of this study, Mernissi, in her Islamic feminist position, does not discard or retract her arguments from her time in the secular feminist position. The only difference in her Islamic feminist position is a shift in focus—from critically criticizing Islam to apologetically

highlighting its positive aspects. She does not explicitly address her past criticisms as a secular feminist but instead changes her focus to emphasize the beauty of Islamic features.

This research introduces six case study issues: (i) identity and intersectionality; (ii) autonomy and religious absolutism; (iii) deconstruction of traditional family institutions; (iv) law and cultural conflict; (v) feminization of poverty; (vi) women and education. Each issue consists of various topics and subtopics. In each section, Mernissi's arguments are presented and subsequently addressed from a normative Islamic perspective in a separate subtopic at the conclusion of the issues.

She addressed the issues of identity and intersectionality by examining the identity of Muslim women and critiquing the Islamic assignment of gender identity, especially for women. Additionally, she highlighted the underlying Arab nationalism as an inspiration in various actions of the Prophet ﷺ. Pioneering the discussion on intersectionality in feminism, Mernissi brought Arab Muslim issues to the forefront of the conversation. She emphasized the significance of Arab-Muslim ethnocentricity as a crucial aspect of modernization, leaning more towards a political claim than a racial one.¹⁰⁶¹ Despite underscoring the importance of Arab states engaging with the world, including the West, to strengthen Arab and Islamic identity, Mernissi criticized the disunity among Arab nations and their lack of honour, especially when subordinating themselves to Western nations that did not reciprocate with importance.¹⁰⁶² Nevertheless, Mernissi's proposal for Muslim identity involves embracing secularism and reducing the influence of religion on the state.

In terms of women's autonomy and religious absolutism, she examines how certain concepts in Islam, such as *ḥijāb* and *ḥudūd*, serve as tools to restrict women's autonomy under the rule of patriarchal leaders. She argues that religious absolutism is utilized by these rulers to silence discussions on this matter. Additionally, she presents historical narratives of female rulers in Islam to challenge the restrictive belief that Islam opposes female leadership. Mernissi highlights that one function of religious discourse is to transform

¹⁰⁶¹ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 16.

¹⁰⁶² Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, 54–55.

issues of an economic, political, and social nature into religious and moral concerns.¹⁰⁶³ Contrary to the claims of some American experts, Mernissi asserts that the primary force shaping the Arab world today is not religion but information technology.¹⁰⁶⁴

Regarding the deconstruction of the traditional family institutions, Mernissi critiques societal biases and unequal treatment regarding the sanctity and virginity of both men and women. She argues that the traditional Islamic family structure was rooted in the submission and oppression of women, providing evidence of the unfairness within Islam in terms of wifhood and motherhood. Mernissi sees modernity as a solution to the traditional Islamic unit, as it promotes desegregation, the independent choice of marriage partners, and the mobility of nuclear families. However, her criticism is somewhat one-dimensional and touches on various concepts in the Islamic family that should be viewed holistically.

In the realm of law and cultural conflict, Mernissi examines the connection between *ḥijāb* and extremism, criticizing the irresponsible allocation of budgets by Petrodollar Arab Emirs toward militarism. She also condemns excessive violence within households. Mernissi advocates for educating wives on reproductive rights and healthcare, emphasizing the pivotal role of education in managing birth rates. However, Mernissi's assertion regarding the relationship between *ḥijāb* and extremism is a generalization, lacking evidence for the correlation or causation between the two.

Concerning the feminization of poverty, Mernissi sheds light on the negative stigma attached to working women and husbands who permit their wives to work. She brings attention to manipulative cases where the aristocracy exploits women living in poverty. Additionally, Mernissi underscores the economic discrimination faced by women in national policies and emphasizes the crucial role of domestic economy in supporting other sectors. Her critique of this economic inequality deserves recognition for bringing this issue to the global platform.

In the realm of women and education, Mernissi emphasizes the significance of education in elevating the status of women and providing them with the opportunity to

¹⁰⁶³ Mernissi, "Etat Planification Nationale et Discours Scientifique Sur La Femme," 92, 96.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*, 1992, xi.

escape poverty. She condemns the disparity in education between the aristocracy and the less privileged. Mernissi also addresses the privileges and issues faced by educated women. Her perspective on education is intertwined with her views on the economy, making both discussions crucial for women's empowerment. Acknowledging her critique of educational inequality is essential for enhancing educational policies and services in Morocco.

Mernissi anticipated that Muslim women are advancing toward a broader objective beyond mere equality with men. The women's goal is articulated as a global rejection of established sexual patterns that are frustrating for males and degrading for females. This suggests a revolutionary reorganization of society, commencing with economic structures and extending to its very language.¹⁰⁶⁵ Mernissi speculates that women's liberation in an Arab context is likely to follow a faster and more radical trajectory compared to Western countries.¹⁰⁶⁶

Overall, Mernissi's stance on global gender equality issues aligns with a secular and feminist perspective. Her arguments are not primarily rooted in an Islamic methodological approach but are constructed based on a sociological framework. Nevertheless, Mernissi's arguments are crucial for shedding light on real instances of misogynistic practices and unconscious oppression faced by Muslim women on the global stage. Her works have significantly enriched academic discussions related to the issues and rights of women in Islam.

5.3 LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In the pursuit of a comprehensive understanding, this study encounters certain limitations. Firstly, the focus on Islamic feminism discussions centres primarily on Fatema Mernissi's perspective on the concept of gender equality in Islam, thus potentially overlooking other dimensions of her work that warrant exploration. Secondly, the discussions are confined to Mernissi's ideas, neglecting the opportunity to study and compare them with those of other

¹⁰⁶⁵ Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, 1987, 176.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Mernissi, 177.

significant Islamic feminists. Lastly, the selection of global gender equality issues is somewhat limited, as there are numerous other issues that could be explored in depth.

For future research endeavours, it is suggested to explore other dimensions of Fatema Mernissi's work or delve into the perspectives of various Islamic feminist figures, whether or not they are directly related to the concept of gender equality. The diverse schools of thought within Islamic feminism remain largely unexplored. Additionally, examining the varying discussions, arguments, and perspectives among different Islamic feminists adds complexity to the discourse. Islamic feminists may also differ in their tolerance for issues such as LGBT rights and religious pluralism. Further, an in-depth study of Islamic feminist methodologies and approaches is recommended for a comprehensive understanding.

Another suggestion for future research involves focusing on specific Islamic feminist movements within Muslim countries. This study could investigate their influence on the enhancement or modification of *Shari'ah* law concerning gender and how it has positively affected Muslim women. Given that Islamic feminists have often been depicted negatively by Islamists, this research could contribute to initiating discussions and potentially improving gender dynamics in Muslim countries.

REFERENCES

- Abbas, Shadiya. "Peranan Sisters in Islam Dalam Membela Kaum Wanita: Satu Tinjauan Dari Sudut Akidah." Universiti Malaya, 2003.
- Abd-Allah, Umar Faruq. "Islam and the Cultural Imperative." *ICR Journal* 1, no. 1 (December 1, 2009). <https://doi.org/10.52282/icr.v1i1.10>.
- Abdul-Ghafur, Saleemah. *Living Islam Out Loud: American Muslim Women Speak*. Massachusetts: Beacon Pres, 2012.
- Abdul-Hussain, Hussain. "Why Lebanon Matters." Now Lebanon, 2013. <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/commentaryanalysis/why-lebanon-matters>.
- Abdullah, Raihanah Haji. "Poligami Di Malaysia." *Jurnal Syariah* 5, no. 2 (1997): 167–86. <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JS/issue/view/625>.
- Abou-Bakr, Omaima. "Islamic Feminism? What's in a Name? Preliminary Reflections." *Middle East Women's Studies Review* 15, no. 16 (2001): 1–4.
- . "Le Féminisme Islamique et La Production de La Connaissance. Perspectives Dans l'Egypte Postrevolutionnaire." In *Feminismes Islamiques*, edited by Zahra Ali, 1–10. Paris: Le Fabrique Editions, 2012.
- . "Turning the Tables: Perspectives on the Construction of "Muslim Manhood"." *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 11, no. 2–3 (2013): 89–107.
- Abou El Fadl, Khaled. *And God Knows the Soldiers: The Authoritative and Authoritarian in Islamic Discourses*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2001.
- . "Tensions in Tradition: Hadith, Gender, and Reasonable Interpretation." *UCLA Journal of Islamic and Near Eastern Law* 19, no. 1 (2021).
- . *The Search for Beauty in Islam: A Conference of the Books*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005.
- Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī. *Al-Umm*. Vol. 6. Madīnah: Dār al-Wafā' li al-Ṭaba'ah wa al-Nashru wa al-Tawzi', n.d.
- Abugideiri, Hibba. "Wadud, Amina." *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Women*, 2013. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref:oiso/9780199764464.001.0001/acref-9780199764464-e-0382?rskey=amawKW&result=359>.
- Afshar, Haleh. "Review of The Forgotten Queens of Islam by Fatima Mernissi; A World of Difference: Islam and Gender Hierarchy in Turkey by Julie Marcus." Translated by Mary Jo Lakeland. *Signs* 21, no. 1 (1995): 205–8.
- . *Women and Politics in the Third World*. Oxford: Taylor & Francis, 1996.

- Afzal, Nazir. "Chapter 1." In *The Prosecutor*. Random House, 2020.
- Agency, AFP News. "Muslim Gay Canadian Launches Book in Malaysia Despite 'Ban.'" Al Arabiya News, 2012.
<https://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012%2F05%2F19%2F215087>.
- Ahmadian, Hajjatul Islam. "Criticism of the Fake Title 'Islamic Feminism' in the Book 'Feminism and Family.'" Iqna: International Quran News Agency, 2021.
<https://isfahan.iqna.ir/fa/news/3980444/خانواده-کتاب-فمینیسم-و-اسلامی-در-کتاب-فمینیسم-و-خانواده>.
- Ahmed, Akbar S. *Journey Into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization*. Brookings Institution Press, 2007.
- Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Ait Sabbah, Fatna. *Woman in the Muslim Unconscious*. Translated by Mary Jo Lakeland. New York: Pergamon Press, 1984.
- Akbulut, Zeynep. "The Headscarf Ban and Muslim Women's Rights Discourse in Turkey." In *Contesting Feminisms: Gender and Islam in Asia*. New York: SUNY Press, 2015.
- Akhter, Shahida. "Hossain, Roquiah Sakhawat." Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh, 2012.
https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Hossain,_Roquiah_Sakhawat.
- Al-'Asqalānī, Ibn Ḥajar. *Fath Al-Bārī Fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*. Vol. 9. Dar al-Makrifah, 1959.
- Al-Aṣḥāhānī, 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn. *Kitāb Al-Aghānī*. Edited by Iḥsān 'Abbās, Ibrāhīm Al-Sa'āfīn, and Bakr 'Abbās. 3rd editio. Vol. 11. Bayrūt: Dār al-Ṣādir, 2008.
- . *Kitāb Al-Aghānī*. Edited by Iḥsān 'Abbās, Ibrāhīm Al-Sa'āfīn, and Bakr 'Abbās. 3rd editio. Vol. 17. Bayrūt: Dār al-Ṣādir, 2008.
- Al-Bājuriyy, Ibrāhīm bin 'Ahmad. *Ḥāshiyah Al-Bājuriyy*. Edited by Mahmūd Ṣāliḥ Al-Ḥadīdī. Lubnan: Dār al-Minhāj, 2016.
- Al-Bakri, Zulkifli bin Mohamad. *Istilah-Istilah Fiqah Dan Usul: Empat Mazhab*. JAKIM, 2017.
- Al-Bayhaqī, Abū Bakar 'Ahmad bin al-Ḥussayn. "Ḥuquq Al-'Awlād Wa Al-'Ahlayn." In *Shu'ab Al-'Imān*, Vol. 6. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000.
- Al-Bukhārī, Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il al-Ju'fī. "Kitāb Al-Fitan: Bāb Al-Fitnah Al-Lati Tamūju Kamawji Al-Baḥr." In *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 6. Bayrūt: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987.
- . "Kitāb Al-Riqā': Bāb Al-Tawāḍu." In *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 5. Bayrūt: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987.

