

Deconstructing Qawwām: Derrida's Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Reconfiguration of the Role of Gender in Islamic Thought

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Abstract: *The issue of gender is a never-ending issue, especially related to the balance of gender roles in the reality of everyday life. The focus of this study is to try to analyze the balance of gender roles in the review of QS. al-Nisā (4): 34 about Qawwām by involving a theory from a famous figure, namely Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory. The data collection method used is qualitative which tends to use analysis. Then the results of the discussion in this study are; First, that by using Derrida's deconstruction, it is able to provide color in a person's thinking style when understanding a text, the text will not be interpreted with only one meaning or even final but will continue to produce new meanings that continue to be sustainable. Second, deconstruction works not to justify and blame, but to be a mediator by looking at the meaning that comes from reading the conditions of social reality in society. Third, the deconstruction brought by Derrida can reveal that the term Qawwām does not immediately refer to male superiority, but rather as a situational division of roles. Thus, the relationship between husband and wife can be seen as a dynamic partnership that complements each other, not hierarchical.*

Keywords: *Deconstruction, Qawwām, Jacques Derrida.*

Abstrak: *Isu gender merupakan isu yang tak ada habisnya, terutama terkait dengan keseimbangan peran gender dalam realitas kehidupan sehari-hari. Fokus penelitian ini adalah mencoba menganalisis keseimbangan peran gender dalam review QS. al-Nisā (4): 34 tentang Qawwām dengan melibatkan teori dari tokoh terkenal, yaitu teori dekonstruksi Jacques Derrida. Metode pengumpulan data yang digunakan bersifat kualitatif yang cenderung menggunakan analisis. Maka hasil pembahasan dalam penelitian ini adalah; Pertama, bahwa dengan menggunakan dekonstruksi Derrida, mampu memberi warna pada gaya berpikir seseorang ketika memahami sebuah teks, teks tersebut tidak akan ditafsirkan dengan makna tunggal atau bahkan makna akhir tetapi akan terus melahirkan makna baru yang terus dipertahankan. Kedua, dekonstruksi bekerja bukan untuk membenarkan dan menyalahkan, tetapi untuk menengahi dengan*

melihat makna yang berangkat dari pembacaan kondisi realitas sosial dalam masyarakat. Ketiga, Dekonstruksi yang dibawa oleh Derrida, dapat mengungkapkan bahwa istilah Qawwām tidak selalu mengacu pada superioritas laki-laki, melainkan pada pembagian peran situasional. Dengan demikian, hubungan antara suami dan istri dapat dilihat sebagai kemitraan dinamis yang saling melengkapi, bukan hierarkis.

Kata kunci: *Dekonstruksi, Qawwām, Jacques Derrida.*

Introduction

Talking about gender is a conversation that will always be warm to talk about.¹ The issue raised is always related to equal rights between men and women. This departs from several people's views that there is an inequality in freedom, especially regarding women. They are sometimes limited to a few things and are even considered second sex in the social order. This problem continues until now to give rise to various problems such as protests carried out by equality support groups.² So in a reality that exists, and it still happens today, that women are still positioned as second-class citizens (*the second people*). This can be seen in the rules, customs, culture and interpretation of religion, which lead to the restraint and deprivation of women's rights. For example, in Islamic society, there is an assumption or understanding that a woman's voice is awrah. With this understanding, women's access to actualize themselves in the public sphere is limited and even hindered. Even though the majority of scholars do not consider women's voices as aurat, as long as they do not cause fitnah.³

As the author has explained before, women are still considered second class after men, in the sense that women's degrees are below men. The relationship that is built is power, where men have full power over women.⁴ Consciously or unconsciously, Muslims still adhere to the patriarchal system. The factors why patriarchal culture is so strong in the social system, at least some of the following factors: First, this patriarchal culture has been rooted for so long (as mentioned above). Second, political factors which have not been completely in favor of women. Third, economic factors, this is none other than the existence of a global capitalist system that sweeps the world which often exploits women. Fourth, the factor of interpretations of religious texts/scriptures which is dominated by the ideology of the patriarchal system.⁵

¹ Yuyun Fitriani, et al., "Increasing Women's Participation in Social, Political, Legal and Economic Fields," *Journal of Social Service* 1, no. 10 (2024): 1456-1461, 1459. <https://doi.org/10.59837/dqpgjw03>.

