# Feminist Criticism of Traditional Understanding of Women's Roles in Islam

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**Abstract**

This study comprehensively reveals the intellectual and social dynamics of the significant impact of patriarchal norms embedded in tradition on the limited understanding of gender roles in the Islamic context. By integrating the approaches of literature study and analysis comprehensively, this study offers a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the evolution of views on the role of women in Islam. The study's results highlight the important role of feminist criticism in dismantling the social construction of gender roles in Islam. Patriarchal norms that limit the role of women in Muslim society are not an essential part of the teachings of Islam but the result of interpretation by men in power. It also gave rise to debates about ambiguous interpretations of religious texts, opening up opportunities for interpretations in favor of gender equality and women's rights. Moreover, feminist criticism is not a threat but a constructive attempt to revive equality in Islam and promote an inclusive and progressive understanding of the role of women in modern Muslim society.

**Keywords:** *Feminist Criticism, Gender Equality, Women's Rights, Islam.*

## Introduction

As one of the world's major religions, Islam has a significant role in shaping the social, cultural, and political order in various parts of the world. In the academic realm, an in-depth exploration of the role of Islam in modern society has become necessary, as the understanding of this religion includes not only theological aspects but also social norms that define the roles and responsibilities of individuals in Muslim societies.

One aspect that has been the focus of intense attention in recent decades is the role of women in Islam. Traditions and traditional understandings of the role of women in Islam have led to diverse interpretations and practices in Muslim communities around the world.[1] This traditional understanding is often based on interpretations of sacred Islamic texts, such as the Quran and Hadith, which have specific historical origins and contexts. However, some groups often perceive this understanding as containing patriarchal and discriminatory aspects towards women.[2]

Feminist movements in Islam have emerged in response to this traditional understanding. The movement attempts to critique, reinterpret, and redefine the role of women in Islam by emphasizing the principles of gender equality and justice.[3] They argue that the religion of Islam, at its core, is compatible with the values of gender equality and women's rights.[4] In other words, the feminist movement in Islam seeks to align Islamic teachings with modern concepts of human rights and gender equality.[5]

Recently, issues surrounding women's rights in Muslim societies have attracted worldwide attention, especially regarding rights such as education, employment, freedom of speech, and reproductive rights. For example, the issue of the hijab, which is a symbol of Islamic identity for many Muslim women, has sparked a long debate.[6] Some see it as a manifestation of the traditional understanding of women's role that portrays them as Guardians of honor and morals of society. In contrast, others consider it a form of oppression of individual freedom.[7] Other issues, such as polygamy, child marriage, and inheritance, raise serious questions about the extent to which traditional understandings respect the principles of gender equality that are increasingly valued in modern society.[8]

However, this debate is not limited to purely practical issues. They reflect deeper questions about religious interpretation, religious authority, and the role of the

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[1] Sidani, 'Women, Work, and Islam in Arab Societies'; Orakzai, 'The Rights of Women in Islam: The Question of 'Public'and 'Private'Spheres for Women's Rights and Empowerment in Muslim Societies'.

[2] Tlaiss and Kauser, 'Entrepreneurial Leadership, Patriarchy, Gender, and Identity in the Arab World: Lebanon in Focus'.

[3] Fuad and Ramadhan, 'The Contestation of Feminism and Religious Authority and Its Implication in Islamic Education'.

[4] Karimullah, 'Reinterpretasi Terhadap Kedudukan Perempuan Dalam Islam Melalui Takwil Gender KH. Husein Muhammad'; Tucker, 'Women, Family, and Gender in Islamic Law'.

[5] Nasruddin and Muliana, 'The Urgency of a Moderate Islamic Spirit for the Liberation and Empowerment of Women Movement'.

[6] Gökarıksel and Secor, 'New Transnational Geographies of Islamism, Capitalism and Subjectivity: The Veiling-fashion Industry in Turkey'.

[7] Zainal and Wong, 'Voices behind the Veil: Unravelling the Hijab Debate in Singapore through the Lived Experiences of Hijab-Wearing Malay-Muslim Women'.