- . “Kitāb Maghāzi: Bāb Kitāb Al-Nabī Ilā Kistrā Wa Qaysar.” In *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 4. Bayrūt: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987.
- Al-Būṭī, Muḥammad Sa‘īd Ramaḍān. *Hurriyyat Al-Insān Fī Zil ‘Ubūdiyyatihi Lillah*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āṣir, 2006.
- Al-Dhahabī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. *Siyar A‘lām Al-Nubalā*. Vol. 2. Bayrūt: Muassasat al-Risālah, 1992.
- Al-Dīn, ‘Abd al-Rabb Nawwāb. *‘Amal Al-Mar‘ah Wa Mawqif Al-Islām Minhu*. al-Manṣūrah: Maṭābi‘ al-Wafa’, 1986.
- Al-Hibri, Azizah. “An Introduction to Muslim Women’s Rights.” In *Windows of Faith: Muslim Women Scholar-Activists in North America*, edited by Gisela Webb, 52–53. Syracuse University Press, 2000.
- Al-Hindī, ‘Ala’ al-Dīn ‘Alī al-Muttaqī. “Kanz Al-‘Ummāl Fi Sunan Al-Āqwāl Wa Al-Af‘āl,” 1985.
- Al-‘Alā‘ī, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Kaykaldī. *Tahqīq Munīf Al-Rutbah Li Man Tsabata Lahu Sharīf Al-Suḥbah*. Edited by Muḥammad Sulaymān Al-Ashqir. al-Riyādh: Dār al-Āṣimah, 1990.
- Al-‘Ayd, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī Ibn Daqīq. *Sharḥ Al-Arba‘īn Al-Nawawīyyah Fī Al-Aḥādīth Al-Ṣaḥīḥah Al-Nabawīyyah*. Bayrūt: Mu’assasah al-Rayyān, 2003.
- Al-Jawziyya, Ibn Qayyim. *‘Awn Al-Ma‘bud Sharh Sunan Abi Dawud*. Edited by Muhammad ‘Uthman Sharaf al-Ḥaq al-‘Aḏzhīm ‘Abd al-Rahman. 2nd ed. Vol. 6. Madīnah: al-Maktaba al-Salafīyya, 1968.
- Al-Khin, Muṣṭafā, Muṣṭafā Al-Bughā, and ‘Alī Al-Sharbajī. *Al-Fiqh Al-Manhajīyy ‘alā Madhhabī Al-‘Imām Al-Shāfi‘ī*. Vol. 4. Damshiq: Dār al-Qalam li al-Ṭabā‘ah wa al-Nashru wa al-Tawzī’, 1992.
- Al-Maqdisī, Ibn Qudāmāh. *Al-Mughnī*. Vol. 10. Riyādh: Dār al-Ālam al-Kutub, 1997.
- Al-Marāghī, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā. *Tafsir Al-Maraghi*. Translated by Bahrūn Abu Bakar and Hery Noer Aly Semarang. Semarang: PT. Karya Toha Putra, 1986.
- Al-Mubarakfuri, Safiur Rahman. *Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhi Bi Sharh Jami’ Al-Tirmidhi*. Vol. 4. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, n.d.
- Al-Mutawakel, A. M. A. *Gender and the Writing of Yemeni Women Writers*. Amsterdam: Dutch University, 2005.
- Al-Nawawī, Abū Zakaria Yaḥya ibn Sharaf al-Dimashqī. “Bāb Wasiyyah Al-Nisā’.” In *Riyāḍ Al-Ṣālihīn*. Damshiq: Dār ‘Ibn Kathīr, 2007.
- Al-Qanūjī, Muḥammad Ṣadiq Khān. *Husn Al-Uswa Bimā Thabata Min Allāh Wa Rasūlihi Fi Al-Niswa*. Bayrūt: Mu’assasah al-Risālah, 1981.
- Al-Qaraḍhāwī, Yūsuf. *Min Fiqh Al-Dawlat Fī Al-Islām*. 3rd ed. al-Qāhirah: Dār al-

- Shurūq, 2001.
- Al-Qarāfī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Idrīs. *Al-Furūq Anwār Al-Burūq Fi Anwā' Al-Furūq*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1998.
- Al-Qurṭubī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. *Al-Jāmi‘ Li Ahkām Al-Qur‘ān*. Vol. 6. Bayrūt: Mu’assasah al-Risālah, 2006.
- . *Tafsir Al-Qurthubi*. Edited by Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Al-Ḥifnāwī and Maḥmūd Ḥāmīd ‘Utmān. Vol. 6. Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2007.
- . *Tafsir Al-Qurthubi*. Edited by Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Al-Ḥifnāwī and Maḥmūd Ḥāmīd ‘Utmān. Vol. 12. Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2007.
- . *Tafsir Al-Qurthubi*. Edited by Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Al-Ḥifnāwī and Maḥmūd Ḥāmīd ‘Utmān. Vol. 4. Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2007.
- Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn. *Al-Tafsīr Al-Kabīr*. Vol. 2. Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.
- Al-Sha‘rāwī, Muḥammad Mutawallī. *Al-Khawāṭir*. Vol. 3. al-Qāhirah: Akhbār al-Yawm, 1997.
- Al-Sharif, Ahmed. “Kuwaiti Poet Wins Million’s Poet First Prize.” *Al-Arabiya News*, 2010. <https://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2010/04/08/105288>.
- Al-Sharif, Manal. “A Saudi Woman Who Dared to Drive.” TED, 2013. https://www.ted.com/talks/manal_al_sharif_a_saudi_woman_who_dared_to_drive.
- Al-Sharmani, Mulki. “Islamic Feminism: Transnational and National Reflections.” *Approaching Religion* 4, no. 2 (2014).
- . “Islamic Feminism and Reforming Muslim Family Laws,” 2011.
- Al-Shātibī, Ibrāhīm ‘ibn Musā ‘ibn Muḥammad. *Al-Muwāfaqāt Fi Uṣūl Al-Fiqh*. Edited by Abū ‘Ubaydah Mashūr ibn Ḥasan. Vol. 2. Dār ‘Ibn ‘Affān, 1997.
- Al-Shihri, Abdullah. “Manal Al-Sherif, Saudi Woman, Detained For Defying Driving Ban.” *Huffington Post*, 2011. https://web.archive.org/web/20110523152848/http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/05/21/manal-al-sherif-saudi-arabia-driving-ban_n_865120.html.
- Al-Shīrāzī, Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Alī. *Muhadhdhab Fī Fiqh Al-Imām Al-Shāfi‘ī*. Vol. 2. Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr, 1980.
- Al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr. *Jāmi‘ Al-Bayān ‘an Ta’wīl Āy Al-Qur‘ān*. Vol. 2. Bayrūt: Mu’assasah al-Risālah, 1994.
- . *Jāmi‘ Al-Bayān ‘an Ta’wīl Āy Al-Qur‘ān*. Vol. 10. Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1999.
- Al-Wadhaf, Yahya Hassan. “A Critical Reading to a Short Story by Ramzia Al-Eryani.” *Majallah Al-Dirāsāt Al-Ijtīmā‘īah* 20, no. 41 (2014): 7–26. file:///C:/Users/Asus-

PC.DESKTOP-

HM1SUT4/Downloads/A_Critical_Reading_to_a_Short_Story_by_R.pdf.

- Al-Waqīdī, Muḥammad 'Ibn 'Umar. *Al-Maghāzī*. 3rd Editio. Bayrūt: Dār al-‘Ālamī, 1989.
- Al-Zuḥaylī, Muḥammad. *Al-Mu‘tamad Fī Al-Fiqh Al-Shāfi‘ī*. Vol. 3. Dimashq: Dār al-Qalam, 2011.
- Al-Zuhaylī, Wahbah. *Al-Fiqh Al-Islāmī Wa 'Adillatuhu*. Vol. 9. Damshiq: Dār al-Fikr, 1997.
- . *Al-Fiqh Al-Islāmī Wa 'Adillatuhu*. Vol. 4. Damshiq: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu‘āshir, 2004.
- Al-Zuḥaylī, Wahbah Mustafa. *Tafsir Al-Munir*. 3rd ed. Vol. 9. Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2018.
- . *Tafsir Al-Munir*. 3rd ed. Vol. 7. Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2018.
- . *Tafsir Al-Munir*. 3rd ed. Vol. 15. Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2018.
- . *Tafsir Al-Munir*. 3rd ed. Vol. 2. Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2018.
- . *Tafsir Al-Munir*. 3rd ed. Vol. 12. Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2018.
- . *Tafsir Al-Munir*. Dimashq: Dār al-Fikr, 2009.
- Al Jazeera: Centre for Studies. “Dr. Nilofar Sakhi.” Accessed March 13, 2023. <https://studies.aljazeera.net/en/profile/dr-nilofar-sakhi>.
- Alafianta, Novan Fatchu, Muhammad Abdul Aziz, and Jaya Sahputra. “A Historical Review of the Development of the Islamic Banking System (An Analytical Study).” *Al-Iktisab: Journal of Islamic Economic Law* 5, no. 2 (2021).
- Alemagna, Lilian. “Tout Voile Dehors.” www.liberation.fr, 2010. https://web.archive.org/web/20150218010718/http://www.liberation.fr/politiques/2010/02/18/tout-voile-dehors_610641.
- Ali-Karamali, Sumbul. “WISE Muslim Women Standing Up.” The Huffington Post, 2015. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/wise-muslim-women-standing_b_314643.
- Ali, Kecia. *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Alison Jaggar. “Political Philosophies of Women’s Liberation.” In *Feminism and Philosophy*. New Jersey: Adam & Co., 1977.
- ALQST Organization for Supporting Human Rights. “نسيمة السادة.” Accessed March 20, 2023. <https://www.alqst.org/ar/prisonersofconscience/nassima-al-sadah>.
- America at a Crossroads. “The Mosque in Morgantown.” Accessed March 26, 2023. https://www.pbs.org/weta/crossroads/about/show_mosque.html.

- Amireh, Amal, and Lisa Suhair Majaj. *Going Global: The Transnational Reception of Third World Women Writers*. London: Psychology Press, 2000.
- Amnesty International. "Saudi Arabia: Two More Women Human Rights Activists Arrested in Unrelenting Crackdown," 2018.
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/08/saudi-arabia-two-more-women-human-rights-activists-arrested-in-unrelenting-crackdown/>.
- Anas, Mālik ibn. "Bāb Al-Nahā 'an Al-Qawl Bi Al-Qadr." In *Muwaṭṭa' Al-Imām Mālik*, Vol. 6. Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1991.
- Andriani, Astri Dwi, Destiana Husnul Chotimah, and Ahmad Fauzi Yuzillah. "Strategi Komunikasi Menantu Perempuan Dengan Mertua Perempuan Dalam Menghadapi Konflik Keluarga." *IKOMIK: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Dan Informasi* 3, no. 1 (2023).
- Anwar, Zainah. "Fatima, the Storyteller." In *Musawah Vision*, edited by Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Special. Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2016.
- Arifin, M. Fiqih Syamsul. "Tafsir Ideologis Dalam Pemikiran Fatimah Mernissi." Institut Agama Islam Negeri Jember, 2020.
- Ashour, Radwa. *Arab Women Writers: A Critical Reference Guide, 1873–1999*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2008.
- Askari, M.H. "Zaibunissa Hamidullah Passes Away." *Dawn*, 2000.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20020225122550/http://www.dawn.com/2000/09/12/nat10.htm>.
- Asma Lamrabet: Biography. "Asma Lamrabet." Accessed March 28, 2023. <http://asma-lamrabet.com/biographie/anglais/>.
- Association, American Anthropological. "Statement on Human Rights." *American Anthropologist* 49, no. 4 (1947).
- Asyadily, Muhamad Hasan. "Telaah Kritis Pemahaman Hijab Dalam Framework Fatima Mernissi." *Fikrah: Jurnal Ilmu Aqidah Dan Studi Keagamaan* 7, no. 2 (2019): 303–31.
- Atlantic Council. "Nilofar Sakhi." Accessed March 13, 2023.
<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/expert/nilofar-sakhi/>.
- Aulia, Vira, and Nur Azizah. "A Historical Review on Halal Industry in the World: Challenge and Improvement Opportunities." *Multidisciplinary Reviews* 7, no. 1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2024020>.
- Azka, Darul, and M. Zainuri. *Potret Ideal Hubungan Suami Istri 'Uqūd Al-Lujjayn Dalam Disharmoni Modernitas dan Teks-Teks Religius Lajnah*. Edited by Syahrowardi, Agus Ibrahim A. Hafidz, and Thohari Muslim. Kediri: Lajnah Bahtsul Masa-il Madrasah Hidayatul Mubtadi-ien, 2006.

- Badran, Margot. "An Historical Overview of Conferences on Islamic Feminism: Circulations and New Challenges." *Revue Des Mondes Musulmans et de La Méditerranée* 128 (2010). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4000/remmm.6824>.
- . "Between Secular and Islamic Feminism/s: Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 1, no. 1 (2005): 6–28. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40326847>.
- . "Feminism and the Qur'an." In *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Vol. 2. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- . *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1999.
- . *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- . "Islam's Other Half: What Does Islamic Feminism Have to Offer? Where Does It Come from? Where Is It Going?" *the Guardian*, 2008. <https://web.archive.org/web/20171201232847/https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2008/nov/09/islam-women>.
- . "Islamic Feminism: What's in a Name?" *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, 2002. <https://web.archive.org/web/20150320074746/http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2002/569/cul.htm>.
- . "Khartoum's Answer to Beijing." *Al-Ahram Weekly*, September 1996.
- . *Opening the Gates, Second Edition: An Anthology of Arab Feminist Writing*. 2nd ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004.
- . "The Feminist Vision in the Writings of Three Turn-of-the-Century Egyptian Women." *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)* 15, no. 1–2 (1988). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530198808705469>.
- Badru, Pade, and Brigid M. Sackey. *Islam in Africa South of the Sahara: Essays in Gender Relations and Political Reform*. Scarecrow Press, 2013.
- Baltaji, Mohd. *Makānah Al-Mar'ah Fī Al-Qurān Al-Karīm Wa Al-Sunnah Al-Ṣaḥīḥah*. al-Qāherah: Maktabat al-Shabāb, n.d.
- Banglapedia.org. "Choudhurani, Nawab Faizunnesa." Accessed March 21, 2023. https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Choudhurani,_Nawab_Faizunnesa.
- Banu, U. A. B. Razia Akter. "Chapter VIII Islam and Women in Bangladesh." In *Islam in Bangladesh*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1992. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004478046_011.
- Barlas, Asma. "Asma Barlas." ITHACA College. Accessed March 27, 2023. <https://www.ithaca.edu/faculty/abarlas>.
- . *Believing Women in Islam: Un-Reading Patriarchal Interpretations of the*

- Quran*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002.
- . “Engaging Islamic Feminism: Provincializing Feminism as Master Narrative.” In *Islamic Feminism: Current Perspectives*, edited by Anitta Kynsilehto, Occasional:15–24. Finland: Tampere Peace Research Institute, 2008.
- . “Qur’anic Hermeneutics.” In *International Congress on Islamic Feminism*. Barcelona, 2005.
- Barlow, Rebecca, and Shahram Akbarzadeh. “Women’s Rights in the Muslim World: Reform or Reconstruction?” *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 8 (2006): 1481–94.
- Baron-Cohen, Simon, Michael Lombardo, and Helen Tager-Flusberg. *Understanding Other Minds: Perspectives from Developmental Social Neuroscience*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Baron, Beth. *Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender, and Politics*. 1st ed. University of California Press, 2005. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ppc6z>.
- BBC News. “Afghan Women’s Official Shot Dead,” 2006. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/5376968.stm.
- BBC News. “Iran Opposition Lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh Detained,” 2010. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11243683>.
- BBC News. “Nasrin Sotoudeh: Iran Lawyer Who Defended Headscarf Protesters Jailed,” 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-47531312>.
- BBC News. “Police Chief Nazir Afzal Quit to Appear on Question Time,” 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-40101558>.
- BBC News. “Profile: Malala Yousafzai,” 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-23241937>.
- BBC Pashto. “امنستي انټرنېشنل پر ملاله یوسفزی برید و غاڼده,” ۲۰۱۲. https://www.bbc.com/pashto/pashtonkwa/2012/10/121009_ns_malala_yusufzai.
- Beck, Sanderson. “Indonesia and the Dutch 1800-1950.” World Peace Communications, 2007. <https://www.san.beck.org/20-11-Indonesia1800-1950.html>.
- Bedell, Geraldine. “Interview: ‘I Cringed When They Compared Me to Martin Luther.’” *The Guardian*, 2008. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/aug/03/women>.
- Bell, Jo, Tania Hershman, and Ailsa Holland. *On This Day She: Putting Women Back Into History One Day at a Time*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022.
- Bentahar, Ziad. “Beyond Harem Walls: Redefining Women’s Space in Works by Assia Djebar, Malek Alloula and Fatima Mernissi.” *Hawwa* 7, no. 1 (2009): 25–38. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156920809X449526>.
- Beyer, Susanne, and Henryk M. Broder. “Islam Needs a Sexual Revolution.” *Der Spiegel*, 2009. <https://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/german-turkish-author-seyran->

ates-islam-needs-a-sexual-revolution-a-654704.html.

Bhatia, Shyam. *Goodbye Shahzadi: A Political Biography of Benazir Bhutto*. Lotus Collection, 2008.

biography.com. "Queen Noor of Jordan Biography." Accessed March 18, 2023. <https://web.archive.org/web/20110610020305/http://www.biography.com/articles/Queen-Noor-of-Jordan-9542217?part=0>.

"Birinci Jild." In *National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan (O'zME)*. Tashkent: National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan State Scientific Publishing House, 2000.

Bloomberg, Michael R. "Sadiq Khan: The World's 100 Most Influential People." *Time* 100, 2018. <https://time.com/collection/most-influential-people-2018/5217530/sadiq-khan/>.

Boone, Jon. "Taliban Shoot Dead Afghan Politician Who Championed Women's Rights." *The Guardian*, 2009. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/apr/13/taliban-afghanistan-kandahar-achakzai-womens-rights>.

Booth, M. "Locating Women's Autobiographical Writing in Colonial Egypt." *Journal of Women's History* 25, no. 2 (2013): 36–60. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jowh.2013.0019>.

Booth, Marilyn. "Review of Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World by Fatima Mernissi." Translated by Mary Jo Lakeland. *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 29, no. 1 (1995): 56–57.

Bourget, Carine. "Complicity with Orientalism in Third-World Women's Writing: Fatima Mernissi's Fictive Memoirs." *Research in African Literatures* 44, no. 3 (2013): 30–49.

Brown, Jonathan A.C. *Slavery and Islam*. London: Oneworld Publications, 2020.

Brumberg, Daniel, and Farideh Farhi. *Power and Change in Iran: Politics of Contention and Conciliation*. Indiana Se. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016.

Brumberg, Daniel. "Review of Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World by Fatima Mernissi." *Contemporary Sociology* 23, no. 5 (1994): 680–81.

Bullock, Katherine H. "Review of The Veil and The Male Elite by Fatima Mernissi." *Journal of Law and Religion* 15, no. 1 (2001): 529–33.

Burhanuddin, Tamyiz. *Fatima Mernissi: Menggugat Ketidakadilan Gender Dalam Pemikiran Islam Kontemporer*. Yogyakarta: Jendela, 2003.

Cahill, Susan N. *Wise Women: Over Two Thousand Years of Spiritual Writing by Women*. W.W. Norton and Company, 1996.

Çamkara, Ayşe. "Zafer Hanim'in Aşk-I Vatan Romani." Hece. Accessed March 21, 2023. <https://web.archive.org/web/20120226070431/http://www.hece.com.tr/hece.131.ozel.7.htm>.

- Campbell, Robert B. "Fatimah Rifat." In *Crosshatching in Global Culture: A Dictionary of Modern Arab Writers (An Updated English Version of R.B. Campbell's "Contemporary Arab Writers.")*, edited by John J Donohue Leslie Tramontini, Vol. 2. Lebanon: Orient-Institut der DMG Beirut, 2004.
- Carastathis, Anna. "The Concept of Intersectionality in Feminist Theory." *Philosophy Compass* 9, no. 5 (2014): 304–14.
- Center on Communication Leadership & Policy. "Irshad Manji." USC Annenberg, 2017. <https://web.archive.org/web/20200222222806/https://communicationleadership.usc.edu/fellows/senior/irshad-manji/>.
- Chant, Sylvia. "Re-thinking the 'Feminization of Poverty' in Relation to Aggregate Gender Indices." *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 7, no. 2 (2006): 201–20.
- Chen, Martha; Joann; Vanek, Francie; Lund, James; Heintz, Renana; Jhabvala, and Christine Bonner. "Progress of the World's Women 2005: Women, Work and Poverty," 2005.
- Chesa, Chesa, Juliet Oyoyo, and Gbenga Faturoti. "Female Editor, Bilikisu; El-Miskeen, 4 Others Die In Hajj Stampede." *Dailyindependentnig.com*, 2015. <https://web.archive.org/web/20150930023056/http://dailyindependentnig.com/2015/09/female-editor-bilikisu-el-miskeen-4-others-die-in-hajj-stampede/>.
- Chikhaoui, Naima. "La Question Des Femmes Vue Par Fatima Mernissi." *Prologues*, 1997.
- Chodorow, Nancy J. *The Reproduction of Mothering*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.
- Chowdhury, Zeenat Rezwana. "Begum Sufia Kamal, as I Knew Her." *The Daily Star*, 2019. <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/tribute/news/begum-sufia-kamalas-i-knew-her-1759429>.
- Citron, Jérôme, and Shirin Ebadi. *Je Porte La Voix de Mon Peuple. CFTD Magazine*. Vol. 427, 2016. <https://www.syndicalismehebdo.fr/article/shirin-ebadi-je-porte-la-voix-de-mon-peuple>.
- Coleman, Isobel. *Paradise Beneath Her Feet: How Women Are Transforming the Middle East*. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 2010.
- Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). "Hidaya Sultan Al-Salem Killed," 2001. <https://cpj.org/data/people/hidaya-sultan-al-salem/>.
- Conlin, Sarah E., Richard P. Douglass, and Emma H. Moscardini. "Predicting Transphobia among Cisgender Women and Men: The Roles of Feminist Identification and Gender Conformity." *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health* 25, no. 1 (2021): 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19359705.2020.1780535>.
- Cook, Michael. *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*.

- Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Cooke, Miriam. *Nazira Zeineddine: A Pioneer of Islamic Feminism*. London: Oneworld Publications, 2010.
- . *Women Claim Islam: Creating Islamic Feminism through Literature*. New York, London: Routledge, 2001.
- Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. "Speakers: Prof. Dr. Siti Musdah Mulia." Accessed March 29, 2023. <https://web.archive.org/web/20140419070229/http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=27&sn=60>.
- Craw, Victoria. "Emmy-Award Winning Filmmaker Deeyah Khan Launches Online Magazine Sister-Hood Aimed at Giving Muslim Women a Voice." *news.com.au*, 2016. <https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/news-life/emmyaward-winning-filmmaker-deeyah-khan-launches-online-magazine-sisterhood-aimed-at-giving-muslim-women-a-voice/news-story/f61efcf5b0650060e3f54cc17f5c291b>.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241–99.
- Curtiss, Richard H. "Women's Rights an Affair of State for Tunisia," 1993.
- D., Kaye. "Domestic Violence among Women Seeking Post-Abortion Care." *International Journal Gynaecol Obstet* 75, no. 3 (2003): 323.
- Dadah, Dadah. "Metode Kritik Matan Hadis Misoginis Menurut Fatimah Mernissi." *Diroyah: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Hadis* 3, no. 1 (2018): 11–18. <https://doi.org/10.15575/diroyah.v3i1.3727>.
- Dalbey, Alex. "TERF Wars: Why Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminists Have No Place in Feminism." *Daily Dot*, 2018. <https://www.dailydot.com/irl/terf-meaning/>.
- Daly, Martin, and Margo Wilson. *Homicide*. New York: Routledge, 1988.
- Daly, Mary. *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.
- Daoud, Zakiya. *Féminisme et Politique Au Maghreb (Feminism and Politics in the Maghreb)*. Casablanca: Eddif, 1993.
- Dastgir, Maryam. "Interrogations of Women Continue/Maryam Dastgir." *Cyrus News Agency*, 2006. <https://web.archive.org/web/20110708220635/http://www.cyrusnews.com/news/en/?mi=6&ni=442>.
- Daud, Wan Mohd Nor Wan. "Containing Muslim Extremism and Radicalism." *Sari - International Journal of the Malay World and Civilisation* 28, no. 1 (2010).
- Davies, Lizzy. "Election Candidate in Headscarf Causes Uproar in France." *The*

- Guardian, 2010. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/feb/10/french-election-headscarf-candidate>.
- Dawn. "Begum Zaibunissa Hamidullah," 2004. <https://web.archive.org/web/20041201155957/http://www.dawn.com/2000/09/12/ed.htm#2>.
- Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Georgetown University. "Meet the Scholar: Snapshots of Intellectual Journeys; Kecia Ali." Accessed March 11, 2023. <https://arabic.georgetown.edu/meet-the-scholar-kecia-ali/>.
- Dialmy, Abdessamad. *Sexualité et Discours Au Maroc [Sexuality and Discourse in Morocco]. Afrique Orient*. Casablanca, 1988.
- Diani, Hera. "In the Land Where Everyone's God: Interview with Musdah Mulia." Magdalene.co, 2014. <https://magdalene.co/story/in-the-land-where-everyones-god-interview-with-musdah-mulia>.
- Dieste, Josep Lluís Mateo. "'Demonstrating Islam': The Conflict of Text and the Mudawwana Reform in Morocco." *The Muslim World* 99, no. 1 (2009): 134–54. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-1913.2009.01258.x>.
- Drake, Richard. "A Conversation with Mohja Kahf." Arkansas Times, 2010. <https://arktimes.com/street-jazz/2010/12/15/a-conversation-with-mohja-kahf-2>.
- Dubensky, Joyce S. *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles in Religious Peacebuilding*. Vol. 2. New York: Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, 2007.
- Ebadi, Shirin. "Nasrin Sotoudeh: The 100 Most Influential People of 2021." TIME, 2021. <https://time.com/collection/100-most-influential-people-2021/6096096/nasrin-sotoudeh/>.
- Ebrahim, Zofeen. "Pakistan: A Marriage of Convenience?" Inter Press Service, 2009. <https://web.archive.org/web/20090813082508/http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=46465>.
- Eeles, Miranda. "Iran's Disappointed Women." BBC News, 2004. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3500565.stm.
- Efrati, Noga. "The Other 'Awakening' in Iraq: The Women's Movement in the First Half of the Twentieth Century." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 31, no. 2 (2004): 153–73. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4145506>.
- Eickelman, Christine. "Review of Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood by Fatima Mernissi." *Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA)* 28, no. 2 (1994): 251–52.
- El-Manssoury, F. "Review of Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women by Fatima Mernissi." *Africa Spectrum* 24, no. 3 (1989).
- Elboubekri, Abdellah. "Is Patriarchy an Islamic Legacy? A Reflection on Fatima

- Mernissi's Dreams of Trespass and Najat El Hachmi's The Last Patriarch." *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 10, no. 1 (2015): 25–48.
- Eltahawy, Mona. "Opinion | #MosqueMeToo: What Happened When I Was Sexually Assaulted During the Hajj." *The Washington Post*, 2018. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2018/02/15/mosquemetoo-what-happened-when-i-was-sexually-assaulted-during-the-hajj/>.
- Emirates 24/7. "Saudi Woman Jailed for Disobeying Father Freed," 2010. <https://www.emirates247.com/news/region/saudi-woman-jailed-for-disobeying-father-freed-2010-10-26-1.309163>.
- Engel, Keri. "Huda Shaarawi, Egyptian Feminist & Activist." *Amazing Women In History*, 2012. <https://amazingwomeninhistory.com/huda-shaarawi-egyptian-feminist/>.
- Engineer, Asghar Ali. *The Qur'an Women and Modern Society*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1999.
- Ennaji, Moha. "Mernissi's Impact on Islamic Feminism: A Critique of the Religious Approach." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 4 (2020): 629–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2020.1840963>.
- Entesari, Hakimeh. "How and Why (about) Islamic Feminism." *Payam-e-Zan Magazine*, 2013. <https://hawzah.net/fa/Magazine/View/3992/8151/107366/چند-و-چون-فمینیسم-اسلامی>.
- Entwicklungspolitik. "Afghanistan: Wicczorek-Zeul Verurteilt Mord an Sitara Atschiksai," 2009. https://www.epo.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4884.
- Erlanger, Steven. "Daughter of French Projects Fights for Them in Government." *The New York Times*, 2008. <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/14/world/14amara.html>.
- Esfandiari, Golnaz. "Iranian Women's Monthly Under Pressure From Hard-Liners." *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 2014. <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-womens-monthly-under-pressure/26561137.html>.
- . "Khomeini's Granddaughter On Iran's 'Critical Situation,' Sanctions, Facebook." *Radio Free Europe*, 2013. <https://www.rferl.org/a/khomeini-granddaughter-iran-critical-situation-/24824197.html>.
- Esposito, John L. "Amin, Qasim." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Fakeh, Shamsiah. *Memoir Shamsiah Fakeh: Dari AWAS Ke Rejimen Ke-10*. Bangi: Penerbit UKM, 2004.
- Farida, U. *25 Perempuan Teladan: Para Istri, Putri & Sahabat Perempuan Nabi*. Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2015.

- fatemamernissi.com. "About Fatema Mernissi." Accessed October 26, 2023.
<https://fatemamernissi.com/about-us>.
- fatemamernissi.com. "Books." Accessed July 12, 2023.
<https://fatemamernissi.com/books>.
- Fawcett, Rachelle. "The Reality and Future of Islamic Feminism." Al-Jazeera.com, 2013.
<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2013/3/28/the-reality-and-future-of-islamic-feminism>.
- Fay, Mary Ann. "Review of The Forgotten Queens of Islam by Fatima Mernissi." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 3 (1999): 453–55.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020743800055562>.
- Ferree, Myra Marx. *Feminist Organizations: Harvest of the New Women's Movement*. Edited by Patricia Yancey Martin. Temple University Press, 1995.
- Fjeldstad, Knut. "Kadra Attacked in Public." *Aftenposten*, 2007.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20070416111546/http://www.aftenposten.no/english/local/article1734869.ece>.
- Flood, Michael. *International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities*. Edited by Michael Flood, Judith K. Gardiner, and Keith Pringle Bob Pease. Vol. 1. London & New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Floyd-Thomas, Stacey M. *Deeper Shades of Purple: Womanism in Religion and Society*. Manhattan: NYU Pres, 2006.
- Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn. "Toward a Theory of Arab-Muslim Women as Activists in Secular and Religious Movements." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (1993): 87–106.
- Fox, Margalit. "Fatema Mernissi, a Founder of Islamic Feminism, Dies at 75." *The New York Times*, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/10/world/middleeast/fatema-mernissi-a-founder-of-islamic-feminism-dies-at-75.html>.
- France TV Info. "4 Vérités - Rama Yade Veut Représenter 'La France Des Oubliés,'" 2016. https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/revolte-en-syrie/4-verites-rama-yade-veut-representer-la-france-des-oublies_1976667.html.
- Frankenberry, Nancy. "Feminist Philosophy of Religion." Edited by Edward N. Zalta. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2011. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-religion/#ProbGod>.
- Freeman, Colin. "If I Want to Breathe I Must Have Permission from My Husband." *The Telegraph*, 2005.
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/1492391/If-I-want-to-breathe-I-must-have-permission-from-my-husband.html>.
- Gabriel, Theodore, and Rabiha Hannna, eds. *Islam and the Veil: Theoretical and Regional Contexts*. NIPPOD edi. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

- Gatehouse, Gabriel. "Afghanistan: Shukria Barakzai's Whispered Voice Notes and Dramatic Escape." BBC Newsnight, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58345901>.
- Geertz, Hildred. "Review of Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society by Fatima Mernissi." *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 11, no. 1 (1977): 49–50.
- George, Rose. "Obituary: Samira Bellil." *The Guardian*, 2004. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2004/sep/13/guardianobituaries.france>.
- Georgetown University. "GU Class to Investigate Murder of WSJ Reporter." Accessed March 26, 2023. https://web.archive.org/web/20090213125401/http://www12.georgetown.edu/scs/event_pages/event_pearl_project.cfm.
- Golson, Emily; Loubna; Youssef, and Amanda Fields. *Toward, Around, and Away from Tahrir: Tracking Emerging Expressions of Egyptian Identity*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014.
- Government of the United Kingdom. "Our Chief Crown Prosecutor and Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutors," 2013. https://web.archive.org/web/20130531022036/http://www.cps.gov.uk/northwest/who_we_are/our_chief_crown_prosecutor_and_deputy_chief_crown_prosecutors/.
- Grove, Lloyd. "The Daughter of Saddam's Pilot Is the Oprah of the Arab World." *The Daily Beast*, 2017. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-daughter-of-saddams-pilot-is-the-oprah-of-the-arab-world?ref=scroll>.
- Gulf News. "Rimiya's Poetry Book Published," 2010. <https://gulfnews.com/uae/rimiyas-poetry-book--published-1.614240#>.
- haber7.com. "Fatma Aliye'nin Gölgesinde Kalan Kardeşi," 2009. <https://www.haber7.com/kitap/haber/386620-fatma-aliyenin-golgesinde-kalan-kardesi>.
- Hacaoglu, Selcan. "Turkey Arresting Islamic Militants." *AP News*, 2000. <https://apnews.com/article/f794f5318e5e7569ef7bd2523efb40ed>.
- Hackel, Joyce. "Lost in the Hajj Stampede Was a Pioneering Journalist Who United Christians and Muslim." *The World*, 2015. <https://theworld.org/stories/2015-09-29/lost-hajj-stampede-was-pioneering-journalist-who-united-christians-and-muslims>.
- Hackett, Conrad, David McClendon, Michaela Potančoková, and Marcin Stonawski. "Religion and Education Around the World," 2016. <https://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2016/12/21094148/Religion-Education-ONLINE-FINAL.pdf>.
- Hadigunawan, Nurhanisah, Rafeah Saidon, Mastura Razali, and Fatin Nabilah Wahi.

- “Kafaah: Impak Perbezaan Sosial Terhadap Kesejahteraan Rumah Tangga.” *Jurnal Pengurusan Dan Penyelidikan Fatwa* 26, no. 2 (2021).
<https://jfatwa.usim.edu.my/index.php/jfatwa/article/view/424>.
- HAMKA, Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah. *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. Vol. 2. Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1987.
- . *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. 4th ed. Vol. 3. Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001.
- . *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. 4th ed. Vol. 18. Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001.
- . *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. 4th ed. Vol. 2. Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001.
- . *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. 4th ed. Vol. 5. Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001.
- . *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. 4th ed. Vol. 10. Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001.
- . *Tafsir Al-Azhar*. 4th ed. Vol. 8. Singapore: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001.
- Hammer, Juliane. *American Muslim Women, Religious Authority, and Activism*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2012.
- Hanapi, Abdullah. “Pemikiran Hadis Misoginis Fatima Mernissi Sebagai Tawaran Pemahaman Hadis Feminisme Di Media Kontemporer.” *Riwayah: Jurnal Studi Hadis* 4, no. 2 (2018).
- Ḥanbal, Aḥmad ibn. “Ḥadīth Rajulin Min Aṣḥāb Al-Nabī Ṣalla Allāh ‘alayh Wa Sallam.” In *Musnad Al-Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*, Vol. 38. Bayrūt: Mu’assasah al-Risālah, 2001.
- Haourani, Albert. *Sejarah Bangsa-Bangsa Muslim*. Translated by Irfan Abu Bakar. Mizan. Bandung, 2004.
- Harris, Khalif Muammar A., and Adibah Muhtar. “Konsep Kesetaraan Gender Menurut Perspektif Islam & Barat.” *Afkar* 21, no. 2 (2019).
- Harvard Divinity School. “Leila Ahmed.” Accessed March 14, 2023.
<https://hds.harvard.edu/people/leila-ahmed>.
- Hary, Dimas. “RA. Kartini.” Guratan Pena, 2006.
http://guratanpena.blogspot.com/2006_04_01_guratanpena_archive.html.
- Hasan, Md. Mahmudul. “Review of Nawab Faizunnesa’s Rupjalal.” *The Muslim World Book Review* 30, no. 2 (2010).
- Hassan, Amro. “Sudan: Female Journalist Faces 40 Lashes for Choice of Clothes.” *Los Angeles Times*, 2009. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/blogs/babylon-beyond/story/2009-07-12/sudan-female-journalist-faces-40-lashes-for-choice-of-clothes>.
- Hassan, Muhammad Haniff. “Wasatiyyah as Explained by Prof. Muhammad Kamal Hassan: Justice, Excellence and Balance.” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 6, no. 2 (2014).

- Hatem, Mervat F. "The Nineteenth Century Discursive Roots of the Continuing Debate on the Social-Sexual Contract in Today's Egypt." *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 2, no. 1 (2004): 64–88.
- Hatem, Mervat F. "Literature, Gender, and Nation-Building in Nineteenth-Century Egypt: The Life and Works of 'A'isha Taymur." In *Literatures and Cultures of the Islamic World*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Haynes, Jeffrey. *Development Studies*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2008.
- Hidayatullah, Aysha A. *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Hill, Mary Ann. "International Women's Rights Advocate Mahnaz Afkhami to Speak at Wellesley College April 6." Wellesley College Office for Public Affairs, 2005. <http://web.wellesley.edu/PublicAffairs/Releases/2005/040505.html>.
- Hishām, 'Abd al-Malik 'ibn. *Al-Şīrah Al-Nabawīyyah Li 'Ibn Hishām*. Vol. 2. Mişr: Sharkah Maktabah Muştafa al-Bābī wa 'Awlādihi, 1955.
- Hossain, Hameeda. "Sobhan, Salma." *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, 2012. https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Sobhan,_Salma.
- Hubbard, Ben. "Saudi Arabia Agrees to Let Women Drive." *The New York Times*, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-women-drive.html>.
- Human Rights First Society. "October 18, 2010 Human Rights First Society (HRFS) Statement," 2010. http://hrfssaudi Arabia.org/?page_id=1541.
- Hurriyet. "50 Lira Edebiyat Dünyasını İkiye Böldü," 2009. <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/50-lira-edebiyat-dunyasini-ikiye-boldu-10847367>.
- Hurtas, Sibel. "Islamic Feminist Challenges Orthodoxy from Within." *Al-Monitor*, 2015. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2015/03/women-in-middle-east-tuksal.html>.
- Hussein, Aamer. "How Long Can a River Be Held Back by a Dam?" *Kindle Magazine*, 2015. <http://kindlemag.in/how-long-can-a-river-be-held-back-by-a-dam/>.
- Hutchinson, Darren Lenard. "Identity Crisis: 'Intersectionality,' 'Multidimensionality,' and the Development of an Adequate Theory of Subordination Development of an Adequate Theory of Subordination." *Michigan Journal of Race & Law* 6, no. 285 (2001).
- 'Azīz, Sa'ad Yūsuf Maḥmūd Abū. *Ādāb Al-Ḥayāh Al-Zawjiyyah Fī Al-Islām*. al-Qahīrah: Maktabah al-Tawfīqiyyah, n.d.
- 'Ilān, Ahmad ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn. *Sharḥ Al-Ḥikam Al-'Ūthiyyah Li Shaykh Sīdī Abī Madyan Al-Tilmasānī Al-Maghribī*. al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Āfāq al-'Arabiyyah, 2012.
- 'Ulwān, 'Abdullāh Nāsīh. *Tarbiyyah Al-Awlād Fī Al-Islām*. Vol. 1. al-Qāhirah: Dār al-

- Salām lī al-Ṭiba‘ah wa al-Nashr, 1985.
- Ibn Abd al-Barr. *Al-Isti‘āb Fī Ma‘rifah Al-Ashāb*. 1st ed. Vol. 4. Bayrūt: Dār al-Jīl, 1991.
- Ibn Abī Shaybah, Abū Bakr ‘Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Shaybah al-Kufī.
Muṣannaḥ Abī Shaybah. Edited by 1st. Vol. 7. Riyādh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1988.
- Ibn al-Jawzī. *Kitāb Aḥkām Al-Nisā’*, 1997.
- Ibn Mājah, Muḥammad ibn Yazīd Al-Qazwīnī. “Bāb Iftirāq Al-Umam.” In *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, edited by Muḥammad Fu‘ād ‘Abd Al-Baqī, Vol. 2. Ḥalab: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyyah, 2010.
- Ibn Manẓūr, Muḥammad ibn Mukarram. *Lisān Al-‘Arab*. Vol. 3. Qāhirah: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2002.
- ICRS Yogyakarta. “ICRS Visiting Professor.” Accessed March 11, 2023.
<https://www.icrs.or.id/visiting-professor>.
- International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF). “Shahla Sherkat, Iran.” Accessed March 18, 2023.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20090801004839/http://www.iwmf.org/article.aspx?id=541&c=cijwinner>.
- Iranian Labour News Agency (ILNA). “فریده ماشینی فعال زنان درگذشت” ۲۰۱۲.
<https://archive.ph/20120802010303/http://www.ilna.ir/newstext.aspx?ID=269276>.
- Ireland, Doug. “Tehran: 2 Women’s Rights Activists Charged with ‘National Security’ Violations.” Direland, 2006.
<https://direland.typepad.com/direland/2006/06/index.html>.
- Ireland, Susan. “Textualizing Trauma in Samira Bellil’s *Dans l’enfer Des Tournantes* and Fabrice Génestal’s *La Squale*.” *Dalhousie French Studies* 81 (2007): 131–141.
- Ishaghi, Seyed Hussein. “The Nature and Goals of Islamic Feminism.” Hawzah.net, 2013.
<https://hawzah.net/fa/Magazine/View/3992/7678/96652/ماهیت-و-اهداف-فمینیسم-اسلامی>.
- Ishaque, Nausheen. “Empowerment through Disempowerment: Harem and the Covert Female Resistance in Fatima Mernissi’s *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*.” *Cultural Dynamics* 30, no. 4 (2018): 284–302.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0921374019828855>.
- Islam, Aminul. “Iffat Ara: Writing from the Margins.” Star Insight, 2007.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20070210013808/http://www.thedailystar.net/starinsight/2007/02/01/she.htm>.
- Islam, Maidul. “Umma and the Dilemma of Muslim Belonging in Modern South Asia.” *St Antony’s International Review* 12, no. 2 (2017): 26–43.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26229172>.
- Ismail, Adawiyah, and Salasih Hanin Hamjah. “Kefahaman Terhadap Kedudukan Wanita Bekerjaya Menurut Islam.” *Jurnal Al-Hikmah* 4 (2012).

- Ismail, Nur Tasnim Binti, Bharuddin Che Pa, and Mohamad Zaidi bin Abdul Rahman. "Kerjaya Wanita Di Peringkat Pengurusan Tertinggi Negara Menurut Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis." *Journal of Hadith Studies* 3, no. 2 (2018).
- Iyigun, Murat. "Lessons from the Ottoman Harem on Culture, Religion, and Wars." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 61, no. 4 (2013).
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1086/670376>.
- Izwany, Bonita. "Keadilan Gender Dalam Rumah Tangga Perspektif Fatima Mernissi." *Tahqiqqa* 13, no. 2 (2019).
- Jabatan Mufti Perak. "Khatan," 2021.
https://mufti.perak.gov.my/images/minda_mufti/2021/artikel/khatan.pdf.
- JAKIM. "E-Sumber Maklumat Fatwa," 1984. <http://e-smaf.islam.gov.my/e-smaf/index.php/main/mainv1/fatwa/pr/15239>.
- Jamaluddin. "Distorsi Hadits Misogonis Dan Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Perspektif Fatimah Mernissi." *Jurnal Tribakti* 20, no. 2 (2009).
- Javanshir, Hamideh Khanum. *Awake : A Moslem Woman's Rare Memoir of Her Life and Partnership with the Editor of Molla Nasreddin, the Most Influential Satirical Journal of the Caucasus and Iran, 1907-1931*. Translated by Hasan Javadi and Willem M. Floor. Washington DC: Mage Publishers, 2016.
- Jecks, Nikki. "I Was Iran's Last Woman Minister." BBC World Service, 2009.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8207371.stm.
- Jeenah, Na'eem, and Shamima Shaikh. *Journey of Discovery: A South African Hajj*. Cape Town: Full Moon Press, 2000.
- Johnson, Kay, and Asif Shahzad. "Nobel Winner Malala in Tears on Emotional Return to Pakistan." Reuters, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-malala/nobel-winner-malala-in-tears-on-emotional-return-to-pakistan-idUSKBN1H503U>.
- Joseph, Suad. "Review of Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society by Fatima Mernissi." *American Anthropologist* 79, no. 2 (1977): 468.
internal-pdf://209.155.79.243/Joseph-1977-American_Anthropologist.pdf.
- Kabir, Ahmad. "Kamal, Begum Sufia." *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, 2012. https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Kamal,_Begum_Sufia.
- Kadir, Mohammad Nidzam Abdul. "Keabsahan Ulil Amri Dengan Kaedah Rampasan Kuasa Dalam Aspek Maqasid Syariah." *Jurnal Hadhari* 6, no. 2 (2014).
- Kamran, Malik, Abdul Mannan Cheema, Saima, Hafiz Wahaibur Rehman, Muhammad Ibrahim Tahir Kailani, and Bushra Nosheen. "Socio-Economic Role of Women in Islamic Perspective: A Critical Review." *Webology* 19, no. 3 (2022).
- Karim, Saydul. "Nawab Faizunnessa Chowdhurani History." Nawab Faizunnessa Government College. Accessed March 21, 2023.

- <https://web.archive.org/web/20131004215725/http://www.nfgc.edu.bd/fouu.html>.
- Kataranovels. “رمزية-الإيراني.” Accessed March 21, 2023.
<https://kataranovels.com/novelist/رمزية-الإيراني/>.
- Keddie, Nikki R. “The Past and Present of Women in the Muslim World.” *Journal of World History* 1, no. 1 (1990): 77–108.
- . *Women in the Middle East: Past and Present*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Khairunnisa, Sofiana. “Hijāb Dalam Konsep Feminisme Fatima Mernissi.” UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SYARIF HIDAYATULLAH, 2017.
- Khaleeli, Homa. “Meet Zainab Salbi – from Aid Worker to Talkshow Revolutionary.” *The Guardian*, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/nov/09/zainab-salbi-nidaa-show>.
- Khalid, Kartini Aboo Talib @ Gapar, Muhammad Helmy Abd., and Ahmad Munawar Ismail. “Ekstremisme: Maksud Dan Konteks Keganasan.” *Jebat: Malaysian Journal of History, Politics & Strategic Studies* 46, no. 2 (2019).
- Khallāf, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. *Ahkām Al-Aḥwāl Al-Shakṣiyyah Fī Al-Sharī‘ah Al-Islāmiyyah*. Qatar: Dār al-Qalam, 1990.
- Khan, Deeyah. “Welcome to Sister-Hood.” sister-hood.com. Accessed October 15, 2023.
<https://sister-hood.com/deeyah-khan/welcome-to-sister-hood/>.
- Khan, Zamir Akhtar. “Islam: A Deen Not Mere Religion.” *The Dialogue* 4, no. 1 (2009).
- KOC, Cengiz. “Fatima Mernissi and Amina Wadud: Patriarchal Dominance and Misinterpretation of Sacred Texts in Islamic Countries.” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 6, no. 8 (2016).
- Kodir, Faqihuddin Abdul. “Bidadari Dalam Al-Qur’an Perspektif Qirā’ah Mubādalah.” UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, 2022.
- Koofi, Fawzia. “The Favored Daughter.” fawziakoofi.org. Accessed March 13, 2023.
https://fawziakoofi.org/?page_id=35/.
- Kurzman, Charles. “The Emancipation of Woman and the New Woman.” In *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook*. Oxford University Press, 2002.
- L’Express. “Rama Yade Candidate ^{‘azza wa jalla} l’élection Présidentielle de 2017,” 2016.
https://www.lexpress.fr/politique/rama-yade-candidate-a-l-election-presidentielle-de-2017_1785190.html.
- L’invité Politique. “Rama Yade : ‘Le Front National n’est Pas Un Parti Républicain.’” *Les Echos*, 2016. <https://videos.lesechos.fr/radioclassique/invite-politique/rama-yade-le-front-national-nest-pas-un-parti-republicain/lvr85z>.
- Labdaoui, Abdellah. “Mernissi et Le Féminisme Islamique.” In *Les Nouveaux*

- Intellectuels Arabes*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1993.
- Lacomba, Joan. "Migración y Desarrollo Rural En Marruecos. El Papel de Los Emigrantes y Sus Asociaciones." In *Migración y Desarrollo*, edited by Angeles Escriba and Natalia Ribas. Cordoba: CSIC, 2004.
- Lamrabet, Asma. "Fatima Mernissi As I Knew Her." In *Musawah Vision*, edited by Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Special. Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2016.
- Lanfranchi, Sania Sharawi. *Casting off the Veil: The Life of Huda Shaarawi, Egypt's First Feminist*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2014.
- Lateef, Shahida. "Review of Women and Islam: An Historical and Theological Enquiry by Fatima Mernissi." *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 2, no. 2 (1995).
- Leung, T.W.; Wing; Leung, P.L.; Chan, and Pak Chung Ho. "A Comparison of the Prevalence of Domestic Violence between Patients Seeking Termination of Pregnancy and Other Gynecology Patients." *International Journal Gynaecol Obstet* 77, no. 1 (2002): 47–54.
- Li, Liya. "'My World of the Unknown': A Catharsis for the Sexual Awakening of an Egyptian Woman Writer." *Community Review* 17 (1999): 71.
- Listernick, Joan Isabel. "Sabbah's Legacy: The Evolution of the Image of Woman in the Muslim Unconscious." Boston College University, 2016.
- Liv Tønnessen. "Islamic Feminism: A Public Lecture." Ahfad University for Women, Sudan: CHR. Michelsen Institute, 2014.
- . "Islamic Feminism." Ahfad University for Women, Sudan: CHR. Michelsen Institute, 2014.
- Ilhaamie Abdul Ghani Azmi. "The Implementation of Islamic Business Practices of Women Traders: A Study in An Islamic State in a Developing Country." *Global Journal Al Thaqafah* 4, no. 2 (2014): 17–28.
- Lloyd, Genevieve. *The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy*. Abingdon: Routledge, 1993.
- Lombardi, Chris. "'Favored Daughter': Fawzia Koofi on Making Women's History in Afghanistan." Women's Voice for Change, 2012.
<https://womensvoicesforchange.org/favored-daughter-fawzia-koofi-on-making-womens-history-in-afghanistan.htm>.
- London Speaker Bureau. "Rama Yade." Accessed March 11, 2023.
<https://londonspeakerbureau.com/speaker-profile/rama-yade/>.
- Macfarquhar, Neil. "She Carries Weapons; They Are Called Words." *The New York Times*, 2007. <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/12/books/12veil.html>.
- MacFarquhar, Neil. "Saudis Arrest Woman Leading Right-to-Drive Campaign." *The New York Times*, 2011.

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/24/world/middleeast/24saudi.html>.
- Malik, Shazia. "Towards a Feminist Interpretation of Islam: Faith and Gender in the Work of Fatima Mernissi." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 19, no. 3 (2014): 25–28.
- Manji, Irshad. "Hating the 'Hateful.'" Persuasion, 2020. <https://www.persuasion.community/p/hating-the-hateful>.
- Mansoor, Menahem. *Political and Diplomatic History of the Arab World, 1900-1967 : A Chronological Study*. NCR Microcard Editions, 1972.
- Marseille, Alfred. "Erasmus Prize Awarded to Islamic Thinkers." http://www.powerofculture.nl/en/current/2004/november/religion_modernity.html, 2004. http://www.powerofculture.nl/en/current/2004/november/religion_modernity.html.
- Marsso, Sarah. "Fatima Mernissi, Inner Beauty." In *Musawah Vision*, edited by Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Special. Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2016.
- Marzolph, Ulrich. "Arabian Nights." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, edited by Kate Fleet;, Gudrun Krämer;, Denis Matringe;, John Nawas;, and Everett Rowson, 3rd Editio., 2007. https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_002.
- Masri, Safwan M. *Tunisia: An Arab Anomaly*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019.
- Mayasari-Hoffert, Silvia. "R. A. Kartini and the Many Faces of Colonial Female Subject." In *A Space of Their Own*. Routledge, 2023.
- McClendon, David, Conrad Hackett, Michaela Potančoková, Marcin Stonawski, and Vegard Skirbekk. "Women's Education in the Muslim World." *Population and Development Review* 44, no. 2 (2018): 311–42.
- McCoy, Terrence. "In Pakistan, 1,000 Women Die in 'honor Killings' Annually. Why Is This Happening?" Washington Post, 2014. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/05/28/in-pakistan-honor-killings-claim-1000-womens-lives-annually-why-is-this-still-happening/?noredirect=on>.
- McGregor, Charles. "Speaker Looks to Be No. 1 on World Hate List." DurhamRegion.com, 2008. <https://web.archive.org/web/20110718042624/http://newsdurhamregion.com/news/durham/article/94029>.
- Mdaghri, Abdelkébir Alaoui. *Al-Mar'ah Bayna Ahkām Al-Fiqh Wa Al-Da'wā Ilā Al-Taghyār*. Mohammedia: Fedala, 1999.
- Medeiros, Marcelo;, and Joana Costa. "What Do We Mean by 'Feminization of Poverty'?" *Internatinal Poverty Centre*, 2008. <http://www.ipc-undp.org/pub/IPCOnePager58.pdf>.

Medias 24. “La Legion d’Honneur Pour Trois Marocaine,” 2015. la-legion-dhonneur-pour-trois-marocaine.

Meinhard. “Biografien, Frauenporträts: Konka Kuris.” Accessed March 21, 2023. https://web.archive.org/web/20130707162048/http://www.meinhard.privat.t-online.de/frauen/konka_kuris.html.

Meneley, Anne. “Review of Women’s Rebellion and Islamic Memory by Fatima Mernissi; Women, the Family, and Divorce Laws in Islamic History by Amira El Azhary Sonbol.” *Signs* 25, no. 2 (2000): 614–17.

Mernissi, Fatema. *A Quoi Rêvent Les Jeunes?* Edited by Fatema Mernissi. *Marsam Editions*. Rabat: MARSAM, 2008.

———. “Etat Planification Nationale et Discours Scientifique Sur La Femme.” In *Portraits de Femmes*, edited by Fatema Mernissi, 69–105. Casablanca: Le Fenec, 1987.

———. “‘Fatima Mernissi.’ Interview by Serge Ménager.” *Le Maghreb Littéraire (The Literary Maghreb)* 2, no. 4 (1996): 87–119.

———. “Femmes: Ascension Ou Décripitude (Women: Rise or Decadence).” *Al Asas*, June 1980.

———. “La Conversation de Salon Comme Pratique Terroriste (Living Room Conversation as Terrorist Practice).” *Lamalif*, 1982.

———. “Le Proletariat Féminin Au Maroc (The Female Proletariat in Morocco).” *Al Asas*, October 1980.

———. *Les Sindbads Marocains: Voyage Dans Le Maroc Civique*. *Marsam Editions*. Rabat: MARSAM, 2004.

———. “Morocco: The Merchant’s Daughter and the Son of the Sultan.” In *Sisterhood Is Global: The International Women’s Movement Anthology*, edited by Robin Morgan, 447–453. New York: Doubleday, 1984.

———, ed. *Réflexions Sur La «Violence» Des Jeunes*. *Le Fenec*. Casablanca: Le Fenec, 2016.

———. “The Degrading Effect of Capitalism on Female Labour in a Third World Economy: The Particular Case of Craftswomen in Morocco.” *Peuples Méditerranéens [Mediterranean Peoples]* 6 (1979): 41–57.

———. “Un Future sans Femmes (A Future without Women).” *Lamatif*, April 1980.

———. “Virginité et Patriarcat (Virginity and Patriarchy).” *Lamalif*, July 1979.

———. “Women’s Work: Religious and Scientific Concepts as Political Manipulation in Dependent Islam.” In *Contemporary North Africa: Issues of Development and Integration*, edited by Halim Baraket, 214–28. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1985.

- . “Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 1).” *Feminist Issues* 2, no. 2 (1982): 69–104.
- Mernissi, Fatima Fatima. “Zhor’s World: A Moroccan Domestic Worker Speaks Out.” *Feminist Issues* 2, no. 1 (1982): 3–31. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02933964>.
- Mernissi, Fatima. *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*. Cambridge & New York: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1975.
- . *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*. Indiana University Press. Revised Ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- . *Beyond The Veil: Male-Female Dynamics In Modern Muslim Society*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975.
- . *Chahrazad n’est Pas Marocaine: Autrement Elle Serait Salarïée. Le Fennec*. Casablanca: Le Fennec, 1988.
- . *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women*. Edited by Mary Jo Lakeland. London: The Women’s Press, 1988.
- . *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women*. Translated by Mary Jo Lakeland. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 1989.
- . *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*. Edited by Ruth V. Ward. Reading, MA.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994.
- . *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*. Translated by Mary Jo Lakeland. Reading, MA.: Addison-Wesley, 1992.
- . *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World*. Translated by Mary Jo Lakeland. New York: Addison-Wolsey Publishing Co., 1992.
- . *L’Amour Dans Les Pays Musulmans*. Casablanca: Editions Maghrébines / Le Fennec, 1986.
- . *ONG Rurales Du Haut-Atlas : Les Aït-Débrouille. Le Fennec*. Casablanca: Le Fennec, 1998.
- . *Pemberontakan Wanita, Peran Intelektual Kaum Wanita Dalam Sejarah Muslim*. Translated by Rahmani Astuti. 1st ed. Bandung: Mizan, 1999.
- . *Ratu-Ratu Islam Yang Terlupakan*. Translated by Rahmani Astuti and Erna Hadi. Bandung: Mizan, 1994.
- . *Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different harems*. Washington Square Press. New York: Washington Square Press, 2001.
- . *Teras Terlarang*. Translated by Aḥmad Bayqūnī. 1st ed. Bandung: Mizan, 1999.
- . *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*. Translated by Mary Jo Lakeland. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

- . *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*. Translated by Mary Jo Lakeland. New York & Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1991.
- . *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*. London and Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books, 1996.
- . *Women and Islam: A Historical and Theological Enquiry*. Translated by Mary Jo Lakeland. Oxford, United Kingdom: Basil Blackwell, 1991.
- . "Women and the Impact of Capitalist Development in Morocco (Part 2)." *Feminist Issues* 3, no. 1 (1983): 61–112. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02685589>.
- Merriam-Webster, Inc. "Harem." Accessed June 27, 2023. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/harem>.
- Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. "Extremism." Accessed May 21, 2024. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/extremism>.
- Middle East Studies Association. "Fatema Mernissi Book Award," 2023. <https://mesana.org/awards/category/fatema-mernissi-book-award>.
- Miller, Edie. "Why Is British Media so Transphobic?" *The Outline*, 2018. <https://theoutline.com/post/6536/british-feminists-media-transphobic>.
- Mir-Hosseini, Ziba. "Beyond 'Islam' vs 'Feminism.'" *Gender, Rights and Religion at the Crossroads* 42, no. 1 (2011): 67–77. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2011.00202.x>.
- . "Fatemeh Haqiqatjoo and the Sixth Majles: A Woman in Her Own Right." *Middle East Report*, 2004. <https://merip.org/magazine/233/>.
- . "Honouring Fatima Mernissi." In *Musawah Vision*, Special. Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2016. <http://arabic.musawah.org/sites/default/files/HonouringFatimaMernissiZIBAMIRHOSSEINI.pdf>.
- . *Islam and Gender: The Religious Debate in Contemporary Iran*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000.
- . "Justice and Equality and Muslim Family Laws: New Ideas, New Prospects." In *Gender and Equality in Muslim Family Law, Justice, and Ethics in the Islamic Legal Tradition*, edited by Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Kari Vogt, Lena Larsen, and Christian Moe, 7–34. London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013.
- , ed. *Musawah Vision: Honouring a Fierce Feminist Foremother*. *Musawah Vision*. Special. Musawah, 2016.
- . "Muslim Women's Quest for Equality: Between Islamic Law and Feminism." *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 4 (2006): 629–45.
- . "The Construction of Gender in Islamic Legal Thought and Strategies for

- Reform.” *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 1, no. 1 (2003): 1–25.
- Miriam Cooke. “Multiple Critique: Islamic Feminist Rhetorical Strategies.” *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 1 (2000): 91–110.
- Mistiaen, Veronique. “My Uncle, the Tyrant.” *New Internationalist*, 2011.
<https://newint.org/features/web-exclusive/2011/03/02/my-uncle-the-tyrant>.
- Mitter, Siddhartha. “Linda Sarsour’s Rising Profile Reflects New Generation of Muslim Activists.” *Al Jazeera America*, 2015.
<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/5/9/linda-sarsours-rising-profile-reflects-new-generation-of-muslim-activists.html>.
- Moghadam, Valentine M. “Islamic Feminism and Its Discontents: Toward a Resolution of the Debate.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 4 (2002): 1135–71.
- . “Patriarchy in Transition: Women and the Changing Family in the Middle East.” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 35, no. 2 (2004): 137–62.
- Moghadam, Valentine M., and Fatemeh Haghighatjoo. “Women and Political Leadership in an Authoritarian Context: A Case Study of the Sixth Parliament in the Islamic Republic of Iran.” *The Women and Politics Research Section of the American Political Science Association* 12, no. 1 (2016): 168–197.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X15000598>.
- Moghissi, Haideh. *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Limits of Postmodern Analysis*. New York: Zed Books, 1999.
- Mohamad Haeqal Ishak. “The Concept of Gender Equality in Feminism: A Critical Analysis From the Qur’anic Perspective.” International Islamic University of Malaysia, 2018.
- Mohammadighalehtaki, Ariabarzan. “Organisational Change in Political Parties in Iran after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. With Special Reference to the Islamic Republic Party (IRP) and the Islamic Iran Participation Front Party (Mosharekat).” Durham University, 2012.
http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/3507/1/PhD_Ariabarzan_Mohammadighalehtaki.pdf?DDD35+.
- Mohd Noor, Ahmad Yunus, Z. Ab Rahman, Ahmad Dahlan Salleh, Mohd Izhar Arif Mohd Kashim, Asmilyia Mohd Mokhtar, Ahmad Yunus Mohd Noor, Ab Rahman, Z., Ahmad Dahlan Salleh, Mohd Izhar Arif Mohd Kashim, and Asmilyia Mohd Mokhtar. “Fatima Mernissi and Her Methodology in Dealing with Misogyny Hadith: A Critical Review.” *Journal of Critical Reviews* 7, no. 5 (2020): 1059–68.
<https://doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.05.211>.
- Mojab, Shahrzad. “Theorizing the Politics of ‘Islamic Feminism.’” *Feminist Review* 69, no. 1 (2001): 124–146. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1080/01417780110070157>.

- Moll, Yasmin. “‘People like Us’ in Pursuit of God and Rights: Islamic Feminist Discourse and Sisters in Islam in Malaysia.” *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 11, no. 1 (2009): 40–55.
- Montanari, Bernadette, and Sylvia I. Bergh. “The Challenges of ‘Participatory’ Development in a Semi-Authoritarian Context: The Case of an Essential Oil Distillation Project in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco †.” *The Journal of North African Studies*, 2014.
- Moore, Kathleen. “American Muslim Associational Life From 1950 to the Present.” In *Routledge Handbook of Islam in the West*, edited by Roberto Tottoli. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Moran, Gloria. “The Development of Laws and Jurisprudence in Islam: Religious and Imperial Legacies.” *Labyrinths of Political and Religious Identities in a Global World*, 2020.
- MStar. “KDN Haramkan Penerbitan Buku Tulisan Irshad Manji,” 2012. <https://www.mstar.com.my/lokal/semasa/2012/05/24/kdn-haramkan-penerbitan-buku-tulisan-irshad-manji>.
- Muammar, Khalif. *Atas Nama Kebenaran Tanggapan Kritis Terhadap Wacana Islam Liberal*. 2nd ed. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia: Institut Alam dan Tamadun Melayu (ATMA), 2009.
- Muawan, Maziyyatul Muzayyanah Samsul, and Supri Sudin. “Analisis Konsep Kafa’ah Terhadap Keharmonian Suami Dan Isteri Dalam Konteks Isu-Isu Semasa Di Negara Brunei Darussalam.” *Malaysian Journal Of Islamic Studies (MJIS)* 7, no. 2 (2023).
- Mubarak, Khalid al. “Obituary: Hidayat Sultan Al-Salem.” *The Guardian*, 2001. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/apr/02/guardianobituaries>.
- Muhammad, Anne. “PM’s Adviser: Liberalism as Much a Threat to Islam as Terrorism.” *Malaysiakini*, 2017. <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/379087>.
- Muhammad, Husein. *Fiqh Perempuan*. Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2019.
- Mukaromah, Kholila. “Hermeneutika Hadis Fatima Mernissi.” *Universum* 12, no. 1 (2018): 47–61.
- Munawir, A. W. *Kamus Al-Munawir Arab-Indonesia Terlengkap*. Surabaya: Pustaka Progresif, 1997.
- Munirah. “Hermeneutika Hadis Ala Fatima Mernissi.” *Ilmu Ushuluddin* 15, no. 1 (2016): 37–47.
- Musawah.org. “About Us.” Accessed October 15, 2023. <https://www.musawah.org/about/>.
- Muslikhati, Siti. *Feminisme Dan Pemberdayaan Wanita Dalam Timbangan Islam*. Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2004. <https://sistersinislam.org/press-statements/>.

- Muslim Journal. "Saleemah Abdul-Ghafur Appointed Director, Chief of Staff for Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation," 2020. <https://muslimjournal.net/saleemah-abdul-ghafur-appointed-director-chief-of-staff-for-bill-and-melinda-gates-foundation/>.
- Muslim, Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Naysābūrī. "Kitāb Al-Riḍā': Bāb Istihbāb Nikāh Zāt Al-Dīn." In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Bayrūt: al-Turāth al-'Arabī, n.d.
- Muslims for Progressive Values. "Saleemah Abdul-Ghafur." Accessed March 11, 2023. <https://www.mpvusa.org/saleemah-abdul-ghafur>.
- Mydin, Raihanah Mohd. "The Harem Within: An Interdisciplinary Reading of the World of the Muslim Moroccan Woman in Fatima Mernissi's Autobiography." Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1999.
- Myers, Bill. "D.C. Police Won't Intervene to Remove Women From Mosques." Washington Examiner, 2010. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/dc-police-wont-intervene-to-remove-women-from-mosques>.
- Nabilata, Lub Lyna. "Hermeneutika Feminis: Kritik Atas Kesetaraan Fatima Mernissi." *Al-Adabiya* 13, no. 2 (2018): 201–22.
- Nadjib, Ala'i. "Reciprocity in Quran and Hadith: A Study on Qiraah Mubadalah." In *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Recent Innovations (ICRI2018)*, 1970–76. Jakarta, 2018.
- Nadjmabadi, Shahnaz R. *Conceptualizing Iranian Anthropology: Past and Present Perspectives*. Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2013.
- Naeem, Raza. "Remembering Ismat Chughtai, Urdu's Wicked Woman." *The Wire*, 2019. <https://thewire.in/books/remembering-ismat-chughtai-urdus-wicked-woman>.
- Naji, Mohammad-Reza;, and Marziya Mohammad-Zadeh. "Sakina Bint Husayn." In *Encyclopaedia of the World of Islam*, Vol. 24. Encyclopaedia Islamica Foundation, 2017.
- Najim, Mohammed Yusif, ed. *Al-Diwān Jamīl Al-Ṣiddīqī Al-Zahrāwī*. Vol. 1. Bayrūt: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1971.
- Najmabadi, Afsaneh. "Feminism in an Islamic Republic: Years in Hardship, Years of Growth." In *Islam, Gender and Social Change in the Muslim World*, edited by Yvonne, Y. Haddad, and John Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Najwah, N. *Wacana Spiritualitas Perempuan Perspektif Hadis*. Yogyakarta: Cahaya Pustaka, 2008.
- Nasir, Mohd Norzi Bin. "Fatima Mernissi Dalam Timbangan Ilmu Hadith: Kritik Terhadap Pemikiran Dan Dakwaan Hadith-Hadith Misoginis." Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2009.
- National Organization for Women. "NOW Celebrates International Transgender Day of Visibility," 2021. <https://now.org/media-center/press-release/now-celebrates->

transgender-day-of-visibility/.

Ni Putes Ni Soumises. "History of the Association." Accessed October 15, 2023.
<https://npns.eu/en/history-of-the-association/>.

Nomani, Asra Q. "Let These Women Pray!" *The Daily Beast*, 2010.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20110518000448/http://www.thedailybeast.com/blogs-and-stories/2010-02-27/let-these-women-pray/#>.

———. *Standing Alone in Mecca : A Pilgrimage into the Heart of Islam*. Haryana: HarperCollins India, 2013.

Noon, Claire. "Islamic Feminism as Articulated by Fatima Mernissi and Its Implications for Christian Mission." *Encounters Mission Ezine* December 2, no. 27 (2008).
https://encountersmissionjournal.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/missiologal_implications_of_islamic_feminism_27.pdf.

———. "The Missiologal Implications of the Islamic Feminism of Fatima Mernissi." *Encounters Mission Ezine* December 2, no. 27 (2008).

Nor, Nik Muhd Marzuki Hj. Muhd, Raihanah Hj. Abdullah, and Wan Zainira Wan Bakar. "Perbezaan Pendekatan Hak Asasi Manusia: Suatu Sorotan Literatur." *Journal of Shariah Law Research* 5, no. 1 (2020).

O'Connor, Karen. *Gender and Women's Leadership: A Reference Handbook*. SAGE Publications, Inc., 2010.

Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR). "Working Group on the Issue of Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice - Members." Accessed March 29, 2023. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-women-and-girls/members>.

Oliveira, Jessica da Silva C. de. "Fatema Mernissi's Writings as a Gateway to Postcolonial Islamic Feminisms and Intersectionality in the Maghreb." *REVISTA DEBATES, Porto Alegre* 15, no. 3 (2021): 133–57.

Osmani, Noor Mohammad, Md. Yousuf Ali, and Abu Umar Faruq Ahmad. "The Political Role of Muslim Women between Traditional Texts and Changing Realities." In *AMSS 38th Annual Conference "Islamic Traditions and Comparative Modernities"*. Virginia, USA, 2009.

Ouedghiri, Meryem. "Writing Women's Bodies on The Palimpsest of Islamic History." *Cultural Dynamics* 14, no. 1 (2002): 41–64.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/09213740020140010301>.

Oxford Initiative for Global Ethics and Human Rights. "Fellows." Accessed March 5, 2023. <https://www.oxfordglobalethics.org/fellows>.

Par L'Economiste. "Interview Du Pr Soumaya Naâmane Guessous, Sociologue Marocaine : La Virginité Joue Un Rôle Capital." 1994. <https://www-leconomiste-com.translate.goog/article/interview-du-pr-soumaya-naamane-guessous-sociologue->

marocaine-la-virginite-joue-un-role-
capi?_x_tr_sl=auto&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=wapp.

- Peteet, Julie. "Review of *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women* by Fatima Mernissi; *Mary Jo Lakeland*; *Both Right and Left Handed: Arab Women Talk about Their Lives* by Bouthaina Shaaban." *Middle East Journal* 43, no. 3 (1989).
- Platt, Lisa F., and Spring L. Szoka. "Endorsement of Feminist Beliefs, Openness, and Mindful Acceptance as Predictors of Decreased Transphobia." *Journal of Homosexuality* 68, no. 2 (2021): 185–202.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1651109>.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Thousand and Second Tale of Scheherazade." In *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*. London: Everyman's Library, 1998.
- Povey, Tara. *Social Movements in Egypt and Iran*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
- Power, Carla. "Muslim Women Demand End to Oppressive Laws." TIME, 2009.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20090221002428/http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1879864,00.html>.
- Prakash, Satya. "Muslim Women's Group Demands Complete Ban on Shariah Courts." Hindustan Times, 2016. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/muslim-women-s-group-demands-complete-ban-on-shariah-courts/story-kgNMV7LwDSgEaMRAOIecfl.html>.
- Princess of Asturias Awards. "Fatema Mernissi and Susan Sontag | Laureates," 2003.
<https://www.fpa.es/en/princess-of-asturias-awards/laureates/2003-fatema-mernissi-susan-sontag.html?texto=trayectoria&especifica=0>.
- Pruzan-Jørgensen, Julie Elisabeth. "Islamic Women's Activism in The Arab World." Copenhagen, 2012.
- Puspita, Adinda Novelia. "Feminism According to Fatima Mernissi's Thinking." *CITIZEN: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Indonesia* 1, no. 1 (2021).
- Q&A. "Panellist: Susan Carland." Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC Television). Accessed March 5, 2023.
https://discover.abc.net.au/index.html#/?query=susan-carland&page=1&refinementList%5Bsite.title%5D=&configure%5BgetRankingInfo%5D=true&configure%5BclickAnalytics%5D=true&configure%5BuserToken%5D=ABC_SEARCH_USER&configure%5BhitsPerPage%5D=10.
- R. J. Cook; M.F Fathalla. "Advancing Reproductive Rights Beyond Cairo and Beijing." *International Family Planning Perspectives* 22, no. 3 (1996): 115–21.
- Rahim, Syaza Zafirah Binti Ab, Humaira Binti Zainuddin, and Nur Filzah Binti Nor Rahmat. "Kepimpinan Wanita Menurut Perspektif Al-Quran Dan As-Sunnah." In *Konvensyen Kearifan Nusantara Ke-IV (ARIF 2023)*. Nilai: Fakulti Pengajian Quran dan Sunnah USIM, 2023.

- Rahim, Wan Mohd Rahimi Bin, and Ahmad Kamal Ariffin Mohd Rus. "Program Perancang Keluarga Dalam Perkhidmatan Kesihatan Awam Di Semenanjung Malaysia, 1957-1975." *SEJARAH* 23, no. 2 (2014).
- Rajagopal, Krishnadas. "Supreme Court Admits Muslim Woman's Plea to Declare Triple Talaq Illegal." *The Hindu*, 2016. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/SC-admits-Muslim-womans-plea-to-declare-triple-talaq-illegal/article60527020.ece>.
- Ramadana, Reimia. "Hadis Hijab Pandangan Kontemporer: Studi Terhadap Pemahaman Fatima Mernissi, Quraish Shihab, Dan Muhammad Syahrur." *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Ushuluddin* 2, no. 1 (2022).
- Ratnam, Dhamini. "I Complicate the Image of Muslim Women: Mona Eltahawy." *The Wire*, 2017. <https://thewire.in/gender/mona-eltahawy-interview-islam>.
- Ravinel, Sophie de. "Le NPA Présente Une Candidate Voilée." *Le Figaro*, 2010. <https://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2010/02/02/01002-20100202ARTFIG00688-le-npa-presente-une-candidate-voilee-.php>.
- RAWA. "A Short Biography of Martyred Meena Founding Leader of RAWA." Accessed March 13, 2023. <http://www.rawa.org/meena.html>.
- RAWA. "About RAWA..." Accessed March 30, 2023. <http://www.rawa.org/rawa.html>.
- Reinhart, Anthony. "'She Was a Warrior' Family Members Reflect on Sitara Achakzai's Life and the Afghanistan They Once Knew." *Globe and Mail*, 2009. <https://archive.ph/20090417073910/http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20090414.AFGHANFAMILY14ART2245/TPStory/National#selection-915.13-2726.0>.
- Rendall, Jane. *The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1860*. London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 1985.
- Republika. "HR Rasuna Said, Sang Orator Ulung," 2014. <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/koran/dialog-jumat/14/10/03/ncur88-hr-rasuna-said-sang-orator-ulong>.
- Rhouni, Raja. *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi. Women and Gender: The Middle East and the Islamic World*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004176164.i-296>.
- Ridhā, Al-Sayyid Muḥammad Rashīd. *Tafsīr Al-Manār*. Vol. 5. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1973.
- Ridwan, MK. "Kontekstualisme Hadis; Analisis Metode Hermeneutika Fatima Mernissi." *Dinamika* 11, no. 21 (2015).
- Rogers, Alexandra. "Sadiq Khan's Ulez Charge Cuts Polluting Vehicles by over a Third and Bags TfL £51m." *CityAM*, 2019. <https://www.cityam.com/sadiq-khans-ulez-charge-cuts-polluting-vehicles-by-over-a-third-and-bags-tfl-51m/>.

- Rohendi, Leon, and Lilly Suzana binti Haji Shamsu. "Gender Dalam Pendidikan Islam: Perspektif Fatima Mernissi." *Jurnal Iman Dan Spiritualitas* 3, no. 2 (2023): 269–78.
- Rusydi, Muhammad. "Perempuan Di Hadapan Tuhan (Pemikiran Feminisme Fatima Mernissi)." *An Nisa'a* 7, no. 2 (2012): 73–86.
- Saatçioğlu, Bige, Düzlem Sandıkcı, and Aliakbar Jafari. "Poverty and Socioeconomic Injustice in Muslim Geographies." In *Islam, Marketing and Consumption: Critical Perspectives on the Intersections*, edited by Aliakbar Jafari and Ozlem Sandikci. London: Routledge, 2016.
- Sabra, Martina. "The Tunisian Islamic Scholar and Activist Tahar Haddad: A Rebel Loyal to the Koran." Qantara.de. Accessed March 29, 2023. <https://en.qantara.de/content/the-tunisian-islamic-scholar-and-activist-tahar-haddad-a-rebel-loyal-to-the-koran>.
- Safdar, Anealla. "Magazine about Muslim Women Aims to Highlight Diversity." Aljazeera, 2016. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2016/5/18/magazine-about-muslim-women-aims-to-highlight-diversity>.
- Saifuzzaman, AKM. "Mahmud, Shamsunnahar." Banglapedia: the National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh, 2012. https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Mahmud,_Shamsunnahar.
- Salah, Hoda. "From Ijtihad to Gender Jihad: Islamic Feminists Between Regional Activism and Transnationalism." *Gender Heft* 1 (2010): 47–64.
- Salleh, Mohamad Johdi. "The Principles of Education in Islam." In *International Seminar on Philosophy of Education and Islamic Civilisation*. Singapore, 2008.
- Saner, Emine. "The Muslim Director Who Filmed Neo-Nazis: 'I Thought – I'm Not Going to Make It out.'" The Guardian, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2017/dec/04/the-muslim-director-who-filmed-neo-nazis-i-thought-im-not-going-to-make-it-out>.
- Sarkar, Siuli. *Gender Disparity in India: Unheard Whimpers*. PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd., 2016.
- Sauda', Limmatus. "Hadis Misoginis Dalam Perspektif Hermeneutika Fatima Mernissi." *Mutawatir* 4, no. 2 (2014): 292–308. <https://doi.org/10.15642/mutawatir.2014.4.2.292-308>.
- SAWNET.org. "Ismat Chughtai." Accessed March 26, 2023. <https://web.archive.org/web/20120107042713/http://www.sawnet.org/books/authors.php?Chughtai+Ismat>.
- Schleifer, Abdallah, and Tarek Elgawhary, eds. *The Muslim 500: The World's 500 Most Influential Muslims 2023*. Amman: The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, 2023. <https://rissc.jo/docs/muslim500-1M-lowres3.pdf>.
- Schwartz, Stephen. "A Model for Moderate Muslims." The Huffington Post, 2016.

- https://www.huffpost.com/entry/a-model-for-moderate-musl_b_7256662.
- Seedat, Fatima. "Beyond the Text: Between Islam and Feminism." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 32, no. 2 (2016): 138.
<https://doi.org/10.2979/jfemistudreli.32.2.23>.
- . "Islam, Feminism, and Islamic Feminism: Between Inadequacy and Inevitability." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29, no. 2 (2013): 25–45.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2979/jfemistudreli.29.2.25>.
- Seedat, Fatime. "Islam, Feminism, and Islamic Feminism: Between Inadequacy and Inevitability." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 29, no. 2 (2013): 25–45.
- Segran, Elizabeth. "The Rise of the Islamic Feminists." *The Nation*, December 4, 2013.
<https://www.thenation.com/article/rise-islamic-feminists/>.
- Selangor, Majlis Agama Islam. "Soal Jawab Berkaitan Khitan Dalam Islam." *Sinar Islam*, April 26, 2019. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/<https://www.mais.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Artikel-Khas-Bil.3.2019-Khitan-Dalam-Islam.pdf>.
- Setiawan, Eko. "Studi Pemikiran Fatima Mernissi Tentang Kesetaraan Gender Dan Diskriminasi Terhadap Perempuan Dalam Panggung Politik." *Yinyang: Jurnal Studi Islam Gender Dan Anak* 14, no. 2 (December 10, 2019): 221–44.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24090/yinyang.v14i2.3224>.
- Shah, Nik Noriani Nik Badli. "Polygamy Not a God-given Right to Muslims." *MalaysiaKini*, 2010. <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/132369>.
- Shaheed, Farida. "Controlled or Autonomous: Identity and the Experience of the Network, Women Living under Muslim Laws." *Signs* 19, no. 4 (1994): 997–1019.
- Sha'rawī, Hudá. *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist (1879-1924)*. Translated by Margot Badran. New York: Feminist Press at CUNY, 1987.
- Shams, Shamil. "Young Pakistani Girls Learn to Speak Up for Their Rights." *DW.com*, 2011. <https://www.dw.com/en/young-pakistani-girls-learn-to-speak-up-for-their-rights/a-6656122>.
- Sharify-Funk, Meena. *Encountering the Transnational: Women, Islam and the Politics of Interpretation*. Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008.
- Sherifa Zuhur. "Women's Quest For Equality In Post-Revolutionary Egypt." In *Women's Movements and Countermovements: The Quest for Gender Equality in Southeast Asia and the Middle East*, edited by Claudia Derichs, 163. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014.
- Shuqqah, 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Muḥammad Abū. *Taḥrīr Al-Mar'ah Fī 'aṣri Al-Risālah*. Vol. 4. Kuwait: Dār al-Qalām, 1991.
- Siddiqui, Naveed. "Kohistan Video Case: Girls Declared Alive by SC Had Actually Been

- Killed, Says Bari.” Dawn, 2016. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1291398>.
- Sinclair, Donna, and Christopher White. *Emmaus Road: Churches Making Their Way Forward*. Wood Lake Publishing Inc., 2003.
- Sisters in Islam. “Dress and Modesty in Islam,” 1997. <https://sistersinislam.org/dress-and-modesty-in-islam/>.
- Sisters in Islam. “Press Statement: Sisters in Islam Remains Firmly Opposed to the Implementation of Hudud Law for Malaysia,” 2011. <https://sistersinislam.org/press-statement-sisters-in-islam-remains-firmly-opposed-to-the-implementation-of-hudud-law-for-malaysia/>.
- Sisters in Islam. “Sisters In Islam: Mission Statement and Objectives.” Accessed March 30, 2023. <https://sistersinislam.org/mission-and-vision/>.
- Smith, Emily Esfahani. “Islamic Feminists Storm Some Barricades.” Wall Street Journal, 2010. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704682604575369472168848914>.
- SMS, Roslan. “Shamsiah Fakeh Srikandi Malaya.” Ummah Online, 2004. <https://web.archive.org/web/20090527085235/http://www.geocities.com/ummahonline/telaahbuku/041230roslamsms-fakeh.htm>.
- Soman, Zakia. “What Fatima Mernissi Means To Me.” In *Musawah Vision*, edited by Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Special. Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2016.
- Soueif, Ahdaf. *The Map of Love*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012.
- Soumaya, Naamane Guessous. “Une Page Nouvelle Dans l’Histoire Du Maroc, Un Espoir Fou Dans Le Coeur Des Femmes.” *Maghreb Canada Express*, December 2003. <http://sisyphe.org/IMG/pdf/doc-486.pdf>.
- South Asia Citizens Web. “Hameeda Hossain.” Accessed March 25, 2023. <http://www.sacw.net/auteur489.html>.
- Stack, Roohi Khan. “An Analysis of Muslim Women’s Rights Based on the Works of Amina Wadud, Fatima Mernissi, and Riffat Hassan.” Harvard Extension School, 2020.
- Stan, Adele M. “Benazir Bhutto: An Imperfect Feminist.” *The American Prospect*, 2007.
- Starr King School for the Ministry. “Amina Wadud, Research Scholar.” Accessed March 11, 2023. <https://www.sksm.edu/faculty/amina-wadud/>.
- State Information Service Egypt. “Aisha Taymur (1840 – 1902).” Accessed March 14, 2023. <https://web.archive.org/web/20120321015646/http://www.sis.gov.eg/vr/figures/english/html/Aisha.htm>.
- Steer, Isabella, and Mehran Kamrava, eds. *The New Voices of Islam: Rethinking Politics and Modernity—A Reader*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.

- “Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.” In *SIPRI Yearbook 1999*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Stockman, Farah. “Three Leaders of Women’s March Group Step Down After Controversies.” *The New York Times*, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/16/us/womens-march-anti-semitism.html>.
- Stoljar, Natalie. “Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy.” In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2015. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/feminism-autonomy/>.
- Sudan Tribune. “Fatima Ahmed Retires from Sudanese Communist Party, Parliament,” 2007. <https://sudantribune.com/article21218/>.
- Sutrisno, Andri, and Dini Salsabela. “Kesetaraan Gender Perspektif Fatima Mernissi.” *Sophist: Jurnal Sosial Politik Kajian Islam Dan Tafsir* 4, no. 2 (2023).
- Suvorova, Anna. *Benazir Bhutto: A Multidimensional Portrait*. Karachi: Oxford University Press Pakistan, 2015.
- Svensson, Jonas. *Women’s Human Rights and Islam: A Study of Three Attempts at Accommodation*. Edited by Tord Olsson. *Lund Studies in the History of Religions*. Vol. 12. Lund: Religionshistoriska avdelningen, Lunds universitet, 2000.
- Tāj, ‘Abd al-Raḥman. *Al-Sharī‘ah Al-Islāmiyyah Fī Al-Aḥwāl Al-Shakṣiyyah*. Miṣr: Dār al-Ta’lif, 1952.
- Tamanna, Nowrin. “Personal Status Laws in Morocco and Tunisia: A Comparative Exploration of the Possibilities for Equality-Enhancing Reform in Bangladesh.” *Feminist Legal Studies* 16, no. 3 (2008): 323–343. 10.1007/s10691-008-9099-9.
- Taufik, Muhammad. “Peran Pemikiran Fatima Mernissi Dalam Memahami Islam Dan Kemodernan Di Maroko.” *Tashwir: Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Sosial* 10, no. 1 (2022).
- Taylor, Jerome. “First Woman to Lead Friday Prayers in UK.” *Independent.co.uk*, 2010. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/first-woman-to-lead-friday-prayers-in-uk-1996228.html>.
- Tazi, Lalla Laâziza. *Ruses de Femmes? Ruses d’Hommes?* Edited by Fatima Mernissi. Translated by Abdellatif Laâbi. *Marsam Editions*. Rabat: MARSAM, 2006.
- The Daily Star. “Eminent HR Activist Barrister Salma Sobhan Passes Away,” 2003. <https://archive.thedailystar.net/2003/12/31/d31231011616.htm>.
- The Express Tribune. “Discrimination: For Women in Rural Areas, Healthcare Not a Basic Right,” 2013. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/573754/discrimination-for-women-in-rural-areas-healthcare-not-a-basic-right>.
- The Grawemeyer Awards. “Ahmed’s Analysis of Increased ‘Veiling’ Wins Religion Prize.” Accessed March 14, 2023.

- <https://web.archive.org/web/20141031081416/http://grawemeyer.org/news-updates/ahmed2019s-analysis-of-increased-2018veiling2019-wins-religion-prize>.
- The Guardian. “Two Disqualified as First Saudi Women Begin Campaign for Election,” 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/29/first-saudi-arabia-women-stand-election-begin-campaigning>.
- The Malaysian Insider. “Syariah Court Fails to Protect and Safeguard Muslim Girls - Sisters in Islam,” 2012. <https://web.archive.org/web/20140714201933/http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/sideviews/article/syariah-court-fails-to-protect-and-safeguard-muslim-girls-sisters-in-islam>.
- The Star. “Sisters in Islam’s Zainah Anwar among 10 Most Influential Muslim Women,” 2013. <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2013/12/31/muslim-women-award-zainab-anwar/>.
- The Star Online. “State Must Refrain from Moral Policing, Says SIS,” 2006. <https://web.archive.org/web/20140714180102/http://www.thestar.com.my/story.aspx/?file=%2F2006%2F12%2F17%2Fnation%2F16348692&sec=nation>.
- The Telegraph. “Saudi Women Launch Legal Fight Against Driving Ban,” 2012. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/saudi-arabia/9062995/Saudi-women-launch-legal-fight-against-driving-ban.html>.
- The University of Manchester. “Nazir Afzal Is The University of Manchester’s New Chancellor,” 2022. <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/nazir-afzal-is-the-university-of--manchesters-new-chancellor/>.
- Todd, Tony. “Far-Left Party Reveals ‘Veiled’ Female Candidate.” France 24, 2010.
- Tohidi, Nayereh. “The Issues at Hand.” In *Women in Muslim Societies: Diversity Within Unity*, edited by Herbert Bodman and Nayareh Tohidi. Boulder Colo: Lynne Rienner, 1998.
- . “Women’s Rights in the Muslim World: The Universal-Particular Interplay.” *Hawwa: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World* 1, no. 2 (2003): 152–88.
- Touhtou, Rashid. “Civil Society in Morocco under the New 2011 Constitution: Issues, Stakes and Challenges,” 2014. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep12647.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Aa2f05d13a792eb685b17592984808d9b&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1.
- Toynbee, Polly. “Behind the Burka.” The Guardian. Accessed March 30, 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/28/religion.afghanistan>.
- Tremlett, Giles. “Muslim Women Launch International ‘Gender Jihad.’” The Guardian, 2005. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/oct/31/gender.religion>.
- Tuksal, Hideyat Sefkatli. “Misogynistic Reports in the Hadith Literature.” In *Muslima*

- Theology: The Voices of Muslim Women Theologian*, edited by Ednan Aslan, Marcia Hermansen, and Elif Medeni, 133–54, 2013.
- U.S. Congressional Human Rights Caucus. “RAWA Testimony to the Congressional Human Rights Caucus Briefing,” 2001.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20070628022728/http://lantos.house.gov/HoR/CA12/Human+Rights+Caucus/Briefing+Testimonies/Fahima+Vorgetts.htm>.
- U.S. Department Of State. “Secretary’s International Women of Courage Award (Honoree),” 2007. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/g/wi/iwoc/c21757.htm>.
- UCLA School of Law. “Khaled M. Abou El Fadl.” Accessed May 5, 2024.
<https://law.ucla.edu/faculty/faculty-profiles/khaled-m-abou-el-fadl>.
- UN Department of Public Information. *Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration, United Nations*. New York: United Nations, 1996.
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. “Senior Afghan Women’s Affairs Official Killed,” 2006.
<https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/senior-afghan-womens-affairs-official-killed>.
- Urciuoli, Brielle. “Queen Noor of Jordan Receives Woodrow Wilson Award at Princeton’s 100th Alumni Day.” NJ.com, 2015.
https://www.nj.com/mercer/2015/02/queen_noor_of_jordan_recieved_woodrow_wilson_award.html.
- US Department of State. “2012 International Women of Courage Award Winners,” 2012.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20120308231128/http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/programs/iwoc/2012/bio/index.htm>.
- Veitch, Janet. “Lady Afshar Obituary.” *The Guardian*, 2022.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/19/lady-afshar-obituary>.
- Vitkovich, Victor. *A Tour of Soviet Uzbekistan*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954.
- Voice of America (VOA). “Iranian Women Campaign to End Discriminatory Laws against Them,” 2009. <https://www.voanews.com/a/iranian-women-campaign-to-end-discriminatory-laws-against-them-79052162/368918.html>.
- Wadud, Amina. “Islam Beyond Patriarchy Through Gender Inclusive Qur’anic Analysis.” In *Wanted: Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family*, edited by Zainah Anwar, 95–112. Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2009.
- . *Qur’an and Women: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman’s Perspective*. 2nd Editio. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- . “We Were Soul Sisters.” In *Musawah Vision*, edited by Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Special. Kuala Lumpur: Musawah, 2016.
- Walsh, Declan. “Taliban Kill Top Afghan Woman.” *The Guardian*, 2006.

- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/sep/26/afghanistan.gender>.
- Walt, Stephen M. "Arab Secularism and Its Discontents." *Foreign Policy Magazine*, 2012. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/07/01/arab-secularism-and-its-discontents/>.
- Wan, William, and Michael Laris. "Mosque Pray-Ins against Segregation of Sexes Are Springing Up." *Washington Post*, 2010. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/21/AR2010052104253.html>.
- Weber, Von Marcus. "Zeitschrift Für Migrantinnen." *Deutschlandfunk Kultur*, 2007. <https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/zeitschrift-fuer-migrantinnen-100.html>.
- Whitcher, Rochelle S. "The Effects of Western Feminist Ideology on Muslim Feminists." *Naval Postgraduate School*, 2005.
- White, Christopher. *Seismic Shifts: Leading in Times of Change*. United Church Publishing, 2006.
- White, Sally. "Rasuna Said: Lioness of the Indonesian Independence Movement." In *Women in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements*, edited by Susan Blackburn and Ting Ting, 98–123. Singapore: NUS Press, 2013.
- Who's Who. "Yousafzai, Malala," 2019. <https://www.ukwhoswho.com/display/10.1093/ww/9780199540884.001.0001/ww-9780199540884-e-282567>.
- Wijayanti, Ratna, Hendri Hermawan Adinugraha, Mila Sartika, and Ahmad Anas. "Pemikiran Gender Fatima Mernissi Terhadap Peran Perempuan." *MUWAZAH: Jurnal Kajian Gender* 10, no. 1 (August 23, 2018). <http://e-journal.iainpekalongan.ac.id/index.php/Muwazah/article/view/1131>.
- Wilaela. "Wanita-Wanita Haremku: Telaah Pengalaman Wanita Oleh Wanita Dengan Pendekatan Sejarah Peradaban Islam." *Jurnal Wanita, Agama Dan Gender (Marwah)* IV, no. 8 (2005).
- Willis, Ellen. "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism." In *No More Nice Girls: Countercultural Essays*, 117–150. Wesleyan University Press, 1992.
- Wintour, Patrick. "Saudi Rights Activist Loujain Al-Hathloul Sentenced to Almost Six Years in Jail." *The Guardian*. Accessed February 28, 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/28/saudi-rights-activist-loujain-al-hathloul-sentenced-to-almost-six-years-in-jail>.
- Wolfreys, Jim. "Ilham Moussaid: A Proud Tribune of the Oppressed." *Socialist Review*, 2010. <https://web.archive.org/web/20121013092551/http://www.socialistreview.org.uk/article.php?articlenumber=11187>.
- Wolpe, Joseph M.D., and Stanley M.A. Rachman. "Psychoanalytic 'Evidence': A Critique Based on Freud's Case of Little Hans." *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 131, no. 2 (1960): 135–48.

- Women's Media Center. "Deeyah Khan." Accessed October 2, 2023.
<https://womensmediacenter.com/profile/deeya-khan>.
- Women Living Under Muslim Laws. "Who We Are." Accessed October 15, 2023.
<https://www.wluml.org/whoweare/>.
- Womensphere. "Statement by Iranian Women for International Women's Day," 2010.
<https://womensphere.wordpress.com/2010/03/08/statement-by-iranian-women-for-international-womens-day/>.
- World Citizenship. "Mahnaz Afkhami – Iran," 2006.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20170728213459/http://word.world-citizenship.org/wp-archive/494>.
- Wright, Robin. *Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion Across the Islamic World with a New Concluding*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011.
- Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs. "Kamala Chandrakirana," 2003.
<https://worldfellows.yale.edu/person/kamala-chandrakirana>.
- Your Middle East. "Meet Asma Lamrabet, Morocco's Feminist Polymath," 2017.
<https://yourmiddleeast.com/2017/01/12/meet-asma-lamrabet-moroccos-feminist-polymath/>.
- Yousef, Reina. "Malak Hifni Nasif: Negotiations of a Feminist Agenda between the European and the Colonial." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 7, no. 1 (2011). <https://doi.org/10.2979/jmiddeastwomstud.2011.7.1.70>.
- Zahrah, Abū. *Al-Aḥwāl Al-Shakṣiyyah*. Miṣr: Dār al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1950.
- Zaman, Niaz. "A Feminist Foremother: Critical Essays on Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain." *The Daily Star*, 2017. <https://www.thedailystar.net/book-reviews/feminist-foremother-critical-essays-rokeya-sakhawat-hossain-1462744>.
- Zanghellini, Aleardo. "Philosophical Problems With the Gender-Critical Feminist Argument Against Trans Inclusion." *SAGE Open* 10, no. 2 (2020).
<https://doi.org/215824402092702>.
- Zayzafoon, Lamia Ben Youssef. *The Production of the Muslim Woman: Negotiating Text, History, and Ideology*. New York: Lexington Books, 2005.
- Zeenath Kausar. "Zeenath Kausar's Critique of Feminism and Her Reflections on Co-Vicegerency." In *Modern Western Political Ideologies: An Islamic Critique*, edited by Zulaikha Nurain Mudzar. Kuala Lumpur: Pearson Malaysia, 2014.
- Zeidan, Joseph T. *Arab Women Novelists: The Formative Years and Beyond*. Albany: State University of New York Press (SUNY), 1995.
- Ziba Mir-Hosseini. "Stretching the Limits: A Feminist Reading of the Sharia in Post-Khomeini Iran." In *Feminism and Islam; Legal and Literary Perspectives*, edited by Mai Yamani. Reading: Ithaca Press, 1996.

Zubaidah, Siti. *Pemikiran Fatima Mernissi: Tentang Kedudukan Wanita Dalam Islam*. Edited by Sulidar. Bandung: Citapustaka Media Perinti, 2010.

“هنداوي. زينب فواز” Accessed March 18, 2023.

<https://www.hindawi.org/contributors/15862507/>.

