

The Contestation of Women's Movement on Digital Media

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ABSTRAK

Keywords

Muslim Women Movement; Digital
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This paper aims to describe the contestation of women's issue regarding sexual violence in digital media. The study focuses on how Aliansi Cinta Keluarga (Family Love Alliance/AILA) resists the discourse of anti-sexual violence. This research uses feminist postcolonial framework to describe how the contestation of discourse employed by AILA takes place through digital media. Postcolonial framework embraces diversity within the women's movement in the Global South. However, the scholarships aware that the acknowledgement towards diversity will be used by local elites to mask their domination which tends to marginalize women. Based on the assumption, the question offered is how AILA employs texts on digital media that contest women's equity discourse in Indonesia. The research conducted digital ethnography for data collection. Data were collected through several methods, including observation on social media, webinars and off-line events. This research finds that AILA refuses gender equity discourse employed by feminist Muslim in Indonesia. They keep fighting feminist Muslim as they want to highlight their resistance as a form of difference. Furthermore, AILA, on one side, rejects western feminist discourse, yet, on the other side, they replicate the way western feminist reproduces the discourse.

1. Introduction

This research aims to explore the contestation of women's issue employed by Muslim women through their movement. The study acknowledges the existing disparities in scholarship, especially regarding women's movements, particularly in the context of the Global South. According to Bhabha (2012), the imbalance in scholarship in Global South countries cannot be separated from colonialism. Like several other postcolonial scholars, Bhabha argues that colonialism created opportunities for the dominance of knowledge, especially from the perspective of the Global North. In the context of scholarship on women's movements, colonialism ultimately establishes a dominant narrative that generalizes women and their movements in the Global South (Yegenoglu, 1998). Therefore, colonialism has the potential to encourage resistance from women in the Global South. This resistance to colonialism opens up opportunities for the emergence of women's movements that, paradoxically, may reproduce colonial ways of marginalizing women (Narayan, 2013). In this regard, this research will examine how the dynamics of diversity within women's movements in the Global South (Moghissi, 2011) occur, particularly in the context of Indonesia and among Muslim women.

Although it did not emerge in an Islamic country, the Muslim women's movement in Indonesia has had a strong influence on the dynamics of the women's movement (Rinaldo, 2008). Their existence has always been intertwined with Indonesia's political dynamics, from the pre-independence period to the post-reform era (Rinaldo, 2013, Blackburn, 2004, Wieringa, 1992). Since the pre-independence period, the women's movement has focused on three areas: equality in access

to knowledge, work, and family (Van Doorn-Harder, 2006, Locher-Scholten, 2000). However, the issue of equality within the family has been a subject of debate among women's movements. Women's equality in the family faces significant challenges from both cultural and religious aspects (Parawansa, 2002).

In Indonesia, various Islamic feminist movements have emerged, supporting the advancement of gender equality. This is reflected in the debates surrounding the ratification of the Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill (RUU TPKS) around 2016. In digital media, numerous Islamic feminist accounts have voiced their belief that the RUU TPKS represents progress toward gender equality in Indonesia. One of the supporters of the bill's ratification is the Indonesian Women Ulama Committee (KUPI), which consists of women scholars in the field of Islamic studies (Rohmaniyah et al., 2022). KUPI introduces the discourse of gender equality through the concept of mubadala (Farida and Kasdi, 2018).

Although AILA's rejection of feminist discourse regarding gender issues claims to represent Indonesian women, this study argues that the discourse offered by AILA cannot be considered a representation of the Muslim women's movement in Indonesia as a whole. This is because this study presents a different perspective from the research conducted by Rinaldo (2013) in his book titled *Mobilizing Piety*, which highlights several Muslim women's movements in Indonesia advocating for equality in education, health, politics, and culture. AILA's actions also demonstrate that there are contradictions among women's movements in Indonesia when compared to Muslim women's movements from the pre-colonial to the post-reformasi era (Qibtiyah, 2009; Van Doorn-Harder, 2006).

2. Method

To understand the discourse produced by AILA, the researcher finds it essential to examine how narratives and interactions among AILA activists occur during their various activities. Narratives and interactions are significant processes that provide insight into what knowledge is valued and collectively accepted. Therefore, the researcher must immerse themselves with the subjects throughout the research process. The approach that requires the researcher to delve deeply into the subjects' world is ethnography (Hine, 2020).

The most crucial aspect of ethnography is participatory observation, which demands that the researcher actively observes interactions during activities (Boellstorff, 2020). Furthermore, AILA is a movement that operates not only in offline spaces but also online. As such, the researcher will specifically apply digital ethnography in this study.

To achieve this, the researcher will observe AILA's social media accounts, particularly its Instagram account @AILAIndonesia. Additionally, the researcher will participate in various discussions organized by AILA participants across different platforms. The activities conducted by AILA participants involve connections with other movements. Thus, it is likely that the researcher will also present data on activities carried out by these other movements.

2. Result and Discussion

Based on observations of AILA's social media, researchers found various posts in which they reject various feminist programs. They frame feminism as a movement that reflects Western culture, which is incompatible with Indonesian culture. AILA also produces narratives stating that Muslim women's movements advocating for equality are initiatives that do not stem from religious norms.

AILA massively rejects the existence of Islamic feminism, based on the assumption that feminist ideology fundamentally contradicts Islamic values. This rejection is directed at various Islamic feminist accounts that have emerged on social media. More specifically, AILA opposes the idea that the Elimination of Sexual Violence (RUU TPKS) is a manifestation of feminist ideology that jeopardizes the younger generation. AILA frames the RUU TPKS as a tool used by feminists to promote the agenda of the homosexual movement in Indonesia.

In her Instagram post, AILA narrated that Islam prohibits adultery. On the other hand, the Bill is described as a legal product that does not regulate adultery and homosexuality. Furthermore, AILA feels that their struggle is hindered by groups that support the ratification of the bill. Through these narratives, AILA concludes that the bill is not aligned with Islam.



Figure 1. @AILAIndonesia Instagram Account

AILA states that the concept of sexual violence is incompatible with Islamic values because the concept stems from an ideology that views human reproductive organs as tools for pleasure. Thus, feminists are portrayed as people who legitimize sexual relations outside of marriage or same-sex relations, as long as they are based on mutual consent. In contrast, in the Islamic perspective, the reproductive system is regarded as a means for regeneration that supports life, not merely based on mutual consent.

AILA disseminates their rejection of consent-based sex through various activities. They conduct outreach via online lectures that fundamentally explain why they oppose the inclusion of consent in the Sexual Violence Law. Additionally, their discourse rejecting Islamic feminism is also shared through online course. For AILA, Islamic feminism is no different from the Western feminist movement. They frame this rejection as a form of resistance against the Westernization of knowledge that sneaks in through the issue of gender equality. AILA spreads their rejection of consent-based sex through various activities. The dissemination through online lectures fundamentally explained why AILA rejected the consent clause to be included in the Sexual Violence Law. Further, the discourse rejecting Islamic feminism was also shared through these online lectures. For AILA, Islamic feminism is no different from the Western feminist movement. They framed this rejection as a form of resistance against the westernization of knowledge that permeates in through the issue of gender equality.

Alternatively, AILA and GIGA advocate for the Draft of Family Resilience Bill, which promotes women's role as homemakers and men's role as heads of the household. Although the bill has not yet been passed, AILA and GIGA's voices on family resilience are growing stronger. This is reflected in GIGA's programs, which carry out various activities both online and offline.

The activities conducted by GIGA focus on family-friendly development. Additionally, GIGA also fosters regeneration by providing training for their volunteers.

3. Conclusion

The debate on gender equality in Indonesia is dynamic and heterogeneous. There is no single voice regarding perspectives on gender equality in Indonesia. On one side, gender equality is supported by religious-based feminist groups. Yet, gender equality efforts sometimes struggle with resistance that arises within women's communities.

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