[8] Karimullah, 'Poligami Perspektif Fikih Dan Hukum Keluarga Negara Muslim'; Sugitanata and Karimullah, 'Implementasi Hukum Keluarga Islam Pada Undang-Undang Perkawinan Di Indonesia Mengenai Hak Memilih Pasangan Bagi Perempuan'.

individual in determining relevant social and ethical norms in today's Muslim society. Meanwhile, many Muslim-majority countries have undergone significant social, political, and cultural changes. These changes often raise questions about women's identity, values, and role in these societies. In addition, in an era of globalization and advances in information technology, ideas and perspectives on the role of women in Islam can spread rapidly throughout the world. Discussions on these issues are no longer limited to the local or regional environment but have become integral to the global dialogue on religion, human rights, and gender equality.

This study aims to delve deeper into this complex and relevant debate by focusing on feminist critiques of traditional understandings of the role of women in Islam. By examining the arguments presented by feminist groups in Islam and exploring how these arguments contradict or complement traditional understandings, this study seeks to provide a better insight into the development of the concept of the role of women in contemporary Muslim societies. By exploring this understanding, it is hoped that this study can make a meaningful contribution to understanding the complex dynamics of the role of women in Islam and how this relates to issues of gender equality in the context of

religion. Overall, the study is an attempt to bridge traditional understandings with the demands of gender equality in modern Muslim societies, as well as present a more in-depth perspective in global discussions on religion, human rights, and gender equality.

This study also covers aspects of globalization and advances in information technology that affect the debate about the role of women in Islam. The era of globalization allows ideas and views from different cultures and contexts to circulate quickly the world through social media channels, websites, and other online platforms. This creates an environment where ideas about the role of women in Islam can easily spread and reach various circles around the world. For example, feminist movements in Islam can quickly gain international support and attention for the issues they raise, and this also allows the exchange of views and experiences between Muslim communities in different countries.

However, while globalization brings the potential for positive change in the understanding of the role of women in Islam, it can also pose challenges. Understanding Islam and the role of women in Muslim societies can often be influenced by external narratives that may have limited or biased viewpoints. Therefore, in this context of globalization, it is important to have in-depth

research and critical analysis of a local and contextual nature to understand how the role of women in Islam is understood and translated by Muslim communities in different places. In addition, the study will also consider the important role played by individuals and groups in determining religious and cultural understanding in Muslim societies.

The fundamental question of who has the authority to interpret sacred texts and how that authority can relate to modern demands for gender equality and human rights will be an important part of this analysis. Whether religious authorities can accommodate a more inclusive view of the role of women in Islam or whether there needs to be a change in the approach of religious authorities to achieving gender equality is a question that requires a deeper understanding. Thus, this study not only attempts to answer the question of the role of women in Islam but also presents a broader perspective on the development and challenges faced by the feminist movement in Islam. By identifying limitations and opportunities in traditional understandings that may limit the potential of women in Muslim societies, the study also aims to provide a solid basis for discussing more inclusive and equitable social change in Muslim societies to understand the very important and complex developments

regarding the role of women in Islam and how this relates to issues of gender equality in religious contexts.

The role of feminist criticism in dismantling the social construction of gender roles in Islam is an important and novel issue in this research. Criticism of patriarchal norms which limit the role of women in Muslim society from the perspective of Islamic teachings which opens up opportunities for interpretation in favor of gender equality and women's rights becomes a discussion aimed at reviving equality in Islam in modern Muslim society.

## Method

This study combines a literature study approach with a comprehensive literature analysis[9]. This method helps to support and strengthen the understanding of feminist criticism of the traditional understanding of the role of women in Islam. This review will include a broad analysis of the literature, which includes sacred texts, books, articles, and academic writings relevant to this topic. By integrating in-depth literature studies, this study will provide a strong theoretical basis to explore the dynamics of understanding the role of women in Islam and formulate relevant study questions and solid hypotheses. In addition, the literature analysis will help in the

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[9] Adlini et al., 'Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Studi Pustaka', 974.

historical and theoretical context necessary to understand the theoretical framework underlying feminist understanding in the context of the Islamic religion.