² Saibatul Hamdi and Ahmad Riyadh Maulidi, A Discursive Study of the Gap in Women's Leadership in the Qur'an, *Maghza Journal of Al-Quran Science and Tafsir* 8, no. 1 (2023): 100–118, 110, <https://doi.org/10.24090/maghza.v8i1.6175>.

³ Muhammad Romli, "Jurnal Al Wasith: Journal of Islamic Law Studies || Vol. 6 No. 2 (2021) □," *Al Wasith Journal: Journal of Islamic Law Studies* || 6, no. 2 (2021): 206–216, 210.

⁴ Haikal Fadhil Anam, Tafsir of Islamic Feminism, *MAGHZA: Journal of Qur'an and Tafsir* 4, no. 2 (2019): 161–176, 162, <https://doi.org/10.24090/maghza.v4i2.3071>.

⁵ Abdul Mustaqim, *The Paradigm of Feminist Tafsir Reading the Qur'an with a Women's Perspective: A Study of Riffat Hassan's Thoughts on Gender Issues in Islam*, (Logung Pustaka; 2008), 15.

The authors see that research on gender is not something new. Here are some of the studies that the author found; *First*, a study conducted by Saibatul Hamdi & Ahmad Riyadh Maulidi (2023), they researched "*A Discursive Study of the Women's Leadership Gap in the Qur'an*". The results of their research include that the review of the Qur'an regarding women's leadership can be seen from the success of Ratu Balqis as Queen of Saba', the existence of women's rights in politics, and there are equal rights between men and women. So that between men and women there is actually equality according to their respective portions. *Second*, research conducted by Haikal Fadhil Anam (2019), which researched "*Tafsir Islamic Feminism: A Study of Riffat Hassan's Interpretation of Q.S Al-Nisa [4]: 34*". The results of his research show that Riffat Hassan criticized the previous scholars who interpreted the word *Qawwām* as a leader. According to him, if the word is interpreted as a leader, it will have implications for theology and psychology of the superiority of men over women. So he offered the result of his interpretation, which is better if the word is interpreted as a protector and support.

Looking at the facts of the literature that have been presented, the author concludes that research related to gender studies using one of the theories of philosophical figures is not much or may not exist. Most of the existing research only discusses or traces gender issues using the study of Islamic law, tafsir or hadith. Therefore, the author took the initiative to conduct research on gender studies using one of the theories of a well-known philosophical figure, Jacques Derrida. Jacques Derrida is famous for his theory of Deconstruction. This theory is not just a textual critique, but also a tool to tame seemingly stable structures of meaning including traditional gender constructs by dismantling binary oppositions and opening up space for more egalitarian and contextual interpretations.⁶ This research will reveal how the balance of gender roles in the perspective of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, especially in QS. Al-Nisā [4]: 34 about *Qawwāmūna*. This paper assumes that in the perspective of Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, assumptions about the balance of gender roles, including those contained in QS. Al-Nisā [4]: 34 concerning *Qawwāmūna*, can be analyzed as a construction of meaning that is not absolute. Derrida encourages us to dismantle the hierarchies, binerisms, and structures of authority inherent in texts, including scriptural passages, in order to find latent alternative meanings. By dismantling the hierarchies implied in the word *Qawwāmūna*, Derrida's deconstruction not only provides a new perspective on gender roles, but also brings us closer to egalitarian values in understanding religious texts.

Method

The data collection technique used in this study is qualitative.⁷ This type was chosen because the author wants to see and explore a symptom, phenomenon or social

⁶ Sonya Trikandi, Yusro Edy Nugroho, and Agus Nuryatin, "Stereotyping of Father Figures in Short Stories by Putu Wijaya: A Study of Derrida's Deconstruction," *Pen : Journal of Language and Literature Education* 13, no. 1 (2023): 49–54, 52, <https://doi.org/10.22437/pena.v13i1.28654>.

