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Hegemonic Masculinity in the Manuscript Hadiyat Al-Nisa of Muhammad Azhari

Mamluatun Nafisah[1], Khoirul Ummah[1], Mohieddin Masoud[2]
[1]Institut Ilmu Al-Qur'an (IIQ) Jakarta, Indonesia
[2]University of Zawia, Libya
mamluatun@iiq.a.c.id *

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Abstract

This study explores the construction of hegemonic masculinity within the classical Nusantara exegetical tradition, focusing on Muhammad Azhari's (d. 1947) manuscript Hadiyat Al-Nisā'. The article aims to uncover how gender relations are interpreted in Surah Al-Nisā', particularly verses 19 and 34, through the theoretical lens of Antonio Gramsci's hegemonic masculinity framework which emphasizes typologies of power relations. The research employs a qualitative method with content analysis and thematic analysis techniques, involving stages of manuscript inventory and authenticity verification, categorization of exegetical interpretations related to marital relations, and application of integral, decident, and minimal hegemony typologies. The findings reveal three forms of hegemony: integral hegemony, emphasizing the wife's obligation to obey her husband including sexual fulfillment; decident hegemony, highlighting the creation of woman from a bent rib as a symbol of weakness yet uniqueness to be respected; and minimal hegemony, stressing mutual affection and respect in marital relationships. These results indicate that Azhari's interpretation not only reflects patriarchal dominance but also opens space for a more balanced reinterpretation of gender relations, thereby contributing to Nusantara tafsir studies, Islamic gender discourse, and critical perspectives on classical manuscripts.

INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, gender inequality is common; one example is the violence frequently directed at those considered vulnerable, particularly women (Alam & Alfian, 2022; Farid, 2019). Women are often relegated to a secondary role in social interactions, and this has been the case for a very long time. In fact, various forms of gender inequality are frequently found in Islamic texts, such as books of exegesis, jurisprudence, hadith, and so on (Gazali & Nawir, 2019).

Take, for example, the Kitab Fatḥ al-Qarīb al-Munīb fī Syarḥ al-Taqrīb by Abu Syuja, which explains how to cleanse items soiled by the urine of baby girls and boys. Indeed, Abu Shuja' cites a hadith of the Prophet stating that the urine of a male infant (who has consumed nothing but breast milk) need only be sprinkled with water, while that of a female infant must be washed (Zailani, 2026). However, the

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gender bias here lies in the reasoning provided by Abu Shuja' regarding the difference in treatment between males and females. According to him, because women in this case, Eve were created from Adam's rib, their urine originates from flesh and blood. Meanwhile, men's urine originates from water and earth (Husin, 2019).

Not only in fiqh literature, but also in exegetical works, many biased interpretations can be found. For example, when exegetes interpret *al-rijāl qawwamūna 'alā al-nisā'* as male leadership over women based on physical strength, education, and the obligation to fulfill all the needs determined by Allah. This interpretation is found in several exegetical works, such as Jāmi al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīli ay Al-Qur'ān by Al-Ṭabari, Tafsir Al-Jalālain by Jalāl al -Dīn al-Maḥalli and al-Suyuṭi, Tafsir al-Kabīr by Muqātil bin Sulaiman, Tafsir Rūḥ al-Bayān by Ismā'il Haqqi, Ma'ālim al-Tanzīl by al-Baghāwi, Rūḥ al-Ma'āni by al-Alusi, Fatḥ al-Qadīr by al-Syaukāni, and so on (Ma'ruf, 2025; Maulida, 2025).

In addition to the works mentioned above, in the Indonesian context, gender-biased narratives are also found in ancient manuscripts, such as the Hadiyat Al-Nisā' manuscript. The Hadiyat Al-Nisā' manuscript by Muhammad Azhari is one of the works by a Palembang scholar that presents material on husband-wife relationships. The existence of this manuscript illustrates how the patriarchal culture of the past influenced the author's understanding of religious texts, including his interpretation of Quranic verses (Muhammad, 2025).

