

NEGOTIATING GENDER AND WORK: CAREER WOMEN IN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC DISCOURSE

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Abstract

The transition of women from the domestic to the public sphere through their roles as professionals remains a debated issue in Indonesian society. This phenomenon represents a form of self-actualization and personal development, which has elicited diverse responses within Indonesian Islamic discourse. This study aims to examine Islamic perspectives on women's careers in Indonesia. Employing a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach through library research, this study reviews relevant literature to explore the issue. The findings indicate that the presence of women in professional sectors in Indonesia is increasingly recognized, with opportunities for career development becoming more accessible and equitable for both women and men. This trend is supported by Islamic frameworks such as Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemajuan, which endorse women's participation in the public sphere. Nevertheless, women continue to face obstacles in their career advancement, particularly due to the persistence of patriarchal structures and male dominance in society. In this context, the women's wings of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah are expected to play a transformative role in promoting wider acceptance of women's professional engagement and in challenging entrenched patriarchal norms.

Kata Kunci: Career Women; Indonesian Islam; Gender and Work; Patriarchy

Abstrak

Transisi perempuan dari ranah domestik ke ranah publik melalui peran mereka sebagai profesional tetap menjadi isu yang diperdebatkan dalam masyarakat Indonesia. Fenomena ini mewakili bentuk aktualisasi diri dan pengembangan pribadi, yang telah memicu respons beragam dalam diskursus Islam Indonesia. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji perspektif Islam terhadap karier perempuan di Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, deskriptif-analitis melalui penelitian perpustakaan, studi ini meninjau literatur relevan untuk mengeksplorasi isu tersebut. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kehadiran perempuan di sektor profesional di Indonesia semakin diakui, dengan peluang pengembangan karier menjadi lebih accessible dan adil bagi perempuan dan laki-laki. Tren ini didukung oleh kerangka Islam seperti Islam Nusantara dan Islam Berkemajuan, yang mendukung partisipasi perempuan di ruang publik. Namun, perempuan masih menghadapi hambatan dalam kemajuan karier mereka, terutama akibat persistennya struktur patriarki dan dominasi laki-laki di masyarakat. Dalam konteks ini, sayap perempuan Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) dan Muhammadiyah diharapkan memainkan peran transformatif dalam mempromosikan penerimaan yang lebih luas terhadap keterlibatan profesional perempuan dan dalam menantang norma-norma patriarkal yang sudah mengakar.

Kata Kunci:

Keyword: Perempuan Karier; Islam Indonesia; Gender dan Pekerjaan; Patriarki

A. Introduction

Nowadays, an increasing number of women are entering the workforce and pursuing professional careers across various sectors. In Indonesia, women's participation in career development has grown significantly as a form of self-actualization and contribution to the public sphere. This shift reflects broader social changes, including rising levels of education, greater access to employment opportunities, and the influence of global discourses on gender equality. However, such progress does not automatically translate into equality with men. Women



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continue to encounter structural barriers, cultural expectations, and workplace discrimination that hinder their professional advancement. These challenges illustrate the persistent tension between the ideals of gender equality and the realities of a patriarchal social order.

In many cases, the position of career women in Indonesia remains unequal to that of men. Within the bureaucratic sector, for instance, patriarchal norms are still deeply rooted, often resulting in gender-biased practices in the selection of leadership positions. Data from the National Civil Service Agency (BKN) show that women constitute 39.7% of the workforce, while men account for 60.3%. Although this indicates significant female participation, women remain underrepresented in higher-ranking positions. Most women are concentrated in echelon III and IV, whereas their presence in strategic leadership roles at echelon I and II remains minimal.¹ A similar pattern can be observed in State Islamic Universities, where the majority of rector positions are still held by men, despite the presence of a few female rectors. These examples highlight how male dominance continues to characterize professional hierarchies in Indonesia, particularly in sectors where authority and decision-making power are concentrated.

In addition, in the workplace, women often face real challenges simply because they are women. Women are often denigrated, considered incompetent, marginalized, labeled with negative stereotypes, violence, and double burden. Based on research conducted by Kinanti, Syaebani, and Primadini, it is stated that the number of genders in a job remains the strongest basis for classifying jobs, or in other words, stereotypes persist in society regarding the classification of jobs by gender.² Not only that, but violence against women in the workplace also still occurs. Based on data from Komnas Perempuan's CATAHU (Annual Record) 2023, 500 cases of violence against women in the workplace were reported to Komnas Perempuan throughout 2023.³ Still related to the issue of women in a career, women can never escape the double burden imposed on them. This double burden can lead to family and work conflicts that hinder the success of career women, both in their

¹Viona Budi Cahyani, "Glass Ceiling pada Perempuan dalam Menempati Posisi Strategis Struktural di Birokrasi Kementerian Republik Indonesia" (t.t.), 2.