⁷ Qualitative research method, which is a study that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from an object that can be observed and researched. *Lexy J & Meleong, Moleong Qualitative Research Methodology*, (Jakarta: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2014), 3.

reality to be researched. The type of data search in this study uses library research, namely the data obtained will be narrated descriptively. In addition, other data sources in this study were obtained from books, journals and articles with theories used to find continuity between the data and the theory used by the author in this study. Then, as explained earlier, the theory used is a deconstruction of one of the famous philosophical figures, namely Jacques Derrida. This approach provides an opportunity to dismantle rigid hierarchical structures such as male versus female opposition and open up the possibility of more egalitarian and contextual gender roles. In its application, concat deconstruction is not just an analysis, but also a critical process that advances a social vision.⁸ So the focus of this research is to see the understanding of gender role balance, in this case especially in QS. Al-Nisā [4]: 34 on *Qawwāmūna* from the lens of Jacques Derrida.

Result and Discussions

Definition of Gender

The word gender comes from the Latin (*genus*), meaning type or type. Then in line with the English dictionary, the word gender is given the meaning of sex (*sex*).⁹ So the term gender is often interpreted as sex, which is biologically defined in the categories of men and women. Gender can literally also be defined as the difference between masculine and feminine. In general, both can be translated as gender, but the connotations of the two are different. Sex refers more to the biological sense, while gender refers more to the social meaning (socio-cultural construction).¹⁰ Confusion in understanding the term gender is a phenomenon that we find many in people's lives. It can be seen from most or the majority of the understanding or understanding that is rooted in society is to confuse the meaning of "*gender*" with "*nature*". For example, a woman does a job that is considered to be a man's job, so it is considered *against "nature"*. Such an understanding is a misunderstanding. Because what is meant by nature is more of a form of ability, power, or innate trait indicating the active involvement of the perpetrator in what he can and can do himself, without depending on others (more on inner power)¹¹ and such is a biological trait that comes from God.

Terminologically, gender is defined as cultural expectations of both men and women.¹² According to H. T. Wilson, gender is defined as a basis for determining the difference in the contributions of men and women to culture and collective life which as

⁸ Adawiyahovel, Muakibatul Hasanah and Robiatul. Sitti Nurbaya, Differentiation of the Concept of Women in Three Eras: A Study of Deconstruction by Jasque DeriddaBalik Kerling, and Saatirah Approach, "39036-107135-3-Pb," *Berth* 20 (2021): 1–28.

⁹ John M. Echols dan Hassan Sadhily, *Indonesian English Dictionary, Cet XII*, (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1983), 265.

¹⁰ Adam and Jessica Kuper Kuper, *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, Second Edition* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2000), 391.

¹¹ Nasaruddin Umar, *The Nature of Women in the Qur'an* (Jakarta: Fikahati Aneka, 2000), 5.

¹² Rokhmansyah Alfian, *Introduction to Gender and Feminism: An Early Understanding of Literary Criticism of Feminism* (Garudhawaca, 2016).

a result they become men and women.¹³ Gender refers to the distinctions and social relationships between girls and boys,¹⁴ as well as adult males and females that are studied and vary widely within and between cultures, and can change over time.¹⁵ For example, in many countries, women are the ones who cook (become chefs), but now there has been a change that men are also used to being cooks and even taking care of kitchen problems in the household. Another meaning comes from Nasaruddin Umar, explaining that gender is a concept used to identify the difference between men and women from a socio-cultural perspective, gender in this sense defines men and women from a non-biological perspective, and this concept is attached to men and women as a result of cultural constructions in human life, so it is not natural.¹⁶ There is a great difference between gender in the sense of "sex", which is put forward by Lisa Little quoting Nella Lucky's argument, that gender in this sense is used to identify the anatomical and biological differences between men and women, and this is something that is carried from birth, therefore it is more natural and immutable. This narrative emphasizes that *the aspect of sex* is objective and stable, in contrast to gender, which is more dynamic and shaped by culture.¹⁷

From some of the explanations that have been provided, the author concludes that gender is a role, attitude, and trait of men and women that are constructed by socio-cultures so that it is possible that one culture and another culture are different in viewing women's roles, attitudes, and traits. It is also clear that gender is not the price of death or the nature of the divine, but it will always change according to the culture that surrounds it. So in other words, gender is a socio-cultural product. The concept of gender emerged and developed through social interactions and cultural values that prevailed in society. For example, in the tradition of Islamic boarding schools, the difference in role patterns between male and female students is not solely due to biological nature, but because of cultural constructions that establish exclusive zones and moral values that shape certain gender expectations.¹⁸ Similarly, in the domestic environment, the division of domestic work between husband and wife in the modern urban family is also greatly influenced by social norms even though there are shifts, the old structure still dominates because of the

¹³ Marzuki, *Study of gender equality in various aspects 1* (Yogyakarta: Center for Women's Studies, 2015), 90.