The disparity in the rights and obligations of husbands and wives in the Hadiyat Al-Nisā' manuscript prompted the author to examine more deeply the dynamics of the text that reveal the manuscript's connection to the culture of past societies, using Antonio Gramsci's concept of "hegemonic masculinity" (Muhammad Zein & Falach, 2022).

In the context of daily life, gender inequality is often clearly evident, whether in the form of violence or the subordination of women as second-class citizens within the social structure (Alfathia & Komarudin, 2026). This gender bias is not only present in social practices but is also documented in classical Islamic texts such as fiqh, hadith, and tafsir (Sholikhah, 2025). For example, Abu Syuja's explanation in Fatḥ al-Qarīb al-Munīb regarding the different treatment of the urine of male and female infants based on the narrative of Eve's creation from Adam's rib reveals a biased gender construction. Similarly, interpretations of the verse *al-rijāl qawwamūna 'alā al-nisā'* in various classical exegetical works often emphasize male leadership over women on the grounds of physical strength, education, and the responsibility to provide for the family, thereby reinforcing patriarchal dominance. In the context of the Indonesian archipelago, a similar bias is also found in the manuscript Hadiyat Al-Nisā' by Muhammad Azhari, which illustrates how the patriarchal culture of the past influenced the way religious scholars interpreted religious texts, particularly regarding husband-wife relationships.

Against this backdrop, there is a need to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the Hadiyat Al-Nisā' manuscript using Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemonic masculinity. This study fills a research gap, as previous research has largely focused on classical Middle Eastern exegesis, while manuscripts from the Nusantara region have not been extensively examined through the theoretical framework of hegemony. The novelty of this study lies in the application of the typologies of integral, decident, and minimal hegemony to the analysis of local texts, thereby yielding a new perspective distinct from normative Islamic legal studies or socio-economic analyses. The implications of this study not only enrich the study of Nusantara exegesis and gender discourse in Islam but also open up space for a more balanced reinterpretation of gender relations. Academically, it broadens the horizons of tafsir research by incorporating local sociocultural dimensions, while practically, it can

foster awareness among Muslim communities regarding the importance of building a more just and inclusive Islamic culture in viewing the relationship between men and women.

METHODS

The research methodology employed in this article is designed to provide a systematic analytical framework for examining the manuscript Hadiyat Al-Nisā' by Muhammad Azhari. By emphasizing a qualitative approach based on content analysis, the author seeks to uncover the construction of hegemonic masculinity in the exegesis of Surah Al-Nisā' in an in-depth and contextual manner. The choice of this method is relevant because the study of classical exegetical manuscripts requires interpretive analysis oriented toward meaning, rather than merely numerical data (Armita, 2025; Creswell, 2018; Engkizar et al., 2025).

Method and Type

This article employs a qualitative method using content analysis. This method was chosen because it aligns with the characteristics of exegetical manuscript studies, which emphasize understanding the meaning of the text within its social and cultural context. Qualitative analysis allows the author to explore the complex meanings of the exegetical text. Thus, this method serves as an appropriate foundation for connecting classical texts with modern theoretical frameworks (Engkizar et al., 2024; Kaema & Ulwi, 2025; Miles, 2015).

Data Sources

Data sources are divided into two categories: primary and secondary. The primary source is the manuscript Hadiyat Al-Nisā' by Muhammad Azhari, while secondary sources are drawn from exegetical texts, academic books, and journal articles relevant to the themes of gender and hegemony. The integration of these primary and secondary sources ensures that the analysis has a strong textual foundation while enriching contemporary academic perspectives (Sugiyono, 2013; Engkizar et al., 2019).

Instrument

The primary instrument in this study is the author herself, who serves as the key instrument. In qualitative research, the author plays an active role in collecting, selecting, and interpreting data based on the theoretical framework. Therefore, the author's sensitivity as the primary instrument is crucial for maintaining the accuracy of the interpretation of the manuscript's exegesis (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018).