## Discussion

### The Social Construction of Gender Roles In Islam

Like other religions, Islam has an important role in shaping views and norms regarding gender roles in society.[10] In Islamic teachings, gender roles are based on religious teachings contained in the Quran and Hadith. However, the interpretation and understanding of this teaching have changed over time and are interpreted by various religious and public figures in various cultures and historical contexts. As a result, there are diverse views on gender roles in Islam, ranging from conservative to progressive.

Traditionally, Islam regulates gender roles by prioritizing equality before God, although physical differences between men and women are recognized.[11] Men and women were given different responsibilities, often affecting the family's economic income and protection. In contrast, women were expected to care for the household and children. However, this is also accompanied by certain

protections and rights for women, including inheritance rights and access to education.

Amid social change and cultural development, many Islamic thinkers began to reinterpret the social construction of gender roles. There have been attempts to assert equality between men and women in Islam, especially regarding women's rights, such as the right to work, get an education, and participate in social and political life. These movements regard the social construction of more inclusive gender roles as a manifestation of fundamental Islamic values, such as justice and compassion. However, this change also faces challenges from more conservative groups and emphasizes the traditional understanding of gender roles in Islam. They may oppose these changes on the grounds of religion and belief. It creates debate in Muslim societies and reflects the complexity of the social construction of gender roles in Islam.

In the context of the development of gender roles in Islam, some of the key issues to consider are the extent to which the Islamic understanding of gender roles reflects the universal values of justice, human dignity, and equality, as well as the extent to which it reflects the social and cultural norms rooted in a particular society. One important aspect of

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[10] Bakhshizadeh, 'A Social Psychological Critique on Islamic Feminism'.

[11] Hamisan, 'Syed Syeikh Ahmad Al-Hadi's Thought on Women's Emancipation and Gender Equality: Re-Evaluation and Analysis'.

the social construction of gender roles in Islam is the issue of clothing, especially the hijab or head covering for women. Some traditional views consider it a symbol of obedience and purity, while others see it as the oppression of women.

In recent years, a movement has advocated for a more inclusive understanding of the hijab, which gives women the choice to wear or not to wear the hijab, emphasizing the importance of freedom of religion and personal decision.[12] In addition, marriage and divorce are an important part of gender roles in Islam. Islam regulates marriage and gives different rights and responsibilities to husband and wife. Although there are legal provisions protecting women's rights in marriage and divorce, varying practices in different Islamic communities may affect these protections.[13]

In the context of education and careers, many Islamic societies have seen significant changes in understanding gender roles. Many Muslim women now get higher education and are involved in various fields of work, including politics and business. However, there are also challenges faced by Muslim women in access to equal opportunities with men, especially in some areas that still implement patriarchal social norms. It is important to remember that different social,

cultural, and political contexts worldwide strongly influence the social construction of gender roles in Islam. Muslim groups in different countries and cultures may have different views on gender roles. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the diversity of perspectives and experiences within Muslim societies when addressing this topic.

In Islam and many religions and societies worldwide, the social construction of gender roles is a constantly changing and important issue. In Islam, as in other religions, gender roles have historically been governed by different cultures and religious interpretations. How Islam views gender roles aligns with certain religious teachings and social norms, and this understanding continues to change. In the early centuries of Islam, gender roles may have been more flexible than in some contemporary interpretations.

Early Islamic history records the involvement of women in various aspects of life, including commerce, politics, and education. In this context, women such as Khadija, the wife of the Prophet Muhammad, were successful businessmen, while Aisha, the other wife, was a scholar and community leader. However, over time and with cultural and political developments, many Muslim

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[12] Rottmann and Ferree, 'Citizenship and Intersectionality: German Feminist Debates about Headscarf and Antidiscrimination Laws'; Yeste et al., 'Muslim Women Wearing the Niqab in Spain:

Dialogues around Discrimination, Identity and Freedom'.

[13] Sugitanata, Karimullah, and Jamil, 'Produk-Produk Pembaharuan Hukum Keluarga Islam Di Turki'.

societies began to adopt more conservative views on gender roles. This often includes restrictions on women's access to education, work, and public life. Strict religious interpretations, such as unequal inheritance laws, can affect social and legal arrangements detrimental to women.