¹⁴ Diah Firdausya, *The Dual Role of Women Who Work as Teachers in Improving Family Welfare: A Case Study in Tampo Village, Cluring District, Banyuwangi Regency*, (Thesis: University of Jember, 2017), 97.

¹⁵ Nelien dan Busakorn Suriyasarn Haspels, *Improving Gender Equality in Action to Address Child Labour and Trafficking in Women and Children: A Practical Guide for Organizations* (ILO-IPEC, 2005), 89.

¹⁶ Nasaruddin Umar, *Argument for Gender Equality Perspective of the Qur'an* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999), 35.

¹⁷ Muhammad Naufal Fairuzillah, Fahman Mumtazi, and Yongki Sutoyo, "Non-Binary Gender and Child Sexuality Fitrah Education," *Ta'dibuna: Journal of Islamic Education* 12, no. 2 (2023): 163–179, 169, <https://doi.org/10.32832/tadibuna.v12i2.8867>.

¹⁸ Luthfi Salim, "Gender Social Construction in Islamic Boarding Schools Study the Gap Between Men and Women," *Socio-Religious: Journal of Sociology of Religion* 01, no. 02 (2020): 1–17, 9, <http://ejournal.radenintan.ac.id/index.php/sr%0AKontruksi>.

values that have been embedded and continue to be repeated in daily culture.¹⁹ The verses in the Qur'an that address gender-related issues can be classified into several main themes, such as the creation of man, the relationship between men and women, gender roles and responsibilities, women's rights, and fair treatment in social life. The verse about the equality of creation of men and women is QS. al-Hujurat (49): 13. The verse about the relationship between men and women is QS. ar-Rum (30): 21. The verse about gender rights and obligations is QS. an-Nisa (4): 34 and QS. al-Baqarah (2): 228. The verse about the protection of women is QS. an-Nūr (24): 30-31 and QS. at-Tahrīm (66): 11-12. The verse about equality in the hereafter is QS. an-Nahl (16:97) and the verse about women's courage and contribution is QS. al-Mumtahanah (60): 12.

An overview of Jacques Derrida

A philosopher whose thoughts were considered to be intriguing but strangely interesting to study and study. Who is Jacques Derrida? Jacques Derrida was born on July 15, 1930 AD in the city of Elbiar near Algiers Al-Jazair, which at that time was still colonized by the French state. His parents are named Aime Derrida and Georgette Sultana Ester Safar. The two married in 1923, and moved to St. Augustine in Al-jazair. His family was of Jewish descent whose ancestors came from Spain and settled in Algeria.²⁰ At the age of 19, around 1949 Derrida moved to France to study and serve in the military. In the following year, precisely 1953, Derrida managed to get into the prestigious school where this school was very famous and produced famous alumni who have now become professors, namely the Ecole Normale Supérieure in this school, Derrida was acquainted with several famous lecturers such as Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and so on.²¹

In 1953-1954, Derrida began to be critical and searched for and studied the archives of Husserl at one of the universities in Belgium, namely the university of Leuven and in the same year Derrida wrote a dissertation entitled "*Le probleme de la genese dans la philosophie de Husserl*" or interpreted (Problem of Origins in Husserl's Philosophy, 1954). Later in 1960-1964, Derrida worked as a lecturer at the University of Paris I Sorbonne-Pantheon. In addition to participating in teaching activities, Derrida also had time to become an assistant to Ricoeur.²² So looking at Derrida's activities, it is natural that he became a great scientist. Because his journey in learning, seeking and studying science is very critical and persistent. Especially in his journey, apart from studying, he has had the opportunity to become a Ricoeur assistant which not everyone can be like that. In 1974, Derrida was involved in the formation of the *Group de Recherche sur L'enseignement de la Philosophie* (GREPH), a movement of associations of philosophy lecturers who fought for a proper place for the teaching of philosophy in secondary

¹⁹ Venny Pratisiya, et al., "Changes in Social Construction in Domestic Labor Division: A Study of the Relationship Between Husband and Wife in Modern Families," *Yinyang: Journal of Islamic Studies of Gender and Children* 18, no. 2 (2023): 197–222, 200, <https://doi.org/10.24090/yinyang.v18i2.8573>.