Data Analysis Tools and Techniques

The analytical tool used is content analysis employing thematic analysis techniques. This approach allows the author to identify patterns, themes, and typologies of hegemony in Muhammad Azhari's interpretations. The analysis was conducted using Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, which divides the typology of hegemony into three levels: total hegemony, declining hegemony, and minimal hegemony. Using this technique, recurring structures of meaning in the text can be systematically revealed, resulting in a classification consistent with the theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

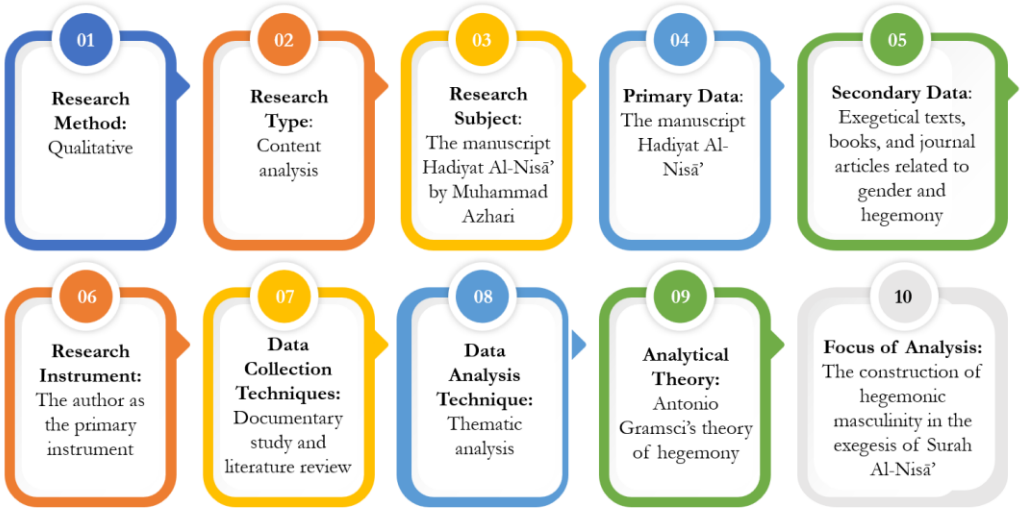


Fig 1. Stages of the research method

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Muhammad Azhari

Muhammad Azhari's full name is Kiagus Muhammad Azhari bin Makruf bin Hasyim bin Hasan bin Soleh bin Hasanuddin bin Khalifah Jakfar bin Khalifah Gemuk bin Ki Bodrowongso bin Pangeran Fatahillah Sunan Gunung Jati. He was born in 1860 in Guguk Pengulon, near the Grand Mosque of 19 Ilir in Palembang. During his childhood, Muhammad Azhari studied directly under his father, who was a religious scholar in the city of Palembang. Not content with learning only from his father, Muhammad Azhari also studied under prominent religious scholars in Palembang, such as H. Abdul Malik bin Syekh Datuk Muhammad Akib, Syekh Abdul bin Makruf, Sayid Hasyir, and others. His diligence and discipline in his studies made him a person with a thirst for knowledge (Nizam, 2026).

After studying in Palembang, while still relatively young, Muhammad Azhari traveled to the Holy Land. There, he lived at an Islamic boarding school for approximately ten years to deepen his religious knowledge by studying under prominent scholars in the Two Holy Cities. Among his friends who also pursued their studies in Mecca were Sayid Abdurrahman Hoofd Penghulu (d. 1920), H. Nanang Siroj (d. 1922), Sheikh Muhammad Azhari bin Abdullah bin Asyikuddin (d. 1932), and KH. Abdullah Azhary Pedatuan (d. 1938).

After completing his studies in Mecca, Muhammad Azhari returned to his homeland, where he studied under prominent scholars, including Sayid Ahmad Zaini Dahlan, Imam Nawawi of Banten, and Sheikh Yahya al-Maghribi. Armed with his knowledge, Muhammad Azhari produced a wide variety of works that remain relevant to this day. Among Muhammad Azhari's works are, first, in the field of Sufism: Kaifiyāt Bai'at, Tafsir Surat An-Najm verses 8–9 (a Sufi exegesis), and Rāhat al-Qulūb (1318 AH/1900 CE). Second, in the field of creed (*aqidah*), there are Riwayat Sahih Bukhari from Anas bin Malik (Hadith), Risalah Ilmu Tawhid (1908), Taj al-Salihin, Najah al-Insan wa Tasbih al-Rahman (1314H/1896M), and Lataif al-' Ābidīn (1325 AH/1907 CE). Third, in the field of fiqh, there are Safīnah al-Gḥūlam, Ghāyah al-Marām (1334 AH/1916 CE), Hadiyat Al-Nisā' (1319 AH/1901 CE), Risālah Nikah, Syarah Dalil syāra', Collection of Prayers (Samanarnik et al., 2024; Sunaryo & Fahmi, 2024).

The works written by Muhammad Azhari reflect the depth of his understanding of Islam and Sufi traditions. Although most of his works remain in manuscript form and only a few have been printed, their existence serves as evidence of Muhammad Azhari's contribution to religious literature of his time. In addition to

writing, Muhammad Azhari was also active in various scholarly forums. He frequently engaged in discussions and exchanged ideas with scholars regarding Islamic studies.

Muhammad Azhari is active in various scholarly forums and frequently engages in discussions with fellow scholars to exchange ideas and explore new concepts in Islam.4 Furthermore, as Muhammad Azhari is also an imam who leads congregational prayers and delivers inspiring sermons, his presence at the mosque serves as a source of inspiration and spiritual guidance for many people in Palembang.

The Hadiyat Al-Nisā' Manuscript

Next, the author discusses one of Muhammad Azhari's works, namely the Hadiyat Al-Nisā' manuscript. The Hadiyat Al-Nisā' manuscript was originally kept by Ustad Kemas Andi Syaripudin, who obtained it as a hereditary legacy from the Sultanate of Palembang. Initially, the manuscript was kept by his father, Umariah, and Ustad Andi himself has now donated it to the Malay Manuscript Laboratory at the Graduate School of Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang. The Hadiyat Al-Nisā' manuscript measures 22 cm in length, 18 cm in width, and 0.5 cm in thickness. The margins of the text in this manuscript are 3 cm on the right, 0.2 cm on the left, 1.5 cm at the bottom, and 1.5 cm at the top. The pages are bound using *neses* (a binding tool). The manuscript consists of 28 sheets without rubrication or page numbering, and there are no accompanying annotations or illustrations.

The paper used in the Hadiyat Al-Nisā' manuscript is brownish European watermarked paper. Overall, the paper is damaged, with the edges appearing torn. Nevertheless, the text in the manuscript remains clearly legible. Furthermore, the script used in this manuscript is Naskhi. Naskhi is characterized by its simple form, as it was developed to make reading easier. With the same goal in mind, this manuscript also uses the local Malay language written in the Pegon script, so that the teachings contained within can be understood and easily read by the general public.

The Hadiyat Al-Nisā' manuscript has been digitized by the DREAMSEA Project (Digital Repository of Endangered and Affected Manuscripts in Southeast Asia) under catalog number DS 0005 00030 and is housed at the HMML (Hill Museum & Manuscript Library) LAUT IMPIAN in Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia.

Muhammad Azhari's Interpretation of Surah Al-Nisa

QS. Al-Nisa [4]: 19

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ اَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاۤءَ كَرْهًا ۗوَلَا تَعْضُلُوْهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوْا بِبَعْضِ مَآ اٰتَيْتُمُوْهُنَّ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّأْتِيْنَ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ ۚ وَعَاشِرُوْهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ ۚ فَاِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوْهُنَّ فَعَسٰٓى اَنْ تَكْرَهُوْا شَيْـًٔا وَّيَجْعَلَ اللّٰهُ فِيْهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيْرًا

Meaning: *O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion. And do not make difficulties for them in order to take [back] part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them - perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good.*