²Nur Aliftha Kinanti, Muhammad Irfan Syaebani, and Dindha Vitri Primadini, "Stereotip Pekerjaan Berbasis Gender Dalam Konteks Indonesia," *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Usahawan Indonesia* 44, no. 1 (2021): 1.

³Komnas Perempuan, "Keadilan Sosial dan Kerja Layak Bagi Buruh Perempuan," Komnas Perempuan, 2024, <https://komnasperempuan.go.id/siaran-pers-detail/siaran-pers-komnas-perempuan-tentang-peringatan-hari-buruh-internasional-2024#>.

roles at home and in their careers.⁴ According to Handayani and Pratama, dual role conflict has a negative influence on performance, which is exacerbated by the high level of stress caused by the high dual role conflict.⁵

From some of the cases and problems related to career women that have been described, it is evident that the issue of career women in Indonesia remains a topic of discourse, and this is certainly interesting to review from an Indonesian Islamic perspective. Regarding career women, particularly from an Islamic perspective, numerous studies have been conducted. From these various studies, differences emerge in focus and topics examined. For example, a survey conducted by Masripah, Nasrullah, and Fatonah found that Islam is a religion that is flexible and understands women, allowing them to pursue careers as long as they are within the boundaries of Islamic law. Therefore, there is no prohibition in Islamic teachings against women having a career.⁶ This is also in line with research conducted by Juwita, which states that Islam does not prevent women from having a career (outside the home) in accordance with their education on condition that they do not violate the limits set in Islam and do not violate their nature as women.⁷

In research conducted by Alfiyan, still related to career women, based on the concept of *mubadalah*, Fakih stated that women can become career women because, in Islam, God has created humans in both male and female types without differentiating in terms of worship, except in biological matters. In Islam, career women have the freedom to work without neglecting their responsibilities and can maintain their nature and religion.⁸ Still talking about career women, research conducted by Sundari on the dual role of career women in Hadith with a psychological review states that in the context of Hadith, women are not prohibited from leaving the house to work, and psychologically, women who go out to work are a form of self-actualization.⁹ Meanwhile, Maleha's research states that although

⁴ T. Elfira Rahmayati, "Konflik Peran Ganda Pada Wanita Karier," *Jurnal Insitusi Politeknik Ganesha Medan* 3, no. 1 (2020): 163, <https://doi.org/10.33395/juripol.v3i1.10920>.

⁵ Ayu Mustika Handayani and Rini Mustikasari Kurnia Pratama, "Konflik Peran Ganda Wanita Karir Dalam Keluarga," *Promotif: Jurnal Kesehatan Masyarakat* 12, no. 02 (2022): 134, <https://doi.org/10.56338/promotif.v12i2.3091>.

⁶ Masripah, Yufi Mohammad Nasrullah, and Nurul Fatonah, "Kebolehan Wanita Berkarir Dalam Pandangan Al-Quran," *Al Quds: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 6, no. 2 (2022): 843-861, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v6i2.4238>.

⁷ Dwi Runjani Juwita, "Pandangan Hukum Islam Terhadap Wanita Karir," *El-Wasathiya: Jurnal Studi Agama* 6, no. 2 (2018): 190.

⁸ Wahyu Nur Alfiyan, "Wanita Karir Perspektif Mubadalah Ky Fakih Dan Kedudukannya Dalam Hukum Islam," *Juris: Jurnal Ilmiah Syari'ah* 3, no. 1 (2023): 55.

⁹ Sundari, "Peran Ganda Wanita Karir Dalam Hadis (Sebuah Tinjauan Psikologi)," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 2, no. 1 (2022): 271, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v2i1.17175>.

women are allowed, they must always prioritize the benefits, both for domestic life and for society.¹⁰

Although there are quite a number of studies that examine career women, especially in the review of Islamic perspectives, however, this paper will further try to explore related views and responses in the Indonesian Islamic perspective, by reviewing two views of Islamic community organizations in Indonesia, namely Nahdlatul Ulama or known as Islam Nusantara and Muhammadiyah or known as Islam Berkemajuan. The views of Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemajuan are chosen for examination in this paper, considering that the two mass organizations are the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, which will, to some extent, influence or impact the thinking and understanding of Muslim communities in Indonesia.

By examining the above problems, this paper will review the discourse on career women from the perspective of Indonesian Islam. This research focuses on how the views of Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemajuan respond to career women. In addition, this research will also provide efforts to affirm career women who are currently still facing various challenges and obstacles in pursuing their careers. This research employs qualitative methods, utilizing a library research approach to collect and inventory literature related to the research theme. The data obtained is then processed, sorted, and analyzed to produce research findings.

B. Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with a library research design, complemented by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The primary data are drawn from organizational documents, religious texts, and official publications of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, including the women's wings such as Muslimat, Fatayat, Nahdlatunnisa, and 'Aisyiyah. Secondary data include scholarly journals, books, and statistical reports issued by national institutions such as BPS, BKN, and Komnas Perempuan.

Data collection was conducted through a systematic review of literature using thematic keywords such as "career women," "Islam Nusantara," "Islam Berkemajuan," and "gender in Islam." The collected data were critically examined for authenticity, relevance, and academic rigor. The analysis applied thematic

¹⁰ Nova Yanti Maleha, "Pandangan Islam Tentang Pilihan Kehidupan Wanita Karir," *An Nisa'a: Jurnal Kajian Gender Dan Anak* 13, no. 01 (2018): 107.

categorization to identify core issues (patriarchy, gender equality, domestic-public roles) and employed Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework to explore the ideological underpinnings and power relations within NU and Muhammadiyah discourses on career women.

To ensure validity, data triangulation was performed by cross-referencing academic literature, organizational statements, and statistical reports. Interpretive analysis was then conducted to situate the findings within the broader socio-religious context of Indonesia, highlighting both opportunities and obstacles faced by career women in the Islamic discourse.

C. Result and Discuss

1. Women in History

Women in the Roman-Greek period were considered the property of men, be it fathers, husbands, children, or relatives. Women in the Greek period were considered to occupy a lower position than men. In Ancient Greek society, during the period of philosophical enlightenment that gave rise to thinkers, the issue of women's rights and obligations was not often discussed.¹¹ In the Roman tradition, women were traditionally subordinate to men and were expected to obey all their orders, regardless of the circumstances.¹² The position of women in Rome was comparable to that of a slave; they were not allowed to hold power of attorney, have authority, bear witness, vouch for others, or be guardians.¹³

In the Arabian Peninsula during the pre-Islamic era, there were quite alarming phenomena. During the Jahiliyyah period, Arab society viewed women as lowly creatures. There were two ways in which the Arabs accepted the presence of women, namely those who buried their daughters alive and kept them, but were treated unfairly and inhumanely.¹⁴ In pre-Islamic societies, women did not have any rights and were treated like objects that could be bought, sold, and inherited. Additionally, it was discovered that during the pre-Islamic period, no rules were limiting the number of wives a man could have.¹⁵

¹¹Lisnawati, "Perempuan dalam Lintasan Sejarah: Menepis Isu Ketidaksetaraan Gender dalam Islam," *eL-Mashlahah Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2019), 77.

¹²Abdul Qadir Manshur, *Buku Pintar Fikih Wanita* (Jakarta: Zaman, 2012), 136-137.

¹³R. Magdalena, "Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Perjalanan Sejarah (Studi tentang Kedudukan Perempuan dalam Masyarakat Islam)," *Harkat an-Nisa: Jurnal Studi gender dan Anak*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2017), 17.

¹⁴*Ibid*, 20-21.

¹⁵Nurjannah Ismail, *Perempuan dalam Pasungan Bias Laki-Laki dalam Penafsiran* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2003), 33-35.

After the arrival of Islam, women's rights became equal to those of men. The presence of Islam erased all forms of Jahiliyah traditions, including all discriminatory actions against women. In Islam, the position of men and women is considered equal, free to do *tasarruf*, and complement and need each other.¹⁶ Islam came to elevate women's dignity with the emergence of a revolutionary movement of women's humanity. With the arrival of Islam, women have received inheritance rights, become witnesses, learn to teach, *khulu'*, and get rewarded.

In the late 18th century, the women's movement known as feminism emerged.¹⁷ This movement is considered to have started in 1792 AD, marked by Mary Wollstonecraft's writing entitled *The Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.¹⁸ According to Sanders, this writing marked the beginning of the modern feminist movement, which encouraged women to develop rational thinking and advocate for equal education for girls in public schools.¹⁹ In relation to feminism, it has become a matter of debate and polemic among Muslims. The polemics are related to the discourse on women's rights and Islam, as well as the different positions of women in Muslim-majority societies, such as in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and North Africa, with Muslim women in Muslim-minority societies, such as in America and Europe.²⁰ Some of them categorically reject the coexistence of Islam and feminism. According to them, hostility towards feminism is inherent in divine laws, and women's liberation in Islamic society itself must begin with the de-Islamization of every aspect of life.²¹ On the other hand, some argue that feminism within an Islamic framework is the only culturally appropriate and effective strategy for the women's movement. They view Islamic feminism as a movement that aligns with societal traditions and counters cultural change, seeking to challenge Western women's claims to feminism.²²

In Indonesia itself, at the end of the 19th century, the women's movement in Indonesia was initiated by R.A. Kartini, who fought for the emancipation of

¹⁶Agustin Hanapi, "Peran Perempuan dalam Islam," *Gender Equality*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Maret 2015), 16-17.

¹⁷Wirasandi, "Wanita dalam Pendekatan Feminisme," *Journal Ilmiah Rinjani*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2019), 48.

¹⁸Valerie Sanders, "First Wave Feminism" dalam *Cambridge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*, ed. Sarah Gamble (2006); Ni Komang Arie Suwastini, "Perkembangan Feminisme Barat dari Abad Kedelapan Belas hingga Postfeminisme: Sebuah Tinjauan Teoretis," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (April 2013), 200.

¹⁹Suwastini.

²⁰Fardan Mahmudatul Imamah, "Dinamika Feminisme Islam dalam Mendefinisikan Perempuan: Tinjauan Filosofis," *Martabat: Jurnal Perempuan dan Anak*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Desember 2022): 177.

²¹A. Azad, "Islam dar barabar-e feminism", *Journal of Iranian Women's Studies Foundation*, No. 8 (1997); Haideh Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism* (London & New York: Zed Books, 1999), 134.

²²F. El Guindi, "Feminism Comes of Age in Islam", dalam S. Sabbagh (ed.), *Arab Women: Between Defiance and Restraint* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1996); *Ibid*.

women.²³ The women's emancipation movement was an effort to elevate the dignity of women at that time, which demeaned women and placed them below men²⁴, and disregarded the patriarchal culture that is still very much a part of Indonesian society.²⁵

The 1960s saw the rise of the feminist movement in Indonesia. Still, it wasn't until a decade later, in the 1970s, that the issue of gender equality began to be raised and linked to development by NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) activists.²⁶ The feminist movement in Indonesia was then divided into three phases. First, in phase 1 (1975-1985), the majority of NGOs viewed gender issues as unimportant, and many even resorted to harassment. Second, in phase 2 (1985-1995), there was an introduction and basic understanding of gender analysis and its role in development. Third, in Phase 3 (1995-present), two main strategies were promoted to address gender issues: the integration of gender into the policies and programs of organizations and educational institutions, and advocacy on gender issues in Indonesia.²⁷ However, in the current Indonesian context, the word feminism is rarely used. On various occasions, Indonesian Islamic scholars tend to use the term gender equality rather than feminism.²⁸

Various strategies for achieving gender equality, as a movement effort to fight for women's rights, are becoming increasingly visible. In addition to multiple methods, the emergence of organizations that provided ideas related to the role of women in the public sphere demonstrated the movement's efforts in advocating for women's rights. Organizations formed, such as Muslimat in NU, 'Aisyiyah in Muhammadiyah, Islamic Wives Association (Persistri) in Islamic Unity, and various other organizations. The emergence of these organizations is aimed at eliminating gender injustice and achieving equal treatment and opportunities for men and women in various fields, including education, economy, politics, society, and other sectors of life.

²³Syakwan Lubis, "Gerakan Feminisme dalam Era Postmodernisme Abad 21," *Demokrasi*, Vol. V, No. 1 (2006), 75.

²⁴Nana Supriatna, *Sejarah* (Bandung: Grafindo Media Pratama, 2008).

²⁵Korry El-Yana, *Perempuan dalam Bingkai Media* (Tangerang: Indigo Media, 2021), 145.

²⁶Mansour Fakhri, *Analisis Gender dan Transformasi Sosial* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1994), 162-164; Azwar, "Jurnal Sosial dan Budaya Syar-I," *Jurnal Sosial dan Budaya Syar-i* 10, no. 1 (2023), 18.

²⁷Azwar.

²⁸Imamah, "Dinamika Feminisme, 181.

2. Problems of Career Women in Indonesia

Career women²⁹ are defined as individuals who prioritize self-development in their professional field, utilizing their skills as a means of self-actualization to achieve established positions, rapid career advancement, notable achievements, and overall life satisfaction.³⁰ In addition to the term career women, there is also the term women workers. According to Prof. Dr. But Omas Ihromi, women workers³¹ are those who can earn financial rewards (wages) from their work.³² From the definition of career women and working women, there is a thin difference; both orientations are equally focused on earning an income. However, career women generally have achieved economic stability and prioritize their social status or position, while working women are primarily motivated to fulfill their family's financial needs.³³

Along with the times, the number of career women in Indonesia is increasing. However, their position as career women often faces several challenges and obstacles that can affect their career progress and development. This can be seen in several cases related to the challenges and barriers women face in pursuing their careers. In some cases in Indonesia, career women often face multiple roles. On the one hand, women are often housewives who assume the duties of wives and mothers, and on the other hand, women are faced with careers that demand high performance. The existence of this dual role carried out by women can lead to work-family conflict, which can be one of the factors inhibiting women's careers. From several existing studies, the double burden for women has indeed become a reality in Indonesian society.

In addition to the double burden carried by women, the form of gender bias that occurs in women is still visible in the issue of wages/salaries. In this case, women's wages/salaries tend to be lower than those of men. According to the August 2022 National Labor Force Survey, the data indicate that women's wages are lower than those of men. It was recorded that men's income was \$

²⁹Career in the Big Indonesian Dictionary means development and progress in life, work, position and so on or in the sense of work that provides hope for advancement. According to A. Hafiz Anshary A.Z, career women are women who pursue their work or profession and carry out various activities to improve their results and achievements.

³⁰Asriaty, "Wanita Karir dalam Pandangan Islam," *Jurnal Al-Maiyyah*, Vol. 07, No. 2 (Juli-Desember 2014), 168.

³¹Working women in this case can be divided into two groups. First, women who work to channel their hobbies, develop their talents and improve their careers. Second, women who work to fulfill their needs in life or because of economic pressure, in other words, women who work for social improvement.

³²A.Z, *Ihdad Wanita*, 21-22; Asriaty, "Wanita Karir, 168.

³³*Ibid*, 168-169.

3.33, while women's was \$ 2.59, with a difference of \$0.74. This is one of the obstacles women face in pursuing a career, considering the wage gap between men and women. Another form of gender bias is evident in the position of women within the bureaucracy. Most bureaucratic positions are dominated by men, with fewer women holding these positions, but the number of women has increased every year. Based on data from BKN (the state employment agency) from 2012 to 2014, according to Hadiati, the higher the position in the bureaucracy, the fewer women are present, indicating that most women are in lower positions.³⁴

In addition, acts of violence against women still occur frequently. The forms of violence that occur to women in pursuing their careers are increasingly becoming a boomerang for women. This is reinforced based on data from the Central Statistics Agency from Komnas Perempuan's Annual Record (CATAHU), which notes that in the workplace, gender-based violence against women is quite high.³⁵ This further inhibits women from starting their careers.

In addition, the role of career women in an organization or job is still trapped in the view of male masculinity. Batool and Karakilic stated that this comes from the environment and culture of organizational work, which in every practice has been constructed in masculinity, which causes women's space to be increasingly limited.³⁶ With this limited space for movement, it becomes difficult for women to develop their potential and move forward in their career development, as opportunities are scarce or non-existent.

It should be underlined that, in addition to external factors, obstacles for women also come from within themselves. From the existing reality, the inhibiting factors for women in their careers can be attributed to several factors, including low educational attainment, a lack of self-confidence, and a lack of self-actualization, among other factors that hinder their career progress. Relatedly, women's education, which is often lower than men's, results in them holding lower positions than men. Although the education factor is an influence within the women themselves, indirectly, society's view of women's education, which is considered unimportant, is a factor in women's low educational

³⁴Selly Oktarina, dkk, "The Glass Ceiling Phenomenon In Working," *Marwah: Jurnal Perempuan, Agama dan Jender*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2022), 8.

³⁵Komnas Perempuan, KemenPPPA, dan FPL, *Gerak Bersama dalam Data Laporan Sinergi Database Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Periode Juli s.d Desember 2021* (Jakarta: t.p, 2022), 20.

³⁶Ade Nuri Septiana dan Rina Herlina Haryanti, "Glass Ceiling pada Pekerja Perempuan : Studi Literatur," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (2023), 173.

attainment. According to Radha and Uwiyo's research, one of the factors that hinders women's access to education is the lack of public awareness about the importance of education for women.³⁷

In general, from several cases that become challenges and obstacles for career women, there are three main factors that hinder their career development: factors within the women themselves, factors within the organization or company, and factors of personal preference. Internal factors include perseverance, self-development intentions, ambition, educational qualifications, experience, and self-efficacy. Organizational factors include negative stereotypes, gender bias, masculine culture, old boy network, queen bee syndrome, organizational or company policies, and sexual harassment. The preference factor is influenced by factors such as family support, work-family conflict, family-work conflict, and work-family balance.³⁸

3. Career Women in Indonesian Islamic Discourse

In this context, Islam emphasizes the values of gender equality between men and women, stating that both are equal in terms of fulfilling their rights and obligations, including work, and there is no distinction between the two in pursuing their careers. The distinction is limited only to the type of work that is distinguished based on the credibility, skills, and competence of each.³⁹ However, in reality, career women often face challenges in pursuing their careers. Over the last decade, efforts to equalize gender have emerged, known as the feminist movement. This movement is a women's movement that rejects various forms of subordination, marginalization, and humiliation that they experience in society, both in social, economic, and political aspects.⁴⁰ In Islam, this feminist movement was then called for by several Muslim figures, including Qasim Amin, Fatima Mernissi, Amina Wadud Muhsin, Asghar Ali Engineer,⁴¹ Riffat Hassan, Musdah Mulia, Hussein Muhammad, and several other Muslim feminist figures.

³⁷Natasya Radha dan Aloysius Uwiyo, "Perbandingan Kesetaraan Hak Pekerja Perempuan dalam Ruang Lingkup Ketenagakerjaan di Indonesia dan Amerika Serikat," *Comserva: Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat*, Vol. 2, No. 11 (Maret 2023), 2778-2779.

³⁸Septiana, "Glass Ceiling, 173-174.

³⁹Rahma Pramudya Nawang Sari, "Wanita Karier Perspektif Islam," *Sangaji: Jurnal Pemikiran Syariah dan Hukum*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Maret 2020), 106-108.

⁴⁰*Ibid*, 4.

⁴¹Suparno, "Perempuan dalam Pandangan Feminis Muslim," *Jurnal Fikroh*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Januari 2015), 125.

In Indonesia, Muslim scholars who have paid attention to the feminist movement include Husein Muhammad and Musdah Mulia. Husein Muhammad, in his view of feminism, seeks an equal, balanced, and harmonious position between men and women in the public sphere. Husein wants equal rights and opportunities between men and women in all aspects. According to him, beyond biological differences, men and women have the same rights in all fields, including economic, political, social, educational, and cultural.⁴² Women deserve equal opportunities with men to develop their potential and contribute to the public sphere.⁴³

Meanwhile, Musdah Mulia, in her book *The Glory of Women in Islam*, emphasizes the principle of gender equality in Islam. She states that this religion does not give privileges to men or women, and both have the same rights and obligations before God. In Mulia's view, in the public sphere, Islam provides equal access for women in various aspects of public life, including seeking knowledge, earning a living, making transactions, and participating in politics, just like men.⁴⁴ In this case, career women are given the opportunity to develop or improve their career potential.

Efforts to promote gender equality in Indonesia are also closely tied to the movements of Islamic community organizations. In Indonesia itself, the Islamic women's movement, which has the majority of followers in Indonesia, is spearheaded by two organizations: Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. In its naming, Nahdlatul Ulama is identical to its designation as Islam Nusantara, while Muhammadiyah is more identical to the name Islam Berkemajuan.

Regarding career women, in the views of NU and Muhammadiyah, both provide flexibility for women to be active in the public sphere as long as they are within reasonable limits and do not violate Sharia.⁴⁵ The NU women's movement is manifested in the formation of Muslimat, whose initial focus was on empowering women to face the various challenges they faced. In religious movements, women play a significant role as agents of political change.⁴⁶ In

⁴²Susanti, "Husein Muhammad antara Feminis Islam dan Feminis Liberal," *Teosofi: Jurnal Tasawuf dan Pemikiran Islam*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Juni 2014), 206.

⁴³Ika Sugiarsih, "Pemikiran Husein Muhammad terhadap Wanita yang Bekerja Perspektif Maqāshid Asy-Syarīah," *Nusantara: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial*, Vol. 9, No. 8 (2022), 3091.

⁴⁴Musdah Mulia, *Kemuliaan Perempuan dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2014), 39-40.

⁴⁵Abdul Halim dan Luthfi Maulana, "Transformasi Dakwah Nahdhatul Ulama dan Muhammadiyah: Dari Subordinasi Menuju Emansipasi," *Jurnal Musawa*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Januari 2019), 87-88.

⁴⁶Sri Roviana, "Gerakan Perempuan Nahdlatul Ulama dalam Transformasi Pendidikan Politik," *Jurnal Pendidikan*

Muhammadiyah, the women's movement was manifested with the formation of 'Aisyiyah, which actively improved the status of women and encouraged women's awareness of their role.⁴⁷

In the view of Islam Nusantara, women have a noble position in Islam. The position of women is not in a subordinate situation, because at its basis, Islam as a religion emphasizes justice and balance. Islam Nusantara recognizes that the dual role of women, both in the public and domestic spheres, can be done in a balanced manner. Women are allowed to participate in the public sphere as long as they possess the necessary abilities and do not neglect or abandon their domestic roles.⁴⁸ For NU, women's central role lies in the domestic sphere, which cannot be ignored under any circumstances. The role of women in the public sphere must be pursued so as not to marginalize their domestic roles.⁴⁹

In the movement for gender equality, Nahdlatul Ulama women formed a women's movement, Muslimat. Since its inception, Muslimat NU has demonstrated that social, economic, political, and educational factors significantly influence the direction of women's struggles. In its movement, Muslimat NU involves not only women but also men, because gender equality and justice can only be realized through cooperation between the two genders.⁵⁰

In addition to Muslimat, Fatayat NU also comes with a vision and mission to liberate women from all forms of oppression, injustice, and arbitrariness against women. According to her, all forms of injustice against women are only a result of the formation of culture and customs, so there needs to be a rethinking in the understanding of religious texts that are able to raise the degree of dignity and dignity of women to contribute to shaping a more advanced and humane human civilization.⁵¹

Islam, Vol. 3 No. 2 (2014), 403-424; *Ibid.*

⁴⁷Dyah Siti Nura'ini, "Corak Pemikiran dan Gerakan Aktivis Perempuan (Melacak Pandangan Keagamaan Aisyiyah Periode 1917-1945), *Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (2013), 125-138; Muhammad Fahmi Ilmy, "Eksistensi Feminisme Mesir dan Transformasi Gerakan Perempuan di Indonesia," *Jurnal Al-Maiyyah*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Desember 2020), 153.

⁴⁸Siti Halimah dan Humaidah Hasibuan, "Respons Tokoh Ormas Islam terhadap Peran Publik Perempuan," *Jurnal Miqot*, Vol. XLII, No. 2 (Juli-Desember 2018), 410-411.

⁴⁹Jamal Ma'mur Asmani, "Kepemimpinan Perempuan: Pergulatan Wacana di Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)," *Jurnal Addin*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Februari 2015), 46.

⁵⁰Abdul Hafiz dan Muh. Sungaidi, "Pemberdayaan Perempuan Kiprah Muslimat NU," *Dakwah: Jurnal Kajian Dakwah dan Kemasyarakatan*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2021), 205.

⁵¹Arif Nuh Safri, "Bangkit dari Ketertindasan (Studi atas Pemikiran Kesetaraan Gender Fatayat NU)," *Jurnal Musawa*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Januari 2012), 132.

In addition, NU also established a gender equality movement, which they call Nahdlatunnisa. The Nahdlatunnisa movement emphasizes three pillars in the awakening of women, namely al-hurriyah (liberation), al-'adalah (justice), and musawah (equality). The three pillars are a mission to liberate women from injustice in the public sphere, encompassing economic, political, social, and cultural fields. This liberation movement is inseparable from the gender injustice that many Indonesian women still experience, such as marginalization, dual roles, subordination, stereotypes, and violence. Nahdlatunnisa's presence is expected to be a narrative that offers solutions for the nation.⁵²

Meanwhile, in Islam Berkemajuan (Muhammadiyah), the women's movement is manifested in the formation of 'Aisyiyah, which has the idea of progressive women. 'Aisyiyah defines progressive women as individuals who are structurally and culturally advanced. In its view, 'Aisyiyah argues that advanced women in an Islamic perspective are realized by the creation of justice and equality between men and women. In social relations, justice for women and men is the realization of justice without discrimination.⁵³ The 'Aisyiyah movement exists to eliminate stigma and empower women. Cultural barriers that position men as superior and various stigmas related to women's powerlessness are the points that the 'Aisyiyah movement continues to fight for. This movement seeks to fight for the rights and status of women who are not only seen as actors in the domestic sphere but also have a stake in the public sphere.⁵⁴

As one of Muhammadiyah's autonomous organizations, 'Aisyiyah aims to create a gender-just society and to fight and respond to all issues related to women.⁵⁵ Regarding the issue of women in the public sphere, especially as career Muslim women, in the economic sector, there is still a gap in economic rewards between men and women, which can be seen from gender inequality, such as opportunities to improve careers and so on. Related to this, progressive women need to increase economic independence. Therefore, women's economy must receive attention so that, in turn, progressive women can become economically

⁵²Annisa Wahid, "Nahdlatunnisa: Perempuan NU Perspektif Feminisme," *Jurnal Iman dan Spiritualitas*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (April-Juni 2023), 200.

⁵³Qurotul' Aeni dan Banun Binaningrum, "Gagasan Perempuan Berkemajuan," *Paradigma: Jurnal Kalam dan Filsafat*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Juni 2022), 6-7.

⁵⁴Dian Fitriana, Sulton, dan Prihma Sinta Utami, "Gerakan Aisyiyah dalam Meneguhkan Identitas Kewargaannya," *Civic-Culture: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan PKn dan Sosial Budaya*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (September 2020), 25.

⁵⁵Zainul Arifin, "'Aisyiyah dan Pembinaan Pemberdayaan Perempuan Sebagai Upaya Mencapai Kesenjangan Gender,'" *Forum Ilmu Sosial*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Juni 2017), 70.

independent figures, which, of course, cannot be separated from the agenda to build the economic independence of progressive women by encouraging women's capacity, access, and participation.⁵⁶

Based on the perspective of Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemajuan, both provide opportunities for women to develop their careers. From the NU and Muhammadiyah women's movements, the position of career women receives full support for advancing their careers. In this case, the movements of the three NU autonomous bodies, namely Muslimat, Fatayat, and Nahdlatunnisa, all support women to have careers in their involvement in various fields as an effort to develop their potential and provide direction for the struggle of women. In Muhammadiyah, regarding career women, 'Aisyiyah seeks women's participation in various fields in order to create an advanced life for women both structurally and culturally, and support women's access and participation.

4. Affirming the Role of Career Women in Indonesia

In response to the challenges and obstacles faced by women in pursuing their careers, there is a need to strengthen their efforts to actualize themselves and develop their potential. In affirming career women in Indonesia, the opening of opportunities in various fields of work for women is one of the supports that encourages them to continue participating in the process of developing a more advanced and better career. This certainly opens the way for women to choose their profession according to the field in which they are engaged.

Regarding some of the challenges and obstacles faced by career women, there are several solutions that can help minimize these. One form of effort that enables career women to continue developing their careers is to pay attention to the needs and roles of women within the workplace. In its realization, various workplaces require the provision of supporting facilities for women according to their needs and roles. For example, for women who are already married, their needs and roles are, of course, different from those of women who are not married. This can be seen in one of the policies of the Indonesian Ministry of Finance, for example, which provides supporting facilities for career women, such as children's playrooms, lactation rooms, and other facilities. Therefore, it is essential in this case to give special attention to both career women and men,

⁵⁶Pimpinan Pusat 'Aisyiyah, *Risalah Perempuan Berkemajuan* (T.k: Pimpinan Pusat 'Aisyiyah, 2022), 48.

based on their respective criteria. With these efforts, it is possible to enhance the performance of career women, and the potential for developing their careers is increasingly open.

Additionally, there is a need to educate the community on the importance of education, not only for men but also for women, and to encourage women to pursue further education. For educated women, career advancement and better job opportunities are more likely. Based on reality, the higher a person's level of education, the greater their chances of securing a job that aligns with their interests or career goals. In improving women's work performance, it is necessary to prevent all forms of violence against them. This effort can take the form of comprehensive policies or rules enforced in the workplace or within an organization. These prevention efforts aim to provide a sense of security to career women, thereby reducing the impact on their career performance.

In the concept of career women, the Indonesian Islamic view holds that women are given freedom of access to develop their careers and have the right to choose a profession according to their competence. In its efforts, the emergence of Islamic women's movements provides its own impetus for women to enter the public sphere as a form of their actualization in all lines of life. These movements certainly aim to inspire women to not only dwell in the domestic sphere but also to develop their potential as career women in the public sphere.

D. Conclusion

In Indonesia, the position of career women has been quite favorable, offering them equal opportunities to men to develop their careers and potential. From the perspective of Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemajuan, both are supportive of women's choices as career women. Their efforts are reflected in the formation of autonomous bodies, including Muslimat, Fatayat, and Nahdlatunnisa' in NU and 'Aisyiyah in Muhammadiyah. Both organizations represent the aspirations of Indonesian Muslim career women in seeking to take a position in the public sphere to create equality in various aspects of life. The existence of autonomous bodies of the two Indonesian Islamic community organizations can be a reference to provide support to women who wish to develop their potential or take part in the public sphere (as career women). However, it is still unfortunate that, although women's opportunities are said to be equal to those of men, the opportunities for career

women in reality are still not free from various challenges and obstacles faced in the process of developing their careers.

E. Reference

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