²⁰ F. Budi Hardiman, *The Art of Understanding Hermeneutics from Schleiermacher to Derrida*, (Yogyakarta: PT Kanisius, 2015), 275.

²¹ F. Budi Hardiman, 276.

²² A New Kind of Love, *Social Philosophy* (Malang: Aditya Media Publishing, 2013), 277.

schools in France. The association became active since the plan for teaching reform was carried out, and the teaching of philosophy began to be questioned. So on the way, Derrida made an interesting statement when he put forward "*Qui a peur de la philosophie*" (Who is afraid of philosophy?).²³

Derrida, therefore, is known as the French philosopher whom everyone considers to be an important figure of post-structuralist-postmodernist. Derrida's thought was heavily influenced by other philosophers such as Edmund Husserl and Ferdinand de Saussure. As a development, specifically in the context of visual semiotics, Derrida's thought with Barthes expands the critique of structuralism by deconstructing signs in order to reveal many layers of interpretation beyond a single structure.²⁴ In the postcolonial realm and Indonesian culture, Derrida is applied methodologically to dismantle the hegemony of knowledge and dominant discourse, especially in understanding post-colonial identity. This is reflected in studies that use deconstruction as a tool to critique the power-knowledge assumptions that shape the national narrative.²⁵ Jacques Derrida has written or written a large number of works, and almost all of them are commentaries on philosophers and scientists, such as Kant, Hegel, Freud, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Husserl. Of the works written by Derrida, the most famous are *La Voix et le Phenomene* (Speech and Phenomena, 1967), *L'Ecriture et la difference* (Writing and Difference, 1967), *De La Grammatologie* (Grammarology, 1967), *La Dissemination* (Scattering, 1972), *Marges de la Philosophie* (The Periphery of Philosophy, 1972), *Glas* (Glas, 1974) and so on. "*L'écriture et la Difference*", *De La Grammatologie* (1967), dan *Marges de la Philosophie* (1972). It can therefore be understood that Jacques Derrida's contribution to the world of philosophy can be said to be very large, because it has given birth to a theory that is still used today.²⁶ Derrida breathed his last on October 9, 2004 by leaving behind his phenomenal works and his famous thoughts to date. Derrida's position as the main character until his death strengthened his status as a deconstructionist icon.²⁷

Deconstruction of Jacques Derrida

Before explaining about deconstruction, it is important to trace the reasons why Derrida proposed deconstruction. In some existing literature, the reason Derrida presents deconstruction is as a form of rejection of the development of western philosophy.²⁸ His

²³ Akhyar Yusuf Lubis, *Is there still a place for knowledge*, (Bogor Akademia, 2003), 92.

²⁴ Irfan, "Deconstructive Semiotics and Post-Structuralist Thought of Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes," *Tanra Journal: Visual Communication Design* 9, no. 2 (2022): 97–104, 100, <https://doi.org/10.26858/tanra.v9i2.33302>.

²⁵ Magdalena Baga, "Deconstruction of Derrida and Gramsci Hegemony: An Beginning of the Search for Postcolonial Indonesian Cultural Identity", *Research Review of Multidisciplinary Scientific Journals* 1, no. 1 (2022): 49–63, 57.

²⁶ Marietta Natalia Irene, In Jacques Derrida: Theory of Deconstruction, Religion and Science - IBTimes.ID, (Accessed on December 12, 2024 – 23:29).

²⁷ Muhammad Nur Hanif and Azizatur Rahma, "Deconstruction in the Short Story 'Arloji' by Tjak S. Parlan," *Transformatika: A Journal of Language, Literature, and Its Teaching* 7, no. 1 (2023): 127, <https://doi.org/10.31002/transformatika.v7i1.7694>.

²⁸ H Tedjoworo, *Imagination and imagination* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2009), 16.

rejection of western philosophy was carried out by criticizing the views of metaphysics and logocentrism. Derrida and his contemporaries generally refused to give a definition of deconstruction, the reason being that they thought that definition was a limitation, whereas deconstruction aimed to break through the boundary. By rejecting the imposition of a fixed definition, Derrida asserts that deconstruction is not a standard method, but rather a practice of opening up the space of meaning hidden in the text to expand interpretation and reveal the dominance of a single center of truth.²⁹ Deconstruction is not a tool to create new definitions, but rather to disrupt and open up the metaphysical foundations and central structures in the text, making interpretation always open and moving.³⁰ Deconstructionist hermeneutics is the activity of reading and understanding texts with the paradigm of equality and diversity. Even further, it can be said that deconstruction is antitheoretical or even antimethodical, because what is based in it is the game (*play*) and parody.³¹

There are several definitions of deconstruction according to experts. Lexically prefixes "*de*" means decrease, reduction, characterization, and rejection. Therefore, from this definition, deconstruction can be interpreted as a means of reducing construction, namely ideas. Then according to Al-Fayyadl, deconstruction is an open testimony to those who lose, those who are marginalized by the stability of the regime named author. Thus, a deconstruction is the movement of the journey towards life itself. And Umar Junus, views deconstruction as a new perspective in literary research.³² From the existing explanation, deconstruction can be defined as an effort to represent the desire and aspiration to dismantle an established building; an attempt to strip a standard construction; an anti-establishment 'movement'. This appreciation of diversity is supported by Derrida's thought of *différance* (France). *Différance* is a source of equivocal meaning. Why is it plural? Because each text has a *différance*; have traces of differences. For example, a word only refers to another sign and never ends at a specific object as the final explanatory one. Traces in words refer to what is there as well as what is not.³³

It should be noted that Derrida's style of thinking is characterized by *mixes genres* (in which any field is studied) in order to explain his ideas. As previously explained, Derrida has a style of thinking that is able to evoke meaning (evocative), which aims to build the readers of the text to continue thinking in search of their own context. Method *mixes genres* This is particularly evident in the study of cognitive linguistics, where Derrida uses the concept of language as a metaphorical and figurative realm to show that each sign structure holds layers of meaning that shift with each other, forcing the reader to actively reinterpret the written message even from movie dialogues or everyday song

²⁹ Mangihut Siregar, "Criticism of Derrida's Deconstruction Theory," *Journal of Urban Sociology* 2, no. 1 (2019): 65, <https://doi.org/10.30742/jus.v2i1.611>.

³⁰ Frenky Icksan Nugraha, Ekarini Saraswati, and Joko Widodo, "Deconstruction of Derrida's Jacques in the Novel *O* by Eka Kurniawan," *FONEMA Scientific Journal* 3, no. 1 (2020): 27–42, 35, <https://doi.org/10.25139/fn.v3i1.2394>.

³¹ Muhammad Al-Fayyad, *Derrida* (Yogyakarta: Lkis, 2006), 8.

³² And summarily, *Hermeneutics: A Philosophical Method* (Yogyakarta: PT Kanisius, 1999), 120.

³³ Frety Cassia Udang, *Hermeneutic with Derrida*, *Tumou Tou* VI (2019), 121.

lyrics so that deconstruction serves as a never-ending exploration of meaning.³⁴ In the study of the sociology of film literature, Derrida's approach to audiovisual texts such as in the analysis of gender stereotypical icons asserts that deconstruction is capable of creating spaces for dialogue between texts and reader-spectators to challenge standard social constructions, presenting the possibility of alternative meanings previously stored in visual or narrative structures.³⁵ Then what became Derrida's style in thinking was circular, meaning that when finding the meaning of a meaning was not directly considered final or final, but still looking for and still in the process of consideration. Because according to Derrida, when it comes to showing the character or meaning of a text, there will be no conclusion. Because from each text that is read, it not only gives birth to one meaning but gives birth to infinite meanings.

Derrida's writings are mostly expressed in the form of commentaries on the books read by scientists, writers and even philosophers. This method is not just a criticism, but marks the birth of new texts born from the dynamic interaction between the original text and the interpretation. By deconstructing the structure of old texts, Derrida opens up space for readers and interpreters to be actively involved, so that meaning becomes an ever-evolving process, not a final narrative.³⁶ Derrida channeled his ideas by providing interpretations and giving birth to new texts. According to him, in reading the text, Derrida tried to compose his own text through the dismantling of other texts. This style of thinking was targeted by Derrida and has now become his style or characteristic of thinking. From McQuillan's research, he explained that deconstruction is a form of interpretation of the text, but that interpretation is not the same as what is understood so far. It can therefore be concluded that deconstruction is a radical interpretation of the text, which is why deconstruction is sometimes called "radical hermeneutics". Why is that? Because this deconstruction is indeed contrary to the usual understanding of his time, namely modernism. Compared to the theories of poststructuralism in general, definitively the difference as well as the characteristic of deconstruction as stated by Derrida (1976) is its rejection of logocentrism and phonocentrism which as a whole gives birth to biner opposition and other dichotomous hierarchical ways of thinking.³⁷

Gender Role Balance Analysis Review of QS. Al-Nisā [4]: 34 Jacques Derrida

Gender role balance refers to the equal distribution of responsibilities, rights, and opportunities between men and women in various aspects of life, both in public and private spaces. This concept requires that domestic and public roles be carried out together in proportion, so that there is no double burden on one party but rather the

³⁴ Seradona Altiria, "Derrida's Deconstruction in the Study of Cognitive Linguistics," *Proceedings of the Atma Jaya Annual Linguistic Conference (KOLITA)* 21, no. 21 (2023): 270–280, 275. <https://doi.org/10.25170/kolita.21.4857>.

³⁵ Ayu Eka Prasetyawati, Laila Adisti Aulia, and Adibah Agustini, "Analysis of Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction Theory in the Short Film 'Aphrodite Stereotype': A Study of Literary Sociology," *Source: Journal of Education, Social and Humanities* 1, no. 3 (2025): 439–447, 445.

³⁶ Yosep Belay, "The Encounter of Derrida's Deconstruction and Dogmatic Theology:," *RAI Theological Journal* 1, no. 2 (2025): 156–171, <https://doi.org/10.63276/jurnalrai.v1i2.46>.

³⁷ F. Budi Hardiman, 291-296.

creation of synergy between genders for inclusive and fair development.³⁸ In society, this concept is important to overcome structural inequalities that often disadvantage one party, especially women, in access to education, employment, health, and decision-making. As previously explained, in this study the author will examine the role of gender in QS. al-Nisā (4): 34 especially the wording *Qawwāmūna*. Before looking at the application of Jacques Derrida's theory to gender in this sentence, the author will first display the interpretations that already exist in this sentence. The Word of Allah in QS. al-Nisā (4): 34:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَنَاطٌ
حَفِظَتْ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاصْرَبُوهُنَّ ۚ فَإِنْ
أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

Translation:

Men (husbands) are in charge of women (wives) because Allah has given some of them (men) more than others (women) and because they (men) have provided for some of their wealth. Righteous women are those who are obedient (to Allah) and take care of themselves when (their husbands) are not there because Allah has taken care of (them). Women whom you are worried about, give them advice, leave them on the bed, and (if necessary,) beat them (in a painless manner). However, if they obey you, do not seek to trouble them. Indeed, Allah is exalted and exalted.³⁹

QS. al-Nisā' (4): 34 needs to be understood from the specific situation (asbāb nuzūl) that is the background of its presence in the reality of the earth, namely in the area of Medina. According to some of our interpretations such as; As-Sais, An-Nawawi Al-jāwī and Al-Baidhawi that the verse was born or present in the family of Sa'ad bin Rabi' a ruler of Anshor. Sa'ad's wife, Habibah bint Zayd, performed nusyuz on him and was beaten by Sa'ad. Then Habibah went to his father and his father went to report to the Prophet Muhammad about the incident. The Prophet encouraged Habibah to retaliate. But before he had time to repay him, the Prophet's decision was then strongly challenged by the companions of Medina, and along with that, the Angel Gabriel came to bring God's message to the Prophet Muhammad about the problems he faced. Then after that, the Prophet again called Habibah and said, "Jibril has come to me with a message of revelation, while reciting QS. al-Nisā' (4): 34.⁴⁰ In this explanation, it does not mean that

³⁸ Nofriadi Nofriadi, et al., "Gender Analysis in MSