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Transformation of Women's Leadership in *Pesantren* from *Fiqh Siyāsah* Perspective: Social Dynamics in the Patriarchal Culture of South Sulawesi

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Abstract: This research aims to explore the assessment of *fiqh siyāsah* regarding the role of women's leadership in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in South Sulawesi and how the patriarchal cultural structure and the existence of *bissu* influence this dynamic. The study is empirical, employing the approach and theory of *fiqh siyāsah*. Primary data were collected through interviews with several prominent figures, while secondary data were obtained from literature studies. Data collection involved techniques such as interviews, participatory observation, and documentation within the *pesantren*. The findings indicate that although women are beginning to play leadership roles within a limited context, the influence of patriarchal culture still dominates the highest policy-making processes in the *pesantren*. Conversely, the presence of *bissu* as a ceremonial figure recognized by the community significantly contributes to the acceptance of women in the realm of religious education. The originality of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of the interaction between local culture and women's leadership, as well as the role of *bissu* in opening opportunities for women. The implications of these findings underscore the importance of applying the principles of *fiqh siyāsah* that emphasize justice and equality, and how this can support women's roles in creating a more just and inclusive society. This study provides a new perspective that enriches the discussion surrounding women's leadership amidst the patriarchal culture of South Sulawesi.

Keywords: Women's leadership, *pesantren*, patriarchal culture, *bissu*, *fiqh siyāsah*

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi penilaian *fiqh siyāsah* tentang peran kepemimpinan perempuan dalam *pesantren* di Sulawesi Selatan dan bagaimana struktur budaya patriarkal serta keberadaan *bissu* memengaruhi dinamika ini. Penelitian ini empirik dengan pendekatan dan teori *fiqh siyāsah*. Sumber data primer dengan melakukan wawancara dengan sejumlah tokoh. Data sekunder diperoleh dari studi pustaka. Pengumpulan data dengan teknik wawancara dan dokumentasi di *pesantren*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun perempuan mulai memainkan peran kepemimpinan dalam konteks yang terbatas, pengaruh budaya patriarkal masih mendominasi pengambilan kebijakan tertinggi di *pesantren*. Di sisi lain, keberadaan *bissu* sebagai figur seremonial yang diakui oleh masyarakat memberikan kontribusi signifikan terhadap penerimaan perempuan dalam ruang pendidikan agama. Keaslian penelitian ini terletak pada analisis komprehensif mengenai interaksi antara budaya lokal dan kepemimpinan perempuan, serta peran *bissu* dalam membuka peluang bagi perempuan. Implikasi dari temuan ini menunjukkan pentingnya penerapan prinsip-prinsip *fiqh siyāsah* yang menekankan keadilan dan kesetaraan, serta bagaimana hal ini dapat mendukung peran perempuan dalam menciptakan masyarakat yang lebih adil dan inklusif. Penelitian ini memberikan perspektif baru yang memperkaya diskusi mengenai kepemimpinan perempuan di tengah budaya patriarkal Sulawesi Selatan.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan perempuan, *pesantren*, budaya patriarkal, *bissu*, *fiqh siyāsah*

Introduction

Islamic Boarding Schools (*Pesantren*) play a significant role in preserving and promoting Islamic culture in Indonesia.¹ As institutions rooted in societal traditions, *pesantren* create unique and distinct regulations compared to other educational establishments.² One of the distinctive features of *pesantren* is the full dedication of *kyai* (religious leaders),³ *ustadz* (teachers),⁴ and *santri*

¹ Ahmad Faisal, et.al., “Strengthening Religious Moderatism Through The Traditional Authority of Kiai in Indonesia,” *Cogent Social Science* 8, No. 1 (2022). Ridhwan, et.al., “Dynamics of Islamic Education in The Land of Bugis: Growth, Development and Typology *Pesantren* in Bone,” in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 2018.

² Maghfur Ahmad, et.al., “Niqab, Protest Movement, and the Salafization of Indonesian Islam,” *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 9, no. 2 (2021), p. 423–62.

³ Yanwar Pribadi, “Religious Networks in Madura: *Pesantren*, Nahdlatul Ulama, and Kiai as the Core of Santri Culture,” *Al-Jamiah* 51, no. 1 (2013). Jajat Burhanudin, “Two Islamic Writing Traditions in Southeast Asia,” *Al-Jami’ah* 60, no. 1 (2022), p. 1–28.

⁴ Arif Zamhari, et.al., “Traditional Religious Authorities in New Media: A Study of the Cariustadz.Id Platform as an Alternative Cyber Fatwa and Da’wah Media among the Middle-Class Urban Muslims,” *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 21, no. 1 (2021), p. 65–88.

(students)⁵ in supporting the continuity of the teaching and learning process.⁶ The spread of *pesantren* across the country has made a substantial contribution to shaping a religious community identity and has become an essential base for preserving Islamic values.⁷

Initially, *pesantren* were always led by men; however, over time, women have begun to assume leadership roles within these institutions.⁸ The emergence of *pesantren* led by women in South Sulawesi has sparked debate, as the region is characterized by a strong patriarchal culture. South Sulawesi has a history of several major *pesantren* initiated by women, even though the local community remains bound by patriarchal traditional values. This creates tension between traditional values that endorse male leadership and the need to provide space for women in *pesantren* leadership.

In the context of South Sulawesi culture, *bissu* (spiritual figures)⁹ play a crucial role within the patriarchal structure. *Bissu*, who are not bound by a specific gender, symbolize women's roles in local culture. Some studies indicate that the presence of *bissu* can positively influence women's positions in society,¹⁰ including in *pesantren* leadership.¹¹ However, to date, literature directly linking the figure of *bissu* with women's leadership in *pesantren* remains very limited, with many focusing more on gender equality aspects outside the *pesantren* context.¹²

⁵ Muhammad Irfan Helmy, et.al., "The Understanding of Islamic Moderation (Wasatiyyah Al-Islam) and the Hadiths on Inter-Religious Relations in the Javanese Pesantrens," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021), p. 377–401.

⁶ Muhammad Irwansyah, et. al., "Developing of Character Science Teaching Tools Integrated with the Value of Qur'an for Junior High School Students," *Edubiotik: Jurnal Pendidikan, Biologi Dan Terapan* 6, no. 02 (2022), p. 123–31.

⁷ Suwendi Suwendi, et. al., "Roles and Challenges of Pesantren Intellectual Networks," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 24, no. 2 (2024), p. 453. Meriatul Kibtiyah, "Pemikiran Azyumardi Azra Tentang Modernisasi Pendidikan Pesantren," *Contemplate: Jurnal Studi-Studi Keislaman* 3, no. 1 (2022), p. 43–67.

⁸ Muhammad Zuhdi, "Challenging Moderate Muslims: Indonesia's Muslim Schools in the Midst of Religious Conservatism," *Religions* 9, no. 10 (2018).

⁹ Petsy Jessy Ismoyo, "Decolonizing Gender Identities in Indonesia: A Study of *Bissu* 'the Trans-Religious Leader' in Bugis People," *Paradigma: Jurnal Kajian Budaya* 10, no. 3 (2020), p. 277.

¹⁰ Alfian Rokhmansyah, et.al., "Calabai Dan *Bissu* Suku Bugis: Representasi Gender Dalam Novel Calabai Karya Pepi Al-Bayqunie," *CaLLs* 4 (2018), p. 89–102.

¹¹ Suciati Pratiwi, "Maddewata As The Performing Art of *Bissu* Oral Tradition In Bugis Soppeng Society," *Jurnal Aksara* 3 (2020), p. 300–319. Elmira Akhmetova, et.al., "The Concepts of Statehood and the Ideal Ruler in the Golden Horde Literature: The Husraw and Shirin of Qutb," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 12, no. 2 (2022), p. 1–13.

¹² Petsy Jessy Ismoyo, et.al., "'Seeking Allataala in Everyday Life': Understanding Queer Spiritual Space of *Bissu* Community in Indonesia," *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 10, no. 2 (2023), p. 469.

Women's leadership in *pesantren* in South Sulawesi has been a rarely discussed topic in literature examining the figure of *bissu*. Although *bissu* is considered to have a strong social influence, no in-depth studies have linked the influence of *bissu* with opportunities for women to lead in *pesantren*. Many studies focus solely on analyses of patriarchy or women's studies in the public sphere, while the unique role of *bissu* in paving the way for women's involvement in *pesantren* leadership has yet to be comprehensively researched.

This study aims to uncover the societal stigma in South Sulawesi concerning the roles of Islam and local culture in providing opportunities for women in *pesantren* through the analysis of *fiqh siyāsah*.¹³ Additionally, this research seeks to demonstrate how interpretations of religious texts dominated by classical scholars' impact societal recognition of women's leadership. This study also aims to identify the relationship between the figure of *bissu* and its influence on women's leadership in South Sulawesi *pesantren*, with the hope of clarifying the social dynamics occurring in the region.

This topic is crucial to address, as the issue of women's leadership in *pesantren*, particularly in the context of a patriarchal culture like that of South Sulawesi, remains overlooked in academic discussions. Opening avenues for women to participate in *pesantren* leadership can help realize gender equality within Islamic educational institutions. Furthermore, examining the influence of *bissu* on women's positions in *pesantren* leadership can make significant contributions to efforts to reduce patriarchal influence and pave the way for greater women's participation in decision-making within *pesantren*.

This research employs a qualitative design with a *fiqh siyāsah* approach, focusing on an in-depth analysis of Islamic law concerning the social and cultural phenomena of women's leadership in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*).¹⁴ The research process begins with identifying relevant literature sources to provide a foundational framework for understanding the context of this study. Primary data were obtained through interviews with seven informants from various community organizations, including the South Sulawesi Provincial MUI (Indonesian Council of Ulama), *pesantren* leadership, academics, and government representatives. Data collection was conducted through literature studies encompassing various sources such as scholarly journals, books, and research reports. Literature studies were chosen as the primary method due to their provision of diverse theoretical and empirical perspectives that support the discussion of the topic. Relevant literature data were identified based on themes of women's leadership in Islam, patriarchal culture, and the influence of *bissu* figures within South Sulawesi

¹³ Prawitra Thalib and Bagus Abrianto, "The Comparative Study of Fiqh Siyāsah With the General Principles of Good Government in Indonesia," *Arena Hukum* 12, no. 2 (2019), p. 215–34.

¹⁴ Abdul Syatar, et al., "Examining Call for the Dissolution of Indonesian Ulema Council: Siyāsah Syar'iyah Perspective," *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 22, no. 2 (2023), p.199.

society. Once the data were collected, all information was systematically organized to facilitate the analysis process within this study. The data analysis technique used follows a content analysis approach, aiming to understand and interpret the meanings of the collected data. Each piece of data obtained from the literature study was identified, classified, and analyzed based on its relevance to the research topic. This analysis involved grouping information according to themes such as women's leadership, the role of *bissu*, and the dynamics of patriarchal culture in South Sulawesi. This technique enables the researcher to uncover patterns and relationships between the existing themes and draw in-depth conclusions related to the research.

Patriarchal Culture and the Challenges of Women's Leadership in South Sulawesi

The patriarchal culture in South Sulawesi significantly influences societal perceptions of women's leadership in *pesantren*. Women's leadership is often viewed as a violation of long-standing social norms, leading to resistance from the surrounding community. Data indicate that patriarchal culture remains strong,¹⁵ particularly within the social structure where men are considered more natural leaders than women. Local cultural norms pose significant challenges for women aspiring to participate in leadership roles.

There exists a complex interplay between customary law,¹⁶ local cultural values,¹⁷ and Islamic law¹⁸ regarding women's roles in leadership within *pesantren*. On one hand, customary law in South Sulawesi reinforces men's positions as primary leaders across various aspects of life, including in religious educational institutions. However, there are interpretations of Islamic law that support women's participation in leadership, particularly in educational environments such as *pesantren*. This divergence creates tension within the community, where women in leadership positions must navigate challenges posed by both legal systems.

The greatest challenge for women holding leadership roles in *pesantren* is the misalignment between customary law and Islamic law.¹⁹ Female leaders often face social resistance, requiring them to not only prove their competence as

¹⁵ Fatmawati, *Dinamisasi Fiqih Kepemimpinan Perempuan* (Depok: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2021).

¹⁶ Gerlov van Engelenhoven, "From Indigenous Customary Law to Diasporic Cultural Heritage: Reappropriations of Adat Throughout the History of Moluccan Postcolonial Migration," *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* 34, no. 3 (2021), p. 695–721.

¹⁷ Acim et al., "Exploring Cultural Diversity in Indonesia: Models, Responses, and Multicultural Politics," *CANDIDATE: Jurnal Sains Politik* 1, no. 1 (2023), p. 35–55.

¹⁸ Rozihan Rozihan, "The Construction of Islamic Law Benefit in the Perspective of Progressive Law," *Ulul Albab: Jurnal Studi Dan Penelitian Hukum Islam* 4, no. 1 (2020), p. 51.

¹⁹ Arskal Salim, *Contemporary Islamic Law in Indonesia: Sharia and Legal Pluralism*, United Kingdom: Edinburgh University Press, 2015. p. 232

leaders but also to negotiate their positions within a social order influenced by patriarchal norms. The patriarchal culture obstructs full recognition of women's abilities, creating barriers for them to gain support from the *pesantren* community and beyond.

The presence of *bissu* figures in South Sulawesi also uniquely impacts societal perceptions of women's leadership.²⁰ Although *bissu* are not religious leaders within the Islamic context, their status as respected spiritual figures have opened avenues for women to assume important roles in society. This indicates that there is potential for women to be recognized in leadership positions within *pesantren* by leveraging local values such as wisdom, courage, and equality championed by the *bissu*. However, this influence remains limited and has yet to fully counteract the effects of patriarchal culture.

From a social perspective, changing perceptions of women's leadership in *pesantren* will require time and greater effort.²¹ The deeply rooted patriarchal culture in South Sulawesi continues to be a primary obstacle to gender equality within the context of religious education. Nevertheless, these findings also highlight the potential for change through increased awareness and advocacy for women's roles in *pesantren* leadership. With the presence of *bissu* as alternative leadership models, there is an opportunity for society to become more accepting of women's roles in sectors previously dominated by men. The acculturation between patriarchal culture and women's leadership in *pesantren* presents its own set of challenges.

The Role of Female Figures in Leading *Pesantren* in South Sulawesi

Several prominent female figures in South Sulawesi have successfully taken on leadership roles within Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), despite facing a strong patriarchal culture. Figures such as Nyai Hajjah Ruminah, Siti Khadijah, and Syarifah Hanum have emerged as central figures in advocating for Islamic education and women's empowerment. Their leadership in *pesantren* is characterized by intellectual capability, courage, and contributions to the development of Islam. Their success lies not only in managing the *pesantren* effectively but also in challenging social constraints that position women in subordinate roles.

These female leaders have adeptly combined Islamic values with their leadership, establishing Islam as a robust foundation for asserting their positions.²² Siti Khadijah, for example, established the Madrasah Diniyah Puteri

²⁰ Interview with Muhsin Mahfudz, Religious Leaders and Professor of South Sulawesi, 2024).

²¹ Muhammad Saleh, "Women's Professional Career Through Al-Qur'an's Perspectives," *Interdisciplinary Social Studies* 1, no. 9 (2022), p. 1133–1149.

²² Interview with Muammar Bakry, Secretary General of MUI South Sulawesi Province and Leader of Pesantren of Multidimensi Al-Fakhriyah, 2024.

in Makassar in 1915, pioneering education for women. These female leaders have employed the principles of *fiqh siyāsah* to justify their roles in leadership, emphasizing justice, community welfare, and the importance of education for women as part of their responsibilities.

The success of women in leading *pesantren* in South Sulawesi can be attributed to their ability to navigate the patriarchal cultural structure. These female figures adopt inclusive approaches, leveraging Islamic values such as justice (*‘adālah*) and equality (*musāwāh*) to strengthen their positions.²³ As a result, they maintain their roles as leaders without directly opposing patriarchal norms; instead, they demonstrate that women's leadership can align with Islamic teachings.²⁴

Religious education plays a central role in establishing the legitimacy of female leadership in *pesantren*. Women leaders such as Hj. Nur Asiah Djafar and Hj. Nurdiniah Datu Bandaro leverage their deep understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith to reinforce their authority. They serve not only as administrative leaders but also as respected religious figures, utilizing their religious knowledge to build theological authority and trust within the *pesantren* community and society at large.²⁵ Hj. Masni Nadjib, who founded the Al-Washliyah Islamic Boarding School in Makassar in 1954 and was the head of the *pesantren* until his death in 2003, is known as a scholar who has expertise in comprehending the Koran and is also active in social activities, such as assisting the poor and victims of natural disasters. Hj. Masni has made significant contributions to the development of Islamic education in South Sulawesi during his tenure as leader; Hj. Arni Baso Mangunna, who founded the An-Najiyah Islamic Boarding School in Parepare City in 1997. Besides being the leader of the *pesantren*, Hj. Arni is also involved in da'wah and Islamic studies in South Sulawesi, among other things.

Several other female boarding schools that still exist include:

1. Nyai Hj. Ummi Hafilda Ali: Leader of the Makassar Darul Quran Islamic Boarding School.
2. Nyai Hj. Sitti Syarifah Anwar: Leader of the An-Nisa Gowa Islamic Boarding School
3. Nyai Hj. Masrufah Syam: Leader of Al-Misbah Bone Islamic Boarding School.
4. Nyai Hj. Aisyah Zahra Makkalu: Leader of the Annida Maros Islamic Boarding School.

²³ Interview with AGH Najamuddin Safa, the Chairman of MUI of South Sulawesi Province 2024.

²⁴ Alexander Niedermeier et al., "The Acculturation of Islam and Customary Law: An Experience of Minangkabau, Indonesia," *Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (2020), p. 335–55

²⁵ Interview with Chaerul Mundzir, Academics and Lecturers of UIN Alauddin Makassar, 2024.

5. Nyai Hj. Rosmini Wahab: Leader of the Bina Insan Mandiri Sinjai Islamic Boarding School.
6. Nyai Hj. Nurdinah Anwar: Leader of Al-Muqorrobin Pinrang Islamic Boarding School.
7. Nyai Hj. Siti Qomariah: Leader of the Al-Hikmah Bulukumba Islamic Boarding School.
8. Nyai Hj. Nurul Huda: Leader of Al-Falah Takalar Islamic Boarding School.
9. Nyai Hj. Umm Kulsum: Leader of the Al-Islam Islamic Boarding School in Bulukumba.
10. Nyai Hj. Nur Asma: Leader of Al-Hidayah Parepare Islamic Boarding School.
11. Nyai Hj. Nuriyah Wahid: Leader of the Makassar Al-Azhar Islamic Boarding School.
12. Nyai Hj. Lutfi Andriani: Leader of the As-Salam Pattallassang Islamic Boarding School.
13. Nyai Hj. Siti Halimah Tanda: Leader of the As-Syafi'iyah Palopo Islamic Boarding School.
14. Nyai Hj. Siti Mariam: Leader of Al-Ikhlash Jeneponto Islamic Boarding School.
15. Nyai Hj. Nurul Aisyah: Leader of the Darul Aitam Sengkang Islamic Boarding School

Based on data collected from a variety of sources regarding women's leadership in Islamic boarding institutions in South Sulawesi, the preceding provides support for women's participation in various aspects of life. In South Sulawesi, the activities of female *pesantren* leaders are extremely diverse and dependent on each *pesantren*. In South Sulawesi, however, female leaders of Islamic boarding schools play a crucial role in administering the *pesantren* and guiding the students. They are responsible for preserving Islamic traditions and heritage, teaching the Koran, hadith, fiqh, interpretation, and other religious sciences, and creating educational and religious programs. Although it was determined that the important role of women as *pesantren* leaders has not been fully recognized, because the *pesantren* they lead are still a small portion of a large *pesantren* or foundation led by males, the position of women as *pesantren* leaders remains significant. Therefore, the highest level of policy remains in the control of men. In addition, it was discovered that a number of *pesantren* that had been founded and established previously are no longer active and that there are still a number of women-led *pesantren* that have not been adequately documented.

In the context of transformational leadership theory, these female leaders in *pesantren* have acted as agents of social change.²⁶ They do not merely manage

²⁶ Interview with AGH Farid Wajedy, Head of DDI Mangkoso Pesantren, 2024.

the *pesantren* administratively; they also inspire societal change by emphasizing the importance of inclusivity, equality, and justice. For instance, Nyai Hajjah Ruminah advocates for women's liberation through Islamic education, transforming not only the educational structure within *pesantren* but also societal perceptions of women's roles in religion and society. Women's leadership in *pesantren* has significantly impacted women's empowerment in South Sulawesi. Through inclusive and participatory leadership styles, they encourage women to actively engage in religious education and social life. *Pesantren* led by female figures such as Hj. Masni Nadjib and Hj. Arni Baso Mangunna serve not only as centers of education but also as platforms for social empowerment for women. This has led to a shift in societal perceptions regarding women's capacity to lead.

Nurhayati Rahman is a prominent female cultural figure who has researched Bugis-Makassar culture, including the phenomenon of *Bissu*: "In anthropology, the kinship systems in this world are divided into three categories: matrilineal (inheritance and kinship through the maternal line), patrilineal (inheritance and kinship through the paternal line), and bilateral (a system built on opportunity, negotiation, and competence). Scholars like Pelras and Mukhlis Paeni have noted that the kinship system in South Sulawesi is bilateral. However, this highly democratic bilateral kinship system faced distortion when the Dutch arrived in South Sulawesi and imposed their legal rules. Nevertheless, the courage of South Sulawesi women throughout history is unquestionable. They have actively participated as leaders in the struggle against colonisers, as exemplified by the bravery of Opu Daeng Risaju."²⁷

When discussing *Bissu*, it is noted that, in relation to gender roles, each has a distinct function.²⁸ South Sulawesi is unique in recognizing and having five different genders: male, female, *calabai*,²⁹ *calalai*,³⁰ and *bissu*. *Bissu* does not identify as male, female, *calabai*, or *calalai*; rather, they see themselves as "between," serving as a bridge between humans and deities. *Bissu* is acknowledged as a separate gender, distinct from the other four. However, when confronted with Islam, *Bissu* is considered a transgression, as they were the shamans of the Bugis people before the advent of Islam. *Bissu* served as intermediaries between humans and deities. After the arrival of Islam, the approach was not one of outright rejection but of initial adaptation.³¹

²⁷ Interview with Nurhayati Rahman, Women's Activist and Cultural Expert of South Sulawesi, 2024.

²⁸ Mustaqim Pabbajah, "Religiusitas Dan Kepercayaan Orang Bugis-Makassar," *Al-Ulum* 12, no. 2 (2012), p. 397–418.

²⁹ Rokhmansyah, Hanum, and Dahlan, "Calabai Dan Bissu Suku Bugis: Representasi Gender Dalam Novel Calabai Karya Pepi Al-Bayqunie."

³⁰ Sharyn Graham, "Negotiating Gender: Calalai' in Bugis Society," *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, no. 6 (2001).

³¹ Interview with Rosmini Amin, "Gender Leaders of South Sulawesi Province, 2024.

In the context of female leadership in *pesantren*, it can be linked to the values of inclusivity reflected in local culture.³² In Bugis culture, *Bissu* has long been recognized as spiritual guardians and cultural mediators. This indicates that non-conventional gender roles have been valued.³³ Women in *pesantren* can draw inspiration from the role of *Bissu* to construct a more robust and inclusive leadership space. It underscores that, despite the dominance of patriarchal culture, there is a long history of local values that appreciate women's roles and gender diversity.³⁴

These female figures have successfully solidified their leadership positions based on Islamic values such as justice and equality. They emphasize that Islam does not restrict women from taking on leadership roles, provided it is done in accordance with the principles of Sharia. In this regard, they employ the concept of justice (*'adālah*)³⁵ to support their role as leaders focused on community welfare and inclusive education. In addition to emphasizing justice and equality, these female figures also leverage the principle of protection for women in Islam to reinforce their arguments. They assert that women have the right to lead, if it benefits the community. In this way, they have created new spaces for women to participate in Islamic educational institutions that were previously male dominated.

Fiqh siyāsah, which pertains to leadership and governance matters in Islam, also plays a crucial role in supporting female leadership in *pesantren*.³⁶ These female leaders utilize *fiqh siyāsah* to elucidate that woman can serve as leaders in Islamic educational institutions, provided they lead justly and contribute to the welfare of the community.³⁷ In this context, they successfully employ *fiqh siyāsah* to bolster their legitimacy as leaders within *pesantren*. Furthermore, these female leaders have developed a leadership model based on the principles of consultation (*syūrā*) and public interest (*maslahah*) within *fiqh siyāsah*.³⁸ They prioritize collective participation and decisions that benefit all parties within the *pesantren*. This leadership model not only affirms the

³² Atun Wardatun and Bianca J Smith, "Woman-Initiated Divorce and Feminist Fiqh in Indonesia: Narrating Male Acts of Nushūz in Marriage," *Ulumuna* 24, no. 2 (2020), p. 266–295.

³³ Interview with Wahyuddin Naro, the Chairman of the FKUB of South Sulawesi Province, 2024.

³⁴ Interview with Aisyah Kara, Gender Leaders of South Sulawesi Province, 2024.

³⁵ Hani Sholihah, "Utilisation of Pawn Goods in Review of Islamic Law and Indonesian Civil Law," *Al-Afkar, Journal For Islamic Studies* 4, no. 1 (2019), p. 105–24.

³⁶ Arip Purkon, "Political Parties and Islamic Law Positivization in Contemporary Indonesian Governance," *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews* 9, no. 2 (2021), p. 75–86.

³⁷ Abdul Syatar et al., "The Development of Fatwas Basen on Local Wisdom to the National Level: A Case Study of Panaik Money Fatwa," *El-Mashlahah* 13, no. 2 (2023), p. 133.

³⁸ Abu Rokhmad and Sulistiyono Susilo, "Conceptualizing Authority of the Legalization of Indonesian Women's Rights in Islamic Family Law," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 11, no. 2 (2017), p. 489–508.

importance of women's roles in Islam but also creates a more inclusive environment oriented towards the welfare of the *pesantren* community.

Women's Leadership in *Pesantren*: A Review of *Fiqh Siyāsah*

Women in Islam possess the rights and potential to be leaders, including within *pesantren*. *Fiqh siyāsah*, as a branch of Islamic law governing leadership and politics, does not explicitly restrict women from leadership positions.³⁹ Despite some views that limit women's roles due to traditional and cultural reasons, there is evidence that women with the requisite abilities and integrity can and should be given opportunities to lead, in accordance with the principles of equality in Islam.

Neither the Qur'an nor the hadith establishes strict gender-based limitations on leadership. Verses such as Q.S. al-Nisa/4:59 emphasize the importance of obedience to leaders without specifying gender criteria. Scholars such as Sayyid Qutb⁴⁰ and Thabathaba'i⁴¹ also stress the significance of obedience to *ulil amri* as part of obedience to Allah and His Messenger.⁴² This indicates that women's leadership is acceptable, provided they meet the qualifications and can fulfil leadership responsibilities fairly.

The marginalization of women in leadership is often based on the assumption that they are physically and emotionally weaker. However, historical female figures, both in South Sulawesi and globally, have demonstrated that women possess strong leadership capabilities. This challenges the notion that leadership is an exclusively male domain, especially in traditional and patriarchal settings. The restrictions on women's roles in leadership are more a result of social and cultural constructs than absolute sharia provisions. In other words, such limitations reflect evolving cultural and gender interpretations within society rather than explicit religious prohibitions. Islam itself acknowledges the equality of men and women regarding potential and responsibility, evaluating individuals solely on the quality of their piety.

The perspective of *fiqh siyāsah* on women's leadership must be understood within the context of social transformation.⁴³ *Fiqh siyāsah* allows for women's participation in the public sector, including political and educational

³⁹ Umar Bensheikh, Feri Eko Wahyudi, and Muh Yunus, "Prophet Muhammad's Legal Politics; A Review of Islamic Legal on the Leadership of the Prophet" 4, no. 1 (2022), p. 1–13.

⁴⁰ Hafijur Rahman, "Toward a Wise Political Fiqh: The Perception of State in the Political Thought of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi," *Akademi Sosial Bilimler Dergisi* 7, no. 21 (2020), p. 6–22.

⁴¹ Al-Allamah Thabathaba'i, *Tafsir Al-Mizan*, Beirut: Massasah al- 'Amy li al-Mathba'at, 1991.

⁴² Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*, Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019.

⁴³ Akh. Minhaji, "The Great Yasa and The Siyasa Shari'iyah Some Comparative Observation," *Unisia* 16, no. 29 (1996), p. 36–44.

leadership, if they possess the necessary qualifications. This aligns with Islamic principles emphasising justice, equality, and moral responsibility, as reflected in the concept of *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*. Within the framework of *fiqh siyāsah*, women's leadership can be viewed as a fundamental right bestowed by Allah upon all individuals, irrespective of gender. Islam does not explicitly prohibit women from leading, and interpretations that restrict women to such positions often reflect cultural biases rather than a strong sharia foundation. Therefore, gender equality in leadership should be recognized as part of the effort to achieve the social justice mandated by sharia.

Fiqh siyāsah also emphasizes the importance of justice in leadership.⁴⁴ This can be observed in the concept of social justice, which obliges leaders, whether male or female, to act justly and wisely. Justice is one of the principal tenets of Islam that must be implemented in all aspects of life, including leadership. Thus, competent, and just women should be given equal opportunities to lead.⁴⁵

Upon further analysis, women's leadership in educational environments such as *pesantren* can also be seen as an implementation of the objectives of *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*,⁴⁶ which aim to preserve intellect, religion, life, lineage, and property. *Pesantren* serve as educational institutions that play a crucial role in developing knowledge and morality, thereby positioning women's leadership here as essential in upholding and advancing these sharia objectives. When viewed through the lens of *fiqh siyāsah*,⁴⁷ women's roles in political leadership are also significant as instruments of democracy and accountability. Women's participation in political leadership strengthens democratic principles that prioritize representation, equal voice, and transparency in decision-making. This is consistent with Islamic teachings that underscore the importance of *syūrah* (consultation)⁴⁸ and justice in governance.

⁴⁴ Muhammad Syarif, et.al., "The Impact of the Implementation of Regional Autonomy on the Village Government System: An Overview of Siyāsah Syar'iyah," *International Journal of Contemporary Islamic Law and Society* 4, no. 1 (2022).

⁴⁵ Mohamad Hashim Kamali, "Siyāsah Shar'iyah or the Policies of Islamic Government," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 6, no. 1 (1989), p. 59–80.

⁴⁶ Faishal Agil Al Munawar, "'Abd Al-Majīd Al-Najjār's Perspective on Maqāsid Al-Sharī'ah," *Juris: Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah* 20, no. 2 (2021), p. 209–223.

⁴⁷ Nur Khaera, et.al., "The Paradigm of Islamic Legal Products in Indonesia: A Critical Review of the Polarization of the Characteristics and Authority of the Madhhab of Thought Products," *Mazahibuna: Jurnal Perbandingan Mazhab* 4, no. 1 (2022), p. 31–48.

⁴⁸ Enkin Asrawijaya, "Harmonization Between Customs and Islam in the Jalawastu Community," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 16, no. 2 (2022), p. 378–98.

Women can also be regarded as agents of social transformation within the perspective of *fiqh siyāsah*.⁴⁹ Their participation in leadership not only fulfills the formal aspects of justice but also aids in changing gender stereotypes and advocating for more inclusive public policies. Thus, women's leadership in Islam is not only permissible from a sharia standpoint but is also a vital strategy for achieving social progress and justice. *Fiqh siyāsah* creates space for women to lead because leadership in Islam is determined not by gender but by competence and moral qualifications. Leadership acknowledged by *fiqh siyāsah* aims to achieve public interest (*maslahah*).⁵⁰ Therefore, competent women with appropriate qualifications should be considered deserving of leadership roles in various fields, including education and politics.

In the context of South Sulawesi, history demonstrates that women have played significant leadership roles. Figures such as We Tenriukke and Andi Tunru exemplify women who have led with wisdom and courage. This illustrates that women's leadership capabilities are not only recognized in local traditions but can also be seen as part of a broader Islamic heritage, where women's leadership is supported by principles of justice and public interest. The strong leadership role of women in South Sulawesi aligns with the *fiqh siyāsah* view that women can lead across various sectors, provided they possess the requisite capacity. In local cultural contexts, women's roles are often determined by local wisdom and cultural values, which in some instances can reinforce their public roles.

However, obstacles to women's leadership persist, particularly from perspectives that regard women as incapable of leading decisively or effectively. This presents a major challenge in advocating for gender equality in leadership, and *fiqh siyāsah* can play a role in addressing these challenges by emphasizing the importance of competence, integrity, and justice in leadership, without distinguishing by gender. In conclusion, women's leadership within *pesantren* and the public sector aligns with the fundamental principles of *fiqh siyāsah* that emphasize justice, equality, and public interest. Through the application of these principles, women have the same rights and obligations as men in assuming leadership roles, thus making significant contributions towards creating a just and inclusive society.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that women in South Sulawesi have begun to take on leadership roles within *pesantren*, albeit within a limited scope. This female leadership reflects the potential for women to be actively involved in the

⁴⁹ Satria Hibatal Azizy, "The Concept of Welfare From Siyasaḥ Syar'iyah Perspective and Its Implementation on Zakat Management in Indonesia," *Islamic Economics Journal* 5, no. 1 (2019), p. 35.

⁵⁰ Said Syarifuddin, "Maslahat as Considerations of Islamic in View Imam Malik," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 4, no. 1 (2020), p. 85–106.

development of religious education. However, the influence of a strong patriarchal cultural structure continues to constrain women's roles in high-level decision-making within *pesantren*, where men still dominate key positions. Additionally, the presence of *bissu*, who are accepted by society in their ceremonial roles, also affects the community's acceptance of women in leadership positions within religious education settings. The leadership of women in *pesantren* and in the public sector aligns with the fundamental principles of *fiqh siyāsah*, which emphasize justice, equality, and the public good. By applying these principles, women have the same rights and responsibilities as men in leadership roles, enabling them to make significant contributions to the creation of a just and inclusive society. One of the key strengths of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of the interactions between local culture and the roles of women in *pesantren*. This study successfully highlights how the presence of *bissu*, regarded as possessing special spirituality, plays a crucial role in paving the way for the acceptance of women in leadership positions. By linking the existence of *bissu* with the cultural characteristics of the Bugis-Makassar, the research offers a new perspective that enriches the discussion on the role of women within the patriarchal culture of South Sulawesi. However, this research has not fully explored the direct influence of *bissu* figures on structural changes within *pesantren*, particularly in policymaking. Furthermore, although the roles of women in *pesantren* have been analyzed, the study has not thoroughly examined other factors, such as education or social reform, that may also affect female leadership in this region. Further studies are needed to explore the interactions between culture, religion, and female leadership within the context of *pesantren* in South Sulawesi.

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