Another challenge in the social construction of gender roles in Islam is combining traditional values with modern society's demands. Many Muslims seek to lead lives that align with their religious values while accommodating social developments, such as higher education for women and active participation in politics and the economy. Some prominent Muslim intellectuals and women activists have tried to reform the understanding of gender roles in Islam by referring to the principles of equality, justice, and human dignity in religious teachings. They argue that more inclusive and equitable social change must be implemented to achieve gender equality in Muslim societies.

The role of religious institutions and religious leaders in interpreting and promoting the social construction of gender roles in Islam also plays an important role. Some religious leaders have offered more inclusive views, while others have retained traditional views. In the face of the social construction of gender roles in Islam, an approach that considers the diversity of interpretations and

local contexts is important. This will allow room for more inclusive change that allows women to reach their potential without violating the religious principles held by many Muslims.

The social construction of gender roles in Islam is also linked to issues such as violence against women, early marriage, and traditional practices detrimental to women, such as female genital mutilation. How Islam views and addresses these issues becomes crucial in understanding gender roles in the context of this religion. Islam teaches the principles of justice, compassion, and protection of human rights. Therefore, many Muslim thinkers and activists struggle to change these practices that harm women by referring to the values of the religion. They argue that these practices are incompatible with Islamic values that encourage protection, justice, and human dignity. In addition, in recent years, there has been an increasing awareness in the Muslim community about the need to achieve gender equality and give women equal rights in all aspects of life. Many Muslim women have been active in feminist and human rights movements, fighting to eliminate gender discrimination in law, education, and social life.

However, these efforts also face significant challenges. There is resistance to changes that are considered contrary to

religious teachings or local traditions. In addition, politics and broader social factors also influence the way Islam views gender roles. In some regions, influence from extremist groups and sociopolitical pressures can limit women's freedom. It is worth remembering that the social construction of gender roles in Islam is a very complex and constantly changing subject. Muslim societies' views and practices evolve according to social, economic, political, and cultural changes. A more inclusive understanding of gender roles in Islam, reflecting the values of justice and equality, is desired by many thinkers and activists, but efforts to achieve it remain unfinished work.

Another challenge in the social construction of gender roles in Islam is how to understand and address issues of sexuality. In many Muslim societies, issues such as homosexuality and gender identity have become increasingly in-depth topics in discussions about gender roles and religious teachings. Some traditional views of Islam may regard homosexuality as incompatible with religious teachings. In contrast, others combine religious views with a more inclusive understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Changes in the social construction of gender roles in Islam are also reflected in the

social and political changes that are taking place in various countries with a majority Muslim population. For example, some countries have introduced legal reforms that give more rights to women, such as the right to drive in Saudi Arabia or the right to hold the highest political office in Indonesia.[14] This suggests that gender roles in Islam can evolve in response to social change and societal demands. It is also important to recognize the role of women in influencing the social construction of gender roles in Islam. Although women in Muslim societies face many challenges and barriers, many Muslim women have become leaders in various fields, including science, politics, and social activism. These women were instrumental in reformulating gender roles in Islam and championing equality and women's rights in the context of their religion.

In achieving more inclusive gender roles in Islam, it is also important to pay attention to education. A good education and a deeper understanding of the teachings of Islam can help people understand the principles of equality and justice embodied in their religion. Education can also help reduce the ignorance and prejudice against women in Muslim societies. In addition, it is important to recognize that the social construction of gender roles in Islam is very sensitive and

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[14] Topal, 'Economic Reforms and Women's Empowerment in Saudi Arabia'; McGregor, 'Indonesian Women, The Women's International Democratic Federation and the Struggle for "Women's Rights", 1946–1965'.

contentious. To reformulate gender roles in Islam, open, inclusive dialogue and respect for differences are key. It is also important to involve religious leaders, academics and women activists in this effort so that a more inclusive understanding of gender roles in Islam can develop over time to promote gender equality and justice in line with religious values.

## Controversies Surrounding Traditional Understandings

Controversy and debate in the Islamic world related to the traditional understanding of the role of women is a very complex and profound issue. This traditional understanding includes various aspects, such as hijab, polygamy, child marriage, and inheritance, which have been debated in Muslim societies. On the one hand, this traditional understanding reflects the interpretation of religious teachings that have lasted for centuries. On the other hand, there are groups in Muslim society that emphasize the values of gender equality and women's rights that are considered contrary to these traditional understandings.

One of the most striking issues is the hijab or women's head covering. In the traditional understanding of Islam, the hijab is considered a religious obligation that indicates the chastity and obedience of women to Allah. However, many feminist groups in Islam have criticized the imposition of the hijab and argued that it should be a woman's choice.[15] They regard the imposition of hijab as an act of oppression and celebrate women's right to decide what they wear. Furthermore, the issue of polygamy is also controversial in Islam. The traditional understanding of Islam allows a man to have up to four wives at a time on the condition that he can treat each of them fairly. However, some feminist groups oppose polygamy because it harms women and interferes with gender equality. They argue that this practice can be used to manipulate and oppress women.

Child marriage is also a subject of debate in Muslim societies. Traditional understanding in some regions allows the marriage of children, even at a very young age. However, many human rights groups and feminists oppose this practice because it can potentially harm children, particularly women, who often are not free to choose their life partners and access proper education. Furthermore, the traditional understanding of Islam requires that a woman's share of inheritance be only half of that given to a man. It has been a source of debate among feminist groups in Islam, which emphasize gender equality and

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[15] Mishra and Bakry, 'Social Identities in Consumer-brand Relationship: The Case of the Hijab-wearing Barbie Doll in the United States: Ethnic Identities in the Multicultural Marketplace'.

the right of women to inherit the same inheritance as men. They argue that this is not to the values of equality taught in the religion of Islam.

Both sides used arguments based on religious texts, Hadith, and interpretations of Islamic teachings in the debate. Groups that support traditional understanding tend to refer to religious teachings that have existed for centuries as the foundation of their arguments. On the other hand, feminist groups in Islam often cite the values of equality embodied in Islamic teachings and point out that such traditional understandings have been misused to support the oppression of women. The impact of these debates on Muslim society varies widely. In some regions, legal changes have been enacted to improve women's rights, such as changes in marriage or inheritance laws. In other regions, however, traditional practices remain in place and regulate everyday life.

The debate around the traditional understanding of the role of women in Islam also faces other challenges, especially in the context of globalization and intercultural interactions. As Muslim societies become increasingly connected to the outside world, values and norms that may differ from traditional understandings of Islam may influence perceptions and practices around women's roles. Some see globalization as a threat to traditional values, while others see it as an opportunity to strengthen women's rights and values of equality. In this debate, the role of religious figures and leaders of the Muslim community is very important. They can play a key role in interpreting religious teachings in a modern context and offer a more inclusive view of the role of women in Islam.

Several religious leaders have sought to reinterpret traditional understandings and support social reforms that promote women's rights.[16] However, some religious leaders maintain stricter traditional views. In addition, social media and Information Technology have played an important role in stirring the debate about the role of women in Islam. Activist groups and women's rights advocates have used the platform to spread their message and build support for women's issues in Islam. However, social media can also be a source of polarization and conflict among groups with different views.

In the long run, this debate will continue and change along with social, cultural, and political changes. How Muslim Societies respond to these challenges will shape how the understanding of the role of women in Islam evolves in the future. Efforts to achieve gender equality in Islam need to be continued

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[16] Arat, 'Democratic Backsliding and the Instrumentalization of Women's Rights in Turkey'; Koburtay, Abuhussein, and Sidani, 'Women Leadership, Culture, and Islam: Female Voices from Jordan'.

regarding religious values and human rights, as well as accepting that the role of women in Islam should not conflict with the values of equality, justice, and human dignity.

It is also important to note that the debate surrounding the role of women in Islam affects not only Muslim individuals and communities but also an increasingly connected global society. Issues related to women in Islam are often of international concern, and their development can affect the world's perception of the religion of Islam and the Muslim community as a whole. Furthermore, this debate raises issues about the separation between religion and state. Many countries with majority Muslim populations have laws and policies that are based on the teachings of the Islamic religion. However, in the modern context, many debate whether such laws and policies should prioritize religious values, individual rights, and democratic principles. This creates a tension between implementing religious values in law and safeguarding the principles of gender equality and Human Rights.

It cannot be overlooked that many positive changes have taken place in recent decades concerning the role of women in Islam. Many Muslim countries have seen changes in marriage, divorce and inheritance laws that pay more attention to women's rights. Muslim women are increasingly active

in politics, business, and education. These are encouraging signs of progress in achieving gender equality in Islam. However, major challenges still exist in many regions. Practices that harm women, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, still exist in some Muslim societies. In addition, there is pressure from extremist groups seeking to impose stricter views on the role of women in Islam. All this shows that the struggle to achieve gender equality in the Islamic context is still ongoing.

A major challenge in the debate surrounding the role of women in Islam is striking the right balance between tradition and social development and the values of gender equality. One approach used in this effort is "ijtihad," which attempts to reinterpret religious texts in a modern context. Ijtihad opens the door for creative thinking in understanding the teachings of Islam and allows adjustment to the realities of today. The role of women in Muslim societies also cannot be isolated from economic and political factors. In many Muslim countries, women often face significant economic challenges, such as limited access to decent work and a significant pay gap between men and women. Changes in the role of women in society often have to do with better access to education and economic opportunities.

The role of women in politics is also an important aspect of this debate. In some Muslim countries, women have achieved high positions in government and parliament. This is a positive step in supporting women's political participation and supporting their political rights. However, in some regions, women still face barriers and discrimination in political participation. In addition, the development of modern media and communication also plays an important role in shaping public opinion about the role of women in Islam. Feminist groups in Islam have used social media and other online platforms to fight for women's rights and criticize traditional understandings that they consider detrimental to women.[17] On the other hand, conservative groups can also use social media to reinforce their traditional views.

It should be noted that many Muslim societies have a mixed understanding of the role of women in Islam. Some communities follow a more rigorous and traditional interpretation, while others may be more progressive in their approach to gender issues. Policies and practices also vary significantly in different Muslim countries. In this debate, educational efforts and open dialogue are essential. Education that educates people about the values of gender equality contained

in Islamic teachings can help reduce misunderstanding and prejudice. In addition, inclusive dialogue between different groups of Muslim communities, including religious leaders, activists, and academics, can help find better solutions and formulate a more inclusive understanding of the role of women in Islam.

To achieve gender equality in Islam, it is important to view the role of women as an integral part of society and religion. This includes changes in laws and policies, culture, and collective understanding of religious teachings. With a thoughtful and sustainable approach, Muslim societies can strive to achieve broader gender equality in line with the principles of religious teachings and universal values of human rights. Through thoughtful and targeted measures, it can help create a more inclusive and equitable understanding of the role of women in Islam.

## The Role of Feminist Movements in Redefining Women's Roles in Islam

Feminist movements have played an increasingly important role in redefining the role of women in Islam. These movements emerged as a response to fundamental gender inequality in Muslim societies and an attempt to understand religious teachings more inclusively, in line with the principles of gender equality. One of the main roles of the

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[17] Goehring, 'Muslim Women on the Internet: Social Media as Sites of Identity Formation'; Bashri, "Noon Al Niswa"–N Is for the Female Collective: Contesting Androcentric Power Structures through Grassroots Women's Groups in Sudan'.

feminist movement in Islam is to redefine the understanding of religious texts. The movement attempts to reinterpret the verses of the Quran and the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad with a focus on the values of gender equality contained therein. They argue that many Islamic religious teachings support equality between men and women and that traditional patriarchal interpretations have misled this understanding. Through research and advocacy, feminist movements seek to develop alternative narratives that are more inclusive and equitable.

The feminist movement in Islam also promotes women's rights in various aspects of life.[18] They fought for women's education, health, employment, and political participation rights. In addition, they highlight issues such as child marriage, polygamy, and domestic violence affecting women in Muslim societies. Research can examine the impact of these efforts in creating positive change in women's rights and their role in society. Furthermore, feminist movements in Islam also play a role in shaping social and cultural views towards women. They advocate for changes in social norms that limit women and pressure them to follow traditional roles. In many Muslim societies, such norms are often stronger than formal laws and feminist movements are working to change society's view of women, their rights, and their potential in everyday life.

Research in this context can also examine the challenges and obstacles faced by the feminist movement in Islam. They often face resistance from conservative groups that maintain traditional views of the role of women in Islam. These groups can use religious arguments to counter the changes proposed by the feminist movement. Research can identify strategies used by feminist movements to overcome these barriers and build support in society to provide deeper insights into how feminist movements have shaped and influenced views on the role of women in Islam, as well as how they overcome challenges and obstacles in their efforts to achieve gender equality in this complex religious context.

Feminist movements in Islam have also made important contributions in creating spaces for women to participate actively in political and social life.[19] They have supported and promoted women's involvement in elections, rallying support for women in

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[18] Althalathini, Al-Dajani, and Apostolopoulos, 'The Impact of Islamic Feminism in Empowering Women's Entrepreneurship in Conflict Zones: Evidence from Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine'.

[19] Beta, 'Commerce, Piety and Politics: Indonesian Young Muslim Women's Groups as Religious Influencers'; Saeidi, 'The Politics of the Erotic: Pious Women's Emotional Experiences in Hizbollah Cultural Institutes and the Surprises of the Anti-Feminist Movement in Post-2009 Iran'.

diplomacy, political leadership, and social activism. This effort reduces the political participation gap between men and women, which often exists in various Muslim societies. In addition, feminist movements in Islam encourage changes in laws and regulations that affect women. They have been instrumental in initiating legal reforms to protect women's rights, such as women's right to inheritance, land rights, and protection from domestic violence. This change in the law could pave the way for women to achieve economic independence and security in their lives.

It is important to note that the feminist movement in Islam is a diverse group with varying views. There are feminist groups that choose to operate within the framework of existing religions, trying to redefine the role of women in a way that is consistent with Islamic teachings. On the other hand, more radical groups may question religious authority and seek an alternative, more secular understanding. Technology and social media advances have also played an important role in supporting feminist movements in Islam. They have used the platform to spread their messages, mobilize public support, and share stories of Muslim women's struggles. Social Media gives feminist movements access to a wider audience and allows them to influence societal changes rapidly.

In the long run, the feminist movement in Islam will continue to play a role in redefining the role of women in religion and society. Although they face challenges and resistance, their passion for achieving gender equality and articulating women's rights in an Islamic context remains strong. Feminist movements in Islam have also contributed significantly to initiating education and public awareness changes. They play a role in educating women about their rights, promoting equal access to education, and eliminating harmful gender stereotypes and prejudices. Education is key in freeing women from inequality and enabling them to reach their full potential. With women's increased access to education, they can contribute more actively in various fields, from science to business and politics.

The feminist movement in Islam also opened up space for intercultural dialogue. They often collaborate with human rights and feminist groups from outside the Muslim world to promote gender equality values. This is an important step in easing intercultural tensions and building a better understanding of women's issues in Islam between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. In addition, feminist movements in Islam can play a role in changing the global perception of Islam. They bring a more inclusive and progressive narrative about this religion, which can help overcome negative stereotypes and prejudices against Islam. By involving the international world in their efforts to achieve gender equality in the context of Islam, feminist

movements contribute to a better global understanding of this religion.

One important aspect of the feminist movement's role in redefining the role of women in Islam is their struggle to create a safer and fairer space for women in a religious context. This includes efforts to address issues of domestic violence and sexual abuse that often do not get enough attention in Muslim societies. The feminist movement is working hard to stop the stigma surrounding these issues and promote awareness about women's rights to live free from violence. In addition, feminist movements in Islam also play an important role in redefining the role of women in the family and household. They support the concept of family based on gender equality and shared responsibilities between husband and wife. The movement also often speaks of the importance of open communication and mutual understanding in marital relationships so women have autonomy in making decisions that affect their lives.

Feminist movements in Islam have also been instrumental in fostering changes in cultural practices that are detrimental to women.[20] They advocate the abolition of traditions that demean women, such as child marriage or the harmful practice of female circumcision. Their efforts to initiate changes in these practices can help create a safer and more supportive environment for women in Muslim societies. It is important to remember that feminist movements in Islam also often collaborate with other groups that fight for Human Rights and gender equality globally. This creates synergy between different movements working towards the same goal. Within this framework, they can share strategies and learn from the experience of other movements in different parts of the world.

It is also important to acknowledge that the role of feminist movements in Islam has not always been without challenges. They often face resistance and criticism from conservative groups that defend traditional views on the role of women in religion. These challenges can come from religious figures, religious institutions, or even the general public, who may believe that the changes proposed by the feminist movement are a violation of religious precepts. One of the common criticisms that feminist movements face in Islam is that they are perceived as groups that try to change or disbelieve the teachings of Islam.

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[20] Uzgören, 'Internationalism and Europeanisation in the Struggle over Gender Equality: Women's Rights/Feminist Movement in Turkey'; Al Hameli, Mertzanis, and Kampouris, 'Women's Empowerment Conditions, Institutions and Firm Performance in the MENA Region'.

Some community members see attempts to reinterpret religious teachings threatening their religious identity. Therefore, feminist movements need to establish dialogue with the wider Muslim community and prove that their efforts are aimed at strengthening religious teachings by understanding the values of gender equality contained in them. In addition to internal resistance, feminist movements can also face pressure from outside. They can be the target of negative campaigns by anti-Islamic groups or engage in international discussions that may not always understand well the local context in which these movements operate. Therefore, feminist movements must build strong communication strategies and ensure their messages are not misinterpreted or manipulated.

The feminist movement in Islam can also fight for inclusivity and diversity in its journey to redefine the role of women in religion.[21] They can acknowledge various legitimate religious understandings within Muslim societies and that efforts to achieve gender equality must reflect diverse religious views. This attempts to ensure that feminist views do not become a kind of "new orthodoxy" that imposes certain views on society. It is also important to note that the feminist movement in Islam had a much broader impact than just a change in the role of women. They also play a role in redefining society's views on human rights, equality, and Justice. The movement calls on the Muslim community to more deeply understand the universal values contained in their religious teachings and apply them in a changing social context.

The feminist movement in Islam has the potential to inspire positive changes in policy and legislation in various Muslim-majority countries.[22] They can advocate for legal changes that better support women's rights, including family law, protection against domestic violence, and land ownership rights. Along with increasing awareness of women's issues, some Muslim countries have introduced positive changes in their legislation, and feminist movements have contributed to this process.

In addition to changes in law and society, feminist movements in Islam have also been instrumental in creating spaces for women to speak with their voices and participate in decision-making. They promote women's participation in politics, business, and social organizations and support women to pursue their education and chosen careers. In doing so, the movement helps break down barriers that have long hindered the potential of women in Muslim societies by working to

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21 Giorgi, 'Religious Feminists and the Intersectional Feminist Movements: Insights from a Case Study'.

22 Shapiro, 'Abortion Law in Muslim-Majority Countries: An Overview of the Islamic Discourse with Policy Implications'.

change religious understanding, champion women's rights, and change social and cultural norms to achieve more inclusive and equitable social change in Muslim societies.

## Conclusion

Feminist criticism of the traditional understanding of the role of women in Islam is an important part of the intellectual and social dynamics in the contemporary Muslim world. An analysis of the social construction of gender roles in Islam reveals how patriarchal traditions have shaped and limited the role of women in Muslim societies, stressing that these norms are not inherent in Islamic teachings but are the product of the interpretation of men in power. Later, controversies against traditional understandings reflected sharp debates about religious texts being ambiguous and interpretable in diverse ways, creating space for alternative interpretations in favor of gender equality and women's rights. In addition, feminist movements in Islam actively redefine the role of women by challenging the authority of traditional interpretations and advocating for equality in diverse cultural and social contexts. The results of this study also show that feminist criticism is not a threat to Islam but rather a constructive attempt to revive the egalitarian essence of Islamic teaching and promote a more inclusive and

progressive understanding of the role of women in modern Muslim society.

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