Muhammad Azhari highlights several important points in his interpretation of Surah Al-Nisa, verse 19. First, the message concerns kindness and patience in marital relationships. According to Muhammad Azhari, every relationship including marriage will face challenges and differences. However, it is important to continue striving to do good and to be patient in dealing with them. Even when there is incompatibility or animosity toward one's spouse, Allah the Almighty teaches that sometimes great goodness can arise from difficult situations. Second, this verse emphasizes the importance of respecting and treating one's wife well. Muhammad Azhari reinforces this by quoting a hadith:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "اسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ، فَإِنَّ المَرْأَةَ خُلِقَتْ مِنْ ضِلَعٍ، وَإِنَّ أَعْوَجَ شَيْءٍ فِي الضِّلَعِ أَعْلاَهُ، فَإِنْ ذَهَبْتَ تُقِيمُهُ كَسَرْتَهُ، وَإِنْ تَرَكْتَهُ لَمْ يَزَلْ أَعْوَجَ، فَاسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ"

From Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, who said: The Messenger of Allah said, "Advise women (to do good), for women were created from a rib, and the most crooked part of a rib is its base. If you try to straighten that crooked rib, it may break. But if you leave it alone, it will remain crooked. Therefore, advise the women."

According to him, the "crooked rib" illustrates that a wife has unique qualities and weaknesses that must be respected and accepted. Even if it is difficult to "correct" or change her, husbands are reminded to continue treating her with love and understanding.

Third, the prohibition against violence in marital relationships. In this regard, Muhammad Azhari bases his interpretation on a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) which states:

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ عَنْ هِشَامٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ زَمْعَةَ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ لَا يَجْلِدُ أَحَدُكُمْ امْرَأَتَهُ جَلْدَ الْعَبْدِ ثُمَّ يُجَامِعُهَا فِي آخِرِ الْيَوْمِ

Let none of you strike his wife as he would strike a slave, yet when evening comes, he has relations with her

According to Muhammad Azhari, the hadith above explicitly prohibits violence against one's wife, using the analogy that striking a wife is like striking a slave an act that is clearly unacceptable in Islam. This message emphasizes the importance of equality and respect in the marital relationship, in which both parties have rights that must be honored.

Fourth, Muhammad Azhari, in his commentary, also explains a husband's obligations toward his wife. A husband is obligated to provide for his wife and meet her basic needs, such as food, clothing, and adequate housing. In addition, a husband is also obligated to provide his wife with hygiene and personal care items, as well as to pay for medical expenses if she falls ill. All of these are rights that a wife has over her husband, which must be properly fulfilled. Fifth, there is an explanation regarding a wife's obligation to submit to her husband and not seek pleasure outside of his commands. If a wife forces her husband or defies him, this is considered disobedience and nusyūz.

QS. Al-Nisa [4]: 34

وَاٰتُوا النِّسَآءَ صَدُقٰتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً ۗ فَاِنْ طِبْنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِّنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوْهُ هَنِيْۤـًٔا مَّرِيْۤـًٔا

Meaning: *O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion. And do not make difficulties for them in order to take [back] part of what you gave them unless they commit a clear immorality. And live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them - perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good.*

Muhammad Azhari interprets this verse as follows: "And as for any women from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them with knowledge and the Quran; and if they disobey you, then shun them in bed by turning your face away from them, and strike them without breaking their skin or fracturing their bones; but if she follows you in your sleep, do not do so treat them with compassion."

Muhammad Azhari's interpretation above highlights the need to offer counsel to a wife deemed likely to commit *nusyuz* or disobedience. Husbands are tasked with providing counsel and guidance to their wives to avoid actions that could lead to disharmony in the household. If counsel proves ineffective and the wife continues to behave in a defiant manner, this verse grants the husband permission to administer physical discipline in the form of light strikes. However, this discipline must be

carried out with care and must not cause the wife pain.

According to Muhammad Azhari, a wife's act of "*nusyuẓ*" is considered an act of defiance against her husband. Examples include covering her face when her husband calls her, leaving the house without her husband's permission, or traveling without her husband's permission. Muhammad Azhari also quotes a hadith of the Prophet:

لاَ تُؤْذِى امْرَأَةٌ زَوْجَهَا فِى الدُّنْيَا إِلاَّ قَالَتْ زَوْجَتُهُ مِنَ الْحُورِ الْعِينِ لاَ تُؤْذِيهِ قَاتَلَكِ اللَّهُ فَإِنَّمَا هُوَ عِنْدَكِ دَخِيلٌ يُوشِكُ أَنْ يُفَارِقَكِ إِلَيْنَا

No wife hurts her husband in this world without his future wife in the Hereafter one of the houris saying, "Do not hurt him! May Allah bring misfortune upon you. Indeed, he is with you only temporarily. Soon he will leave you and come to us."

According to Muhammad Azhari, the hadith above states that a woman who hurts her husband's feelings will receive a warning from the angels. In this hadith, Muhammad Azhari also emphasizes the prohibition against verbal abuse and insults in marital relationships. This demonstrates how important it is to be mindful of one's words and behavior in marital interactions so as not to hurt each other's feelings.

In addition, Muhammad Azhari also quotes the following hadith:

إِذَا دَعَا الرَّجُلُ امْرَأَتَهُ إِلَى فِرَاشِهِ فَأَبَتْ أَنْ تَجِيءَ لَعَنَتْهَا الْمَلاَئِكَةُ حَتَّى تُصْبِحَ

"If a husband invites his wife to his bed (for sex), and she refuses, causing him to spend the night angry with her, then the angels will curse that wife until morning."

According to him, a wife must be obedient and submissive to her husband, even when he calls her to his bed (for sexual relations). If the wife does not comply with this call, it will result in Allah's anger and curse.

Hegemonic Masculinity in the Manuscript Hadiyat Al-Nisā'

In this discussion, the author will analyze Muhammad Azhari's interpretation of Quranic Surah Al-Nisā', verses 19 and 34, regarding husband-wife relations in the manuscript titled Hadiyat Al-Nisā', using Antonio Gramsci's theoretical framework. In his theory, hegemony is classified into three levels: total hegemony or integral hegemony, declining hegemony, and minimal hegemony.

Integral Hegemony

Muhammad Azhari, in his interpretation of Quranic Surah Al-Nisā' verse 19 regarding a wife's obligation to submit to her husband and not seek pleasure outside of his commands, states that if a wife defies him, this is considered disobedience and *nusyūẓ* an interpretation categorized as integral hegemony. Why? There are several considerations: First, a potentially discriminatory understanding. An interpretation that leads to an absolute obligation for a wife to submit to her husband can pose a risk of unfair or discriminatory treatment toward women. This can serve as a justification for disregarding women's rights or for justifying treatment that harms women within the marital relationship.

Second, an imbalance of power. An overly literal understanding of a wife's obligation to submit can lead to an imbalance of power in the marital relationship. This can reduce the wife's role to merely obeying her husband's commands without considering the values of equality, openness, and mutual dependence in the marital relationship.

Third, the changing social context. A textual interpretation of a wife's obligation to submit may not take into account the changes in social and cultural dynamics that have occurred since the time of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Interactions between husbands and wives in modern society are often more complex and require a more contextual approach.

Fourth, potential for abuse. Interpretations that reinforce an absolute

obligation to submit can be misused by husbands as a justification for authoritarian or domineering behavior toward their wives. This can lead to oppression or unhealthy control within the marital relationship. Fifth, the need for equality and justice. Counter-criticism emphasizes the importance of treating husbands and wives as equal partners in marriage.

In addition, Muhammad Azhari's interpretation which falls under the category of "integral hegemony" of Surah Al-Nisā' verse 34 addresses the importance of a wife's loyalty to her husband, even when he summons her to his bed. Failing to heed her husband's summons results in Allah's wrath and curse (*laknat*).

Muhammad Azhari's interpretation in his exegesis can be viewed as inaccurate. Borrowing Masdar F. Mas'udi's opinion regarding the hadith about a wife's failure to comply with her husband's summons which results in Allah's curse he states, "*Although this hadith is narrated by Bukhari and Muslim, it cannot be accepted at face value because it is impossible that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) would have spoken of a husband's injustice toward his wife*"

Borrowing Siti Musdah Mulia's view regarding the hadith about a wife's failure to comply with her husband's sexual request which is said to incur Allah's curse she argues that a literal interpretation of this hadith would create a strong impression of men's superiority over women, and could even serve as a tool to legitimize men's coercion and exploitation of women in sexual relationships. According to her, if the refusal is due to the wife being unwell or uninterested, or because the husband made the request in a rude and inhumane manner, then it is the husband who should be cursed by the angels, as he is considered to have committed violence against his wife.

According to feminists, interpreting the revelation literally leads to a patriarchal understanding that demeans women, viewing them as individuals who must always be subordinate to men. This is considered unfair to women, and therefore the interpretation needs to be revised. Feminists suggest that this hadith be understood in a different way. They point out that the phrase "a woman/wife who refuses" in the hadith text reflects a gender bias, as it does not account for the possibility that a husband might also refuse his wife's request. In their view, to achieve a better balance in the interpretation of this hadith, the text should refer to "a partner who refuses" in general terms, so that both husband and wife share equal responsibility in the relationship.

Feminists also emphasize that a misunderstanding of this hadith can trigger dissatisfaction within the household, which in turn can affect trust and the quality of the relationship between husband and wife. Therefore, they stress the importance of mutual understanding and a fair division of labor in building a harmonious household, to prevent the situation described in the hadith from occurring.

Decident Hegemony

Muhammad Azhari's interpretation of Quranic Surah Al-Nisā' verse 19 regarding the importance of respecting and treating one's wife well is categorized as an interpretation of "decident hegemony." According to Muhammad Azhari, the hadith stating that women were created from a "crooked rib" is a metaphor illustrating that wives possess unique qualities and weaknesses that must be respected and accepted. Even if it is difficult to "correct" or change them, husbands are reminded to continue treating their wives with love and understanding.

To borrow Fatimah Mernissi's view, the original purpose of the hadith regarding women as ribs is to remind men (husbands) to be gentle and understanding toward women (wives), not to belittle them. According to her, the statement that a woman is a crooked rib is a metaphor intended to emphasize the importance of protection and compassion, not inferiority (Al-Refi'i, 2021).

Ali Mustafa Ya'qub also commented on the existence of this hadith in his book titled "The Right Way to Understand Hadith." In his view, the hadiths regarding

women being created from a rib are not singular. Naturally, the existence of multiple hadiths requires them to clarify one another. According to Ali Mustafa Ya'qub, the figurative meaning is considered better suited to explain the theme of these hadiths, so that it can be understood that women were created with characteristics akin to a crooked rib one that cannot be straightened, let alone by force.

Furthermore, Muhammad Azhari's interpretation of Quranic Surah Al-Nisa' verse 34 which falls under the category of "decident hegemony" addresses a husband's conduct when his wife is disobedient (*nusyuz*). When a wife is disobedient, the husband may first offer advice and guidance. If this proves unsuccessful, there is a very limited permission to impose physical discipline in the form of a light slap, provided it does not harm the wife and is carried out with great care.

The statement "strike your disobedient wives" does indeed pose a problem. For example, in the Ministry of Religious Affairs' interpretation, the imperative "*wadhribûhunna*" is translated as "and (if necessary) strike them" (Mujahydah, 2022). The placement of "if necessary" in parentheses within the imperative sentence indicates an additional explanation, which is not actually contained verbatim in the original phrase "*wadhribûhunna*." This addition indirectly gives the impression that "striking" is to be done only if it is deemed necessary. Striking, therefore, must be limited to cases of necessity or need. This implication at least points to a dilemma in interpreting that portion of the verse if taken literally and at face value. This implication can also be found in various other commentaries and translations circulating throughout the Indonesian archipelago. Mahmud Yunus's translation, for example, includes the clarification "but with a blow that does not injure her body" immediately following the phrase "strike them." The same emphasis is also found in the exegesis al-Ibrîz by Kyai Bisri Mustofa of Rembang (Mustofa & Ma, 2015).

In line with the interpretations of their predecessors, Hamka and Quraish Shihab who follow this school of thought interpret the phrase "*wadhribûhunna*" as "strike them." They do not merely interpret it as "strike them," but explicitly permit husbands to strike their wives as part of their responsibility to discipline them and restore harmony to the household. There are good women, and there are also bad women. The beating that is commanded, as Shihab explains, is intended only for women or wives who are wicked, disobedient to their husbands, and unresponsive to advice and sleeping apart. Under such circumstances, a husband has the right to strike his wife, although, of course, a good husband should not choose to do so. The prescribed striking must also be done in a way that does not cause pain or physical injury to the woman.

At the end of his discussion, Shihab actually cites the view of scholars who believe that the right to strike lies with the state, not with the husband. However, the general impression from Shihab's explanation in Tafsir al-Misbah is that the right to strike remains the husband's authority for disciplining his wife even in certain situations where discipline can only be administered through physical punishment while explicitly permitting the husband to strike his wife as part of his responsibility to discipline her and restore domestic harmony (Anahdiah & Soleh, 2024; Wahyudi et al., 2023).

A more progressive interpretation can be found in the work of Prof. Zaini Dahlan, who interprets the phrase as "impose an educational sanction," rather than "strike them" as others do. This interpretation naturally emerged because the meaning of "strike them" is considered problematic or, at the very least, inappropriate for interpreting "*wadhribûhunna*," especially when linked to the Islamic principles of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

Minimal Hegemony

In his interpretation of Quranic Surah Al-Nisā', verse 19 which falls under the category of "minimal hegemony" Muhammad Azhari emphasizes the importance of

maintaining a marital relationship rooted in love and mutual respect. Violence in all its forms is unequivocally prohibited. The husband has the responsibility to provide for his wife, protect her, and care for her appropriately, in accordance with the values of equality and justice in Islam. This aims to ensure that the marital relationship is harmonious and filled with love.

In Islamic teachings, women and men were created from the same origin, which means that both possess equal human dignity. Therefore, maintaining harmony in the marital relationship requires balanced roles and efforts from both parties.

In Surah Al-Nisā', verse 34, Muhammad Azhari interprets that it is important for a husband to advise his wife to avoid actions that could disrupt harmony in the household, as taught in Islam. Husbands have a responsibility to remind their wives with love and understanding. This applies not only to matters of worship such as bathing after marital relations or during menstruation but also to maintaining spiritual purity and cleanliness. This reflects the principles of healthy communication, fairness, and consideration in marital relationships according to Islamic teachings.

CONCLUSION

This article aims to uncover the construction of hegemonic masculinity in classical Nusantara exegesis through the manuscript Hadiyat Al-Nisā' by Muhammad Azhari (d. 1947), specifically in Surah Al-Nisā' verses 19 and 34. An analysis using Antonio Gramsci's theoretical framework of hegemony reveals three typologies of hegemony: integral hegemony, which emphasizes a wife's obligation to submit to her husband, including in fulfilling his sexual needs; decident hegemony, which highlights the creation of woman from a crooked rib as a symbol of both weakness and uniqueness; and minimal hegemony, which emphasizes the importance of mutual love and respect in the husband-wife relationship. These findings confirm that exegesis does not arise in a vacuum but is always in dialogue with the culture and social context surrounding an exegete.

The novelty of this article lies in the application of Gramsci's theory of hegemony to the exegesis of Nusantara manuscripts, an approach rarely taken in studies of classical exegesis. This approach opens up a new perspective: that exegesis is not merely a normative text, but a cultural product that both reflects and shapes gender relations. The implications of these findings suggest that Muhammad Azhari's exegesis not only represents patriarchal dominance but also holds the potential for a more balanced reinterpretation of gender relations. This contribution enriches the study of Nusantara exegesis, broadens the discourse on gender in Islam, and fosters the emergence of critical perspectives on classical manuscripts that are relevant to contemporary academic needs.

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Author contribution

Mamluatun Nafisah: data curation, writing-original draft preparation, analysis, **Khoirul Ummah:** conceptualization, methodology, **Mohieddin Masoud**: visualization, and editing.

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