



Discourses of Women's Movements and Struggles in Muslim Women's Mass Media in 1912-1942

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Abstract

Purpose

This research aimed to reveal various discourses and narratives of womanhood popularly discussed in the era before Indonesian independence. In addition, it also revealed the movement of women against oppression using writings published in various Muslim mass media.

Method

In this case, this research used a sociological approach and qualitative content analysis theory.

Findings/Result

It revealed that the oppression experienced by Muslim women both in the public and domestic spheres was the most frequently raised topic. It was because of the limited access to education for women, the deep-rooted patriarchal culture, and the limited role of women in the public sphere were still closely attached to Indonesian society.

Conclusion

The Muslim mass media becomes an effective tool in voicing women's voices, ranging from the polemic of polygamy practices, the importance of education for women, the position of women, to the narrative of women's involvement in combat.

Keywords

Muslim women mass media, women's discourse, Muslim women movement, womanhood.

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Abstrak

Tujuan

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap berbagai wacana dan narasi keperempuan yang masyhur dibahas pada era sebelum kemerdekaan Indonesia. Disamping itu, juga mengungkap pergerakan kaum perempuan dalam melawan ketertindasan dengan menggunakan tulisan yang diterbitkan dalam berbagai media massa Muslimah.

Metode

Dalam hal ini, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan sosiologi dan menggunakan teori analisis konten kualitatif.

Temuan/Hasil

Penelitian ini mengungkap bahwa, ketertindasan yang dialami oleh perempuan Muslimah baik pada ruang publik maupun domestik menjadi topik yang paling sering diangkat. Kondisi tersebut disebabkan oleh keterbatasan akses pendidikan bagi perempuan, budaya patriarki yang masih mengakar, dan peran perempuan dalam ranah publik yang masih melekat erat pada masyarakat Indonesia.

Kesimpulan

Media massa Muslimah menjadi alat yang efektif dalam menyuarakan suara kaum perempuan; mulai dari polemic praktik poligami, pentingnya pendidikan bagi perempuan, kedudukan kaum perempuan, hingga narasi keterlibatan perempuan dalam pertempuran.

Kata kunci

Media massa Muslimah, diskursus keperempuan, pergerakan Muslimah, keperempuan.

المخلص

الغرض

يهدف هذا البحث إلى الكشف عن مختلف الخطابات والسرديات المتعلقة بالأنوثة التي كانت شائعة في حقبة ما قبل الاستقلال الإندونيسي. كما يسعى إلى كشف النقاب عن حركة المرأة ضد الاضطهاد من خلال الكتابات المنشورة في مختلف وسائل الإعلام الإسلامية.

الطريقة

يعتمد هذا البحث على منهج علم الاجتماع ونظرية تحليل المحتوى النوعي.

النتائج

يكشف هذا البحث أن القمع الذي تعاني منه المرأة المسلمة في المجالين العام والخاص هو الموضوع الأكثر إثارة للنقاش. ويعود ذلك إلى أن محدودية فرص حصول المرأة على التعليم، والثقافة الأبوية المتجذرة، ومحدودية دور المرأة في المجال العام، لا تزال مرتبطة ارتباطاً وثيقاً بالمجتمع الإندونيسي.

الخلاصة

أصبحت وسائل الإعلام الإسلامية أداة فعالة في إيصال أصوات النساء، بدءاً من الجدل الدائر حول ممارسات تعدد الزوجات، وأهمية التعليم للمرأة، ووضع المرأة، وصولاً إلى سردية مشاركة المرأة في القتال.

الكلمات الرئيسية

وسائل الإعلام النسائية المسلمة؛ خطاب المرأة؛ حركة المرأة المسلمة؛ الأنوثة

INTRODUCTION

The role of women in Indonesian historiography is a crucial part that is often marginalised. Until now, the narrative built in the historiography of the Indonesian independence struggle is identical to the heroism of male figures. This has caused the role of women in the Indonesian revolutionary movement to be largely unknown, and even worse, forgotten. This phenomenon is not without reason, it is closely related to the stereotypes attached to women for generations. As believed by the Javanese community, women are always closely related to the term *Kanca Wingking* which means back friend, *Kanca Turu* which means bedmate (Nugroho, 2020). This term frames the role of women as being confined to household chores and biological needs, which then makes women inferior under male subordination. In addition, this stereotype makes the narrative about the role of women in the struggle of the Indonesian nation not taken into account. In fact, women also took a crucial role in the struggle for Indonesian independence.

In the pre-independence period, women, including Muslim women, faced various challenges, apart from the suffering caused by colonisation, they faced a patriarchal society. As well as Muslim women at that time did not get the right to education. As Kartini's feelings expressed in her letter on 25 May 1899, she said that women going to school at that time was a mistake (Kartini, 1922). This then inspired Kartini to fight to educate women by establishing a school for women in 1903.

Kartini's spirit inspired women in her era, so that many women's organisations were born that fought for women's independence from the shackles of patriarchy and colonialism, including Putri Mardika, which was established in 1912, then in 1917 the Aisyiyah was established, Wanito Soesilo in 1918, and Wanito Oetomo which was established in 1920. In the 1920s various women's movement organisations united in the frame of nationalism and solidarity on behalf of women which gave birth to the first women's congress in 1928, this association focused on efforts to gain access to education, improve the legal position of women, and take a stand against polygamy (Blackburn, 2004).

Muslim women who lived during this period faced at least two big challenges, Muslim women at that time were very much bound by prevailing religious and social norms, as Indonesian Muslim women they were obliged to obey and submit to the prevailing norms in society at that time, even though the prevailing norms often marginalised women. However, despite this situation, many women had a strong desire to participate in the struggle for Indonesian independence. Elsbeth Locher-Scholten in her book *Women and the Colonial State: Essays on Gender and Modernity in the Netherlands Indies 1900-1942* states that in the early 20th century women in Indonesia entered the world of modern emancipation, Indonesian women were more active in various public institutions that were then newly developing such as newspapers, women's organisations, and the political scene (Scholten, 2000).

To raise the voices of Muslim women related to the struggle against colonialism and oppression due to patriarchal culture, various forms of mass media have emerged to express all the ideas that women have. In this case, the mass media became the most crucial tool in shaping the discourse on the role of Muslim women in the struggle of the Indonesian nation. For example, the magazine published by the Putri Mardika organisation which was oriented towards the issue of child marriage, polygamy, and forced marriage, then Soenting Melajoe initiated by Rohanna Kudus voiced firmly the emancipation of women, and so on (Robinson, 2009).

Muslim women's mass media in the pre-independence period built narratives with two major discourses, namely narratives that emphasised aspects of women's domestic roles as mothers and wives, women were positioned as educators of the nation's generation who had great responsibility for the education of their children. Then, the narrative that constructs women to be actively involved in the public sphere, especially in the Indonesian independence struggle movement. In this case, there was a friction between traditional values and modernity among Muslim women, which then reflected that Muslim women at

that time were not only silent in accepting a change but were also actively involved in playing their role in broader socio-political dynamics. As with Soeara Aisjijah, which significantly builds discourses related to education and empowerment of Muslim women. Mahmudah in her study shows that the mass media has a crucial role in building awareness of the importance of education for women, besides that the Muslim women's mass media also plays a role in strengthening the position of women in the public sphere (Mahmudah, 2020).

The discourse of the movement and the various narratives of womanhood found in the Muslim mass media at that time reflected quite complex social and political dynamics. On the one hand, the Muslim mass media showed the role of women in line with Islamic values as a mother and educator for her children. On the other hand, Muslim mass media also encouraged women to be more involved in the public sphere and a wider range of social and political issues. This condition certainly creates diverse narratives and discourses, not only inspired by religious unrest but also social and political conditions, especially oppression due to patriarchy.

In this regard, Rachel Rinaldo in her book *Mobilizing Piety: Islam and Feminism in Indonesia* provides an overview of the paradigm of thinking of the Muslim women's movement in Indonesia. In this case, Rachel reveals that Islamic women leaders combine the discourses of global feminism and Islamic reformism which are then interpreted with a local perspective in order to obtain an argument to mobilise Muslim women in Indonesia (Rinaldo, 2013). Thus, the discourse at that time not only voiced various matters closely related to local issues but also involved itself in global-scale discourse that was closely related to the role of women in Islam.

In connection with mass media, Erving Goffman, a sociologist from Chicago in his book entitled "Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience" reveals that the mass media has the power to make changes to the social reality that occurs by framing the information that is then given to the public (Goffman, 1974). Based on this, the various discourses and narratives presented by the mass media have a crucial role in shaping social reality in society. In another study, Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in their writing entitled "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media" strengthened the role of the mass media in shaping social reality by stating that the mass media does not only spread news or information randomly, but also prioritises an issue to be the main headline (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Moreover, Maxwell explains further in his book titled "Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion", he asserts that the mass media can influence public perception at two levels, namely influencing what the public thinks and at a higher level influencing how the public thinks about various issues that occur (McCombs, 2014).

According to the explanation above, the crucial role of mass media in the corridor of the Muslim women's movement in Indonesia eventually raises several questions that will become the focus of discussion in this study, how the polarisation of narratives that emerge from the Muslim mass media can influence the movement and shape Muslim women's identity and movement, then how the discourse of womanhood and nationalism is formed and debated. This research answers these questions by using a sociological approach to analyse the social, cultural and political dynamics that influenced the discourse of womanhood in the Muslim mass media in the pre-independence period.

This research focuses on various mass media managed by Muslim women in the pre-independence period with the period 1912-1942. The year 1942 became the research deadline because when Japan came to power in Indonesia all women's movement organisations were frozen, only one organisation was allowed to operate, namely *Fujinkai* (Hapsari et al., 2020). This research analyses the various discourses of womanhood found in the mass media of pre-independence Muslim women and the social construction of the role of Muslim women in Indonesia at that time developed and transformed from a sociological point of view.

METHOD

This research examines various Muslim mass media published in the period 1912-1942. In order to examine the discourse of the women's movement in mass media, both in the form of magazines and newspapers published in the past, this research uses historical research methods consisting of four stages, namely Heuristics, Verification, Interpretation, and Historiography (Abdurrahman, 2011). This research uses primary sources in the form of various Muslimah mass media published in the period 1912-1945. Various Muslimah mass media were obtained from the Audiovisual Service of the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta. Here are some forms of mass media that will be used as primary sources: *Isteri Soesila Taman Muslimah* (1346/PN and 2393/PN), *Soenting Melajoe* (Port Pos 540, 658/PN, and 659/PN), and *Soeara Aisjijah* (Arsip Pimpinan Pusat Suara Aisyiyah di Yogyakarta). Various mass media of Muslim women in 1912-1942 that have been obtained are original archives that have been converted into microfilm. The validity of the sources is also supported by the font shape that is clearly visible because of typewriter typing. Then, the spelling used is in accordance with the Indonesian writing style in the pre-independence period. In relation to the newspaper *Istri Soesila Taman Moeslimah*, it can be identified that the publisher who printed ISTM namely Ab. Siti Sjamsijah was the publisher in that year, this is evidenced by several books published by Ab. Siti Sjamsijah that can be found such as *Tafsir Qur'an Jawen* which was published in 1930 (Gusman, 2010).

Subsequently, the *Soenting Melajoe* newspaper can also identify one of its editors, Siti Roehana Kuddus, who was a figure in the women's movement at that time. Roehana Kuddus was a Minangkabau woman activist born in Koto Gadang on 20 December 1884 (Agustiningsih, 2019). In relation to *Soeara Aisjijah*, since the archives were obtained directly in the form of rubric pieces, internal criticism was carried out based on the topics raised, including a rubric entitled *Kaoem Poetri didalam Peperangan* which also mentions the year 1941. Thus, it can be concluded that the primary sources used are truly original mass media published in 1912-1942. Interpretation is done using a sociological approach and critical discourse analysis. Peter Burke states in his book *History and Social Theory*, by examining the social structure that exists at certain historical periods, we can understand the context of how an event occurs and how social forces can influence history (Burke, 1993). The sociological approach is used to analyse how social realities in society influence the narratives constructed by Muslim mass media at that time. Subsequently, qualitative content analysis theory was used to analyse the discourse of the women's movement presented in three different mass media, namely *Istri Soesila Taman Moeslimah*, *Soenting Melajoe*, and *Soeara Aisjijah*. Klaus Krippendorff in his book entitled *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* reveals that content analysis is a way to understand and interpret the meaning of a text in a more in-depth way (Krippendorff, 2019). In the context of this research, the narratives and discourses presented in the three-mass media are grouped by issue and analysed for patterns and relationships to obtain a comprehensive interpretation of meaning.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Indonesian Muslim Women in the Pre-Independence Period

In the pre-independence era, women, including Muslim women, were still socially confined within the traditional patriarchal culture. In this case, men as superior beings were considered the head of the family, responsible for all decision-making, representative of the family in various public affairs, and the main breadwinner in the family. In contrast, women as inferior creatures are considered to have a role only as caretakers of household affairs such as cooking, caring for children, and being the fulfilment of lust for their partners. This is in line with the well-known traditional Javanese expression regarding the role of women, namely *Dapur, Sumur, Kasur*; *Dapur* means that women have a

role to cook, *Sumur* means women's role in fulfilling household needs, and *Kasur* which means women's role as satisfying their husband's lust (Nugroho, 2020).

In the social sphere, it has become commonplace for Indonesian women to be regarded as second-class beings. Women are only considered as helpers and supporters of men. As was the case in Java in the late 19th century, there are various Javanese literary works that can illustrate the position of women at that time. In *Pawulang Estri*, for example, it is mentioned that a woman as a good wife agrees to her husband's polygamous desires and submits to his authority. In addition, *Serat Murtasiyah* explains that a wife of good character is one who submits entirely to her husband, including his violence, and devotes herself to his happiness (Dewi, 2012). Traditional beliefs about women's position were so deeply rooted that they influenced the social conditions felt by Muslim women in the pre-independence period.

The hegemony of traditional beliefs that influenced the social conditions of society in the pre-independence period made women second-class beings whose social status was below that of men. In the corridor of access to education, women also do not get the proper rights like men, many schools have been opened for natives but most of them are only for men and only a few women participate. This is based on the habits and customs of traditional societies that consider women's role only in the domestic sector, so access to education for women is often ignored. Not only that, the colonial government also legitimised the patriarchal culture that had taken root in Indonesian society, schools opened for indigenous women used a curriculum that emphasised women's domestic roles, thus indirectly legitimising the patriarchal social hierarchy (Vickers, 2013).

The conditions experienced by Indonesian women in the pre-independence period were further exacerbated when the practice of concubinage became widespread. Concubinage meant a relationship between a European man and a native woman who became a mistress with the task of fulfilling sexual needs and taking care of household needs (Karima, 2017). In practice, women involved in the practice of concubinage not only received unfavourable treatment from the Dutch colonial government but also received similar treatment among the indigenous community, so in this case women were truly marginalised. Even so, it cannot be denied that some indigenous women consciously chose to become concubines due to economic demands and the promise of gaining a higher social status than other indigenous women; it should be underlined that despite getting more benefits, the status of concubines was still unclear in the eyes of colonial law. This is reflected in the derogatory title that Europeans gave to mistresses, namely *Meubel* (furniture) or *Inventarisstuk* (inventory), the mistresses were considered like objects that could be used at any time (Baay, 2017). In addition, the legal status of concubines was not recognised by the colonial government, nor were the children of concubines, so they were often discriminated against (Stoler, 2002). The practice of concubinage, which is not in accordance with the religious norms and customs prevailing in Indonesia, makes the women involved in the practice also receive discriminatory behaviour from the indigenous community.

To respond to the increasingly suffocating social conditions for women in general and Muslim women in particular, in the early 20th century many women's movement organisations emerged with the aim of fighting for their rights. Like the women's organisation Poetri Mardika, which was established in 1912, in its movement fought to raise a new generation of women who could improve their lives independently and progressively and emphasised the importance of education for women (Pradita, 2020). In addition, there are also women's organisations affiliated with religious organisations such as Aisyiyah, which was born in 1917, emphasising its focus on the importance of education for women (Qodariah, 2016). The birth of various women's movement organisations in the first half of the 20th century is certainly closely related to the social conditions experienced directly by women, including Muslim women. The position of women who were considered as second-class beings under men by traditional beliefs, plus the reinforcement of women's roles only revolved around the domestic corridors of the household, made various women

decide to create a movement with the aim of fighting for their rights and voices.

In the early 20th century, a progressive Muslim women's organisation that had been established was Aisyiyah as the women's wing of Muhammadiyah. Aisyiyah is closely associated with one of the most famous Muslim women figures, Nyai Siti Walidah, the wife of Muhammadiyah founder KH Ahmad Dahlan. In the beginning, Aisyiyah began with Nyai Siti Walidah's concern about the conditions experienced by the Muslim women around her. The Muslim women around her lacked knowledge about religious knowledge and most of them could not read, due to the lack of access to education for women and traditional patriarchal beliefs. Her unrest led to the establishment of a women-only educational *halaqoh* (community) called *Wal Ashri* which is held after *Asr* and *Maghribi School* which starts after work, namely after Maghrib. The halaqoh she founded focused on teaching reading and writing Arabic and Latin letters. This halaqoh in 1914 was named the *Sopo Tresno* association which became the basic foundation in the establishment of Aisyiyah (Uyuni et al., 2024). The movement carried out by Nyai Siti Walidah and the community she founded, *Sopo Tresno*, shows that the large number of Muslim women who have not been educated as a result of the lack of access to education for women and a patriarchal culture makes Muslim women make their own movements to produce progressive and educated Muslim women who can also be juxtaposed with men in public roles.

Nyai Siti Walidah with Aisyiyah is one example of the movement carried out by Muslim women in Indonesia in the early 20th century. In Sumatra, there was a famous female ulama' figure who also fought for education for women, namely Rahmah El Yunusiah. To provide education for women. Rahmah founded *Madrasah li al-Banat* or also known as Diniyah Putri School on 01 November 1923, she also founded the *Sekolah Menyesal* and *Kulliyatu al-Muallimat el-Islamiyah* (Yusutria et al., 2021). The vision and mission of her movement is not much different from the Muslim women's movement in Java, which is to create a generation of educated women. Apart from Rahmah el Yunusiah, in Sumatra there is also another Muslim women's movement figure, Rasuna Said. In her movement, she echoed the patriotic spirit and anti-Dutch colonialism. In addition, Rasuna Said in her movement emphasised the importance of politics in an effort to expel the colonisers, in this case she also invited Muslim women to play an active role in public roles, especially in the political corridor (White, 2013). The various Muslim women's movements that emerged in the early 20th century were a manifestation of women's unrest who were tired of being considered second-class beings and confined to the domestic space due to the entrenched patriarchal culture. Muslim women in the early 20th century made their own movements and entered various sectors to fight for their rights and nurture the embryo of Muslim women who were active in various public sectors, then ended male domination and replaced it with a concept of equality between men and women.

The women's movement that emerged in various regions decided to gather and discuss various issues related to nationalism and womanhood, so that on 22 December 1928, two months after the youth pledge event, the first women's congress was held in Yogyakarta, initiated by R.A. Soekonto, Nyi Hadjar Dewantoro, and Soejatin. In this event, Muslim women also played their role, those who joined *Aisyiyah* became the representation of Muslim women who participated in the congress. Siti Moendjiah, who represented Aisyiyah, gave a speech entitled *The Position of Women*, she reminded that women must stand in line and strong brotherhood (Siswantari et al., 2024). The involvement of the Aisyiyah organisation as a representation of Muslim women shows that Muslim women have a crucial role in the movement for independence and the liberation of women's rights. In this congress, several things were decided, including the formation of the Indonesian Women's Association, then providing proposals to add schools for women, then proposing the concept of Taklik nikah regulations and financial assistance for widows and orphans. In addition, the first women's congress also campaigned against child marriage and proposed to the government to provide socialisation so that child marriage could be prevented (Siswantari et al., 2024). The women's congress became evidence of a revolutionary women's movement and was recorded as a progressive contribution to the future of wom-

en in Indonesia. Of course, this event cannot be separated from the involvement of Muslim women who also took part in voicing their concerns.

Pre-Independence Muslimah Mass Media

Isteri Soesila Taman Moeslimah

Isteri Soesila Taman Moeslimah (ISTM) is a Muslim women's magazine that was first published in 1924 in Solo. This magazine came at the request of Woro Soesilo's readers to present a Malay-language magazine. *Isteri Soesila Taman Muslimah* was headed by Sjamsoel Hadiwijata, a teacher at the *Mamba'oelel Oeloem* school in Surakarta and served as secretary II of Muhammadiyah Surakarta. Despite being headed by a man, the majority of ISTM's board members were Muslim women; including Soekati, Soekarmi, Sadjjah, and Soeparmini as authors, Siti Sjamsijah as publisher and manager; Wadining, Aisyiyah, Soetji Hati and Wanita Sedyah Rahajoe as permanent helpers.

Isteri Soesila Taman Moeslimah since its first publication in 1924 has consistently presented narratives that are closely related to various Muslim women's issues that occurred at that time, such as polygamy, women's right to get proper education, and the position of women in the household and in society. This magazine has progressive narratives that go against the current of the times at that time, the various articles it contains position ISTM as a magazine that stands on the interests of Muslim women who want to be considered as human beings equal to men; not above or below but standing right beside them. Based on the name it used, *Taman Moeslimah*, the issues raised came from the concerns of Muslim women.

In the corridor of the position of Muslim women, ISTM repeatedly mentions in various articles published that position a woman as equal to men. The relationship between women and men described by ISTM magazine is a relationship that is interdependent and needs each other. ISTM magazine has a permanent rubric that is always published in its publications, namely *Almarotoel Moeslimah*. In issues from 25 April 1924 to 25 July 1924 ISTM discussed the position of women and the relationship that should be established between women and men in Islam, which was divided into four sections of *Almarotoel Moeslimah*. In its issue of 25 May 1924, ISTM quoted the first verse of Surah An-nisa', which explains that men and women come from the same essence, to support its narrative that states "*Saudara-saudara, Allah menerangkan dalam ayat jang pertama dari soerat Nisak ini bahwa laki-laki hendaklah bersahabat dan menghormati kepada perempuan*" "Brothers, Allah explains in the first paragraph of this soerat Nisak that men should be friendly and respectful to women." (Djoeroe Fatwa *Isteri-Soesiila Taman Moeslimah Magazine*, 1924a).

However, ISTM in its narrative builds an opinion that there are significant differences between men and women, as it states that "*Badan laki-laki jang gagah lagi koewat itoelah menoendjoekkan bahwa wadhifatnya mengerdjakan amalan jang berat. Bagaimanakah kalau perempuan jang badannja loenak itoe disoeroeh amalan laki-laki.*" "A man's strong body shows that his nature is to do heavy work. What if a woman with a soft body is disposed to the practice of men." In addition, ISTM also mentions four main tasks as a woman including pregnancy, childbirth, parenting, and child education (Djoeroe Fatwa *Isteri-Soesiila Taman Moeslimah Magazine*, 1924b). This shows that ISTM in shaping the narrative of equality between men and women still dichotomises the two by stating that women are destined to have soft and delicate bodies while men are born with strong bodies.

ISTM as a Muslim women's magazine responds to various issues related to Muslim women. In this case, ISTM has produced an article as a form of counter-narrative to the notion that the order to wear the hijab is part of an agenda to seize women's freedom. In addition, the debate over the practice of polygamy is discussed at length in this magazine. The discussion about the polygamy debate is discussed in the rubric of "*AlMarotoel Moeslimah*" section five to six, even as if it is not enough to discuss in the rubric, ISTM includes a special rubric entitled "*Polygamy-Permadoean*" in several sections. This ru-

bric contains counter-narratives against people who criticise the practice of polygamy, which is allowed by Islam, and the narratives tend to attack Christians.

Regarding the presentation of narratives attacking Christians, this was also done by another contemporaneous Islamic newspaper, Islam Bergerak. Luthfah Eta Aini in her book entitled *Islam Bergerak: Media Perlawanan Terhadap Kristenisasi di Surakarta 1917-1923* stated that at that time there was a Christianisation agenda in Surakarta, in this case Islam Bergerak newspaper became a media for the resistance of Muslims in Surakarta to overcome the Christianisation agenda (Aini, 2023). Therefore, there is no doubt that ISTM also carried the same rubric, because the Christianisation agenda was the main issue highlighted by Muslims in Surakarta at that time.

Furthermore, ISTM states unequivocally that polygamy is not an obligatory or *sunnah* commandment but is only permitted under severe conditions. In its narrative, ISTM uses the term Remedial Law, which is a regulation used when there is a need to describe the practice of polygamy in Islam, in this case ISTM makes a case study of the conditions that are allowed to practice polygamy; including when a country is hit by war so that many men die, the practice of polygamy is highly recommended to avoid the phenomenon of war babies, prostitution, and women who suffer. ISTM, in building its opinion, states that polygamy will bring *bala'* (badness) if it is only based on lust. In fact, ISTM chose to prohibit the practice of polygamy because of the situation and conditions at the time (Sadjjah, 1927).

ISTM in its article criticised the traditional belief that a woman's duty was simply to remain in radical obedience to her husband. This is of course also closely related to the patriarchal culture that is still deeply rooted in Javanese society. Fitria in her research titled *Peran Istri dipandang Dari 3M dalam Budaya Jawa* revealed that in Javanese patriarchy there are various terms such as *Swarga Nunut Neraka Katut* (to Heaven follows, to Hell is carried away) in the sense that if the husband goes to heaven then the wife follows to heaven, but even though the wife has the right to go to heaven, but because her husband goes to hell, the wife is also carried to hell. In addition, there is also the term *nek awan dadi teklek, nek bengi dadi lemek* (during the day becomes footwear, at night becomes bedding) and *macak, manak, masak* (dressing up, giving birth, and cooking) (Fitria et al., 2022). Based on this term, in Javanese patriarchy, a wife is required to obey her husband fundamentally, from indulging her lust to obeying whatever the husband commands.

Besides, ISTM raised the issue of women in society, namely the position of women in the household, at a time when men considered women to be clueless; women's voices had no place in the household. In an article it published entitled *Nasib Perempoean Islam*, published on 20 August 1926, ISTM said *Kekoeasaan jang moelia itoe dibawah kebenaran* (Soenarti, 1926), In this case, ISTM is trying to convey to women that when a man (husband) prevents his wife from doing the truth, it is an obligation for a wife to force her husband to allow it. ISTM also gives a sentence that is a little satire *Tetapi kalau pihak lelaki itoe kekal jang menghalang-halangi, itoe terserah kepada toean-toean poetri semoea, takoet kepada tuhan atau kebenaran, atau hanja takoet kepada orang."*

In the corridor of education for women, ISTM was well aware that at that time women did not have the right to adequate education, in addition to the traditional beliefs of the community that considered education for women to be unimportant; in this case ISTM called it '*Kaoem Koenoe*' because it considered people who still adhered to these beliefs to be *outdated*, it was time for a new faith, progressive, and relevant for women at that time. In building the narrative of the importance of education for women, ISTM uses the term *Goeroe jang pertama bagi anak-anak* and *Pendidik dan pengasoeh anak jang teroetama* (Loebis, 1925) so it is appropriate that a woman who will become a mother gets a proper education.

Soenting Melajoe

Soenting Melajoe is a Muslim women's newspaper in Sumatra. This newspaper originated from the communication between Rohana Kudus and her community, *Kerajinan Amai Setia (KAS)* and Datuk Sutan Maharaja with his weaving school. Datuk Sutan Maharaja, who at that time headed the *Oetoesan Melajoe* newspaper with Rohana Kudus, worked together and made a women's newspaper called *Soenting Melajoe* (Herawati et al., 2022). *Soenting Melajoe* in publishing its various articles experienced several changes in publication days, at first published on Saturday every month, then changed to Thursday when starting the second edition, then Friday in the 18th edition, and returned to Thursday until the end of publication.

Soenting Melajoe, which is a newspaper published in Sumatra, certainly has a variety of narratives that are based on the problems felt by women in the Minang land. Various issues of oppression of Minang women, both in the domestic sphere (family) and the public sphere, are often raised by *Soenting Melajoe*. In the social context, *Soenting Melajoe* illustrates that Minang women are in a circle of oppression as a result of unequal power relations between men and women as well as various thoughts that *Soenting Melajoe* refers to as conservative thinking. In her articles published on 07 August 1912 and 01 October 1915 entitled *Tertindas Bangsa Kita Perempoean* and *Nasibnja Perempoean Boemi Poetra*. The Fate of Boemi Poetra's Women women's limited access to education was not only due to the lack of availability of educational institutions for women, but also due to the traditional understanding held by the community that there is no point for women to get an education is still deeply rooted in society. In other issues, Minang women are also still limited in their space to speak out, even in matters of determining their own husband, Minang women do not have the freedom to choose the man they will marry, because all decisions are in the hands of their parents. In its article, *Soenting Melajoe* mentions that there are still many parents who do not think about their children's feelings, even *Soenting Melajoe* uses the term *Orang toea tjoema tahoe senang sadja*. This is because there are still many cases of parents marrying off their daughters to a rich man without thinking about the feelings of their daughters. In this case, *Soenting Melajoe* gave a harsh narrative on this treatment that was still widely practised by the community, even *Soenting Melajoe* did not hesitate to write curses such as *Shetan* and *Terkoetok* for parents who carry out the practice (Ghallik, 1915; *Soenting Melajoe* Editorial Team, 1912).

To fight against the oppression often experienced by Minang women, *Soenting Melajoe* provides various narratives of resistance in every article it publishes. Such as the narrative of resistance in the form of a poem entitled *Membela Bangsakoe Perempoean* which was published on 04 January 1913 (Mien, 1913). In addition, resistance is also carried out in the form of narratives that show the strength and advantages of women, such as the article entitled *Kepandaian Kita Perempoean* which was published on 03 August 1912, *Kemadjoean Orang Perempoean* 28 September 1912, and *Perhiasan Pakaian* 07 Agustus 1912. In these articles, *Soenting Melajoe* challenged the notion that women were not smarter than men. In the narratives, it was pointed out that there were several sectors at the time that would be better if done by women such as sewing, writing, weaving, and weaving. *Soenting Melajoe* also dichotomised occupations with the designation of *haloes* and *kasar*, all forms of delicate work are more suitable for women to do while the rough ones are more suitable for men. In this case, *Soenting Melajoe* attempted to show that in some ways women were actually smarter than men, thus indirectly inviting us to see women as equal human beings with their own portions. (Alamsjah, 1912; Djoewita, 1912; Koedoes, 1912).

In its various articles, *Soenting Melajoe* placed women in a noble position, equal to men. As well as pinning the title *goeroe jang pertama* to women. In this case, all women will be the first teachers for their children, and to carry out this task women must have intelligence, thus indirectly teaching women the importance of knowledge (Noerdin, 1913). *Soenting Melajoe* also provides an understanding that every woman has the duty to give birth and care for children, this certainly affirms the role of women as mothers (Djamilah, 1912).

In addition, *Soenting Melajoe* also discussed the polemics over the practice of polygamy. In its various articles discussing polygamy, it departs from various cases that occurred in Sumatra. In the narrative, most men at that time in practising polygamy were only based on their lust without thinking about the feelings of the woman who would be married. So, in its articles *Soenting Melajoe* even stated for men not to marry their wives and those who already had four wives to no longer divorce other women, with consideration for the feelings of the wife who was also a human being (Soenting Melajoe Editorial Team, 1916). Overall, *Soenting Melajoe* did not reject the practice of polygamy, but it strongly opposed it if it was only based on lust as it would harm both sides.

Based on the description above regarding *Soenting Melajoe* published in Sumatra, there are indeed differences with the Muslim mass media published in Java. The reason is that culturally the social community in Sumatra is in a matrilineal circle. Iva Ariani in her research entitled *Nilai Filosofis Budaya Matrilineal di Minangkabau (Relevansinya Bagi Pengembangan Hak-Hak Perempuan di Indonesia)* illustrates how matrilineal culture prevails in Minang society. Iva Ariani in her research revealed that Minang women have a fairly strong position in society. She quoted from Dr Raudha Thair's statement that Minang women can enter the public sphere, Minang women are not locked up in the house, and even have the power to make political decisions. However, in its development, Minang women are often oppressed. Jeffrey Hadler in his book "Muslims and Matriarchs: Cultural Resilience in Indonesia Through Jihad and Colonialism" states that the transformation of customs that were originally matriarchal began to shift during the Padri movement, especially when the Dutch colonialists came and implemented a patriarchal system (Hadler, 2008). Based on these conditions, the women's movement in Minang began to emerge in the early 20th century, from the movement initiated by Rahmah el Yunusiah to KAS and *Soenting Melajoe* led by Rohanna Kudus.

Soeara Aisjijah

Soeara Aisjijah is a magazine born from the womb of Muhammadiyah's women's wing, Aisyiyah. *Soeara Aisjijah* was first published in October 1926 in Javanese. In the beginning, *Soeara Aisjijah* was printed with 600 to 900 copies and distributed for free. However, the printed magazine included a request for donations from readers for the continuation of the next edition. In 1927, *Soeara Aisjijah* began publishing in Malay in some of its articles. By 1928, *Soeara Aisjijah* had fully utilised Malay in every article it published (Sofia, 2021).

Soeara Aisjijah, like other Muslim women's mass media, departed from the anxiety over the oppression experienced by women. Starting from the limited access to education to the narrow public space for women. *Soeara Aisjijah* consistently stated the importance of education for women. In order to state the importance of education for women, *Soeara Aisjijah* provided a statement *perempoean itoe pendidik jang sebenar-benarnja dan pada tanganjalah terpegang kemadjoean* (Fatimah & Lathif, 1932). In this case, *Soeara Aisjijah* shows how crucial the role of a woman is in educating her children, so it is mandatory for women to study. Then, in strengthening the narrative of the importance of education for women, *Soeara Aisjijah* continues to actively invite women to continue studying, in its article entitled *Hidoep...Berilmoe* published in 1941 there is a metaphorical sentence *...ilmoe itoe sebagai lampoe jang akan menerangi kita diwaktoe malam. Diwaktu hoedjan akan didjadikan pajoeng, waktoe panas tempat bernaeng* (Roehidah, 1941). This is evidence that *Soeara Aisjijah* in its various articles endeavoured to build awareness among women of the importance of getting an education. In addition, *Soeara Aisjijah* in its article entitled *Sepoeloeh Hadis* includes a hadith that states that the prophet forbade teaching reading and writing to women, in which case *Soeara Aisjijah* classifies it as a *maudhu' hadith*. (*Soeara Aisjijah* Editorial Team, 1932). This is certainly a counter-narrative to the societal belief that it is not important for women to study.

The narrative of the struggle for women's education rights presented by *Soeara Aisjijah* was certainly based on the social background of Yogyakarta society. The narrative creat-

ed was in line with the renewal movement initiated by Muhammadiyah. In this case, there is a central Muhammadiyah figure who focuses on education for women, namely Nyai Siti Walidah. Khoirul Muthrofin and Nicky Estu Putu Muchtar in their research entitled *Kontribusi Siti Walidah dalam Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia melalui Muhammadiyah* revealed that in order to provide education rights for women, Nyai Siti Walidah initiated the Sopo Tresno study group, which later became Aisyiyah (Muthrofin & Muchtar, 2023). Nyai Siti Walidah and Aisyiyah are indeed massively engaged in the field of educational equality.

In addition to narratives closely related to the struggle for education for women, Soeara Aisjijah as a Muslim mass media also provided religious views on women's behaviour at that time. This aimed to create a generation of Muslim women who were close to religion. Like the article entitled *Disekitar mempertjantik diri* which was published in 1941, Soeara Aisjijah took a case that is often inherent in women, namely dressing up or preening. Soeara Aisjijah saw the social conditions at that time, many young women were fond of using make-up which of course came from the west. In this case, Soeara Aisjijah wanted to respond to this phenomenon by providing religious views in responding to the rise of women who preen (Soeara Aisjijah Editorial Team, 1941). Soeara Aisjijah did not reject this but warned Muslim women to stay within the lines of shari'ah.

In 1942 when the Japanese landed in Java, Soeara Aisjijah also directly responded. In its narrative entitled *Kaoem Poetri didalam Peperangan* which was published in 1942, Soeara Aisjijah called on all women to actively participate in the war to defend the country. However, despite the fiery narrative, *Soeara Aisjijah* still realised that the condition of women in Indonesia at that time was still not enough knowledge to take up arms. Thus, in its narrative *Soeara Aisjijah* invited women to do anything and sacrifice for the safety of the homeland (Soeara Aisjijah Editorial Team, 1942). Hal ini membuktikan bahwa Soeara Aisjijah berusaha menunjukkan bahwa perempuan bukan lagi makhluk yang bisa dianggap lemah, tetapi sudah menjadi manusia kuat yang pantas untuk aktif dalam berbagai agenda pertempuran.

CONCLUSION

Muslim women's mass media in the pre-independence period, in this case *Isteri Soesila Taman Moeslimah*, *Soenting Melajoe*, and *Soeara Aisjijah*, consistently portrayed the social conditions of women who experienced oppression. Not only that, the three Muslim mass media were also active in publishing narratives of resistance to the oppression experienced by women. Various pre-independence women's issues were always discussed, such as the limited access to education for women, the patriarchal culture that was deeply rooted in society, the polemic of polygamy practices, and the role of women in the public and domestic spheres.

In their various narratives, the three Muslim women's mass media agree that women should be seen as equal beings with men: neither above nor below. In this case, equality means a relationship of mutual respect and love between men and women with their respective roles. In addition, the various narratives presented also show that the Muslim women's movement in the pre-independence period did not solely originate from western understanding, but was a response born from the oppression of women in Indonesia which was then studied in an Islamic perspective. In the end, the various discourses described above are the face of the Muslim women's resistance movement in the pre-independence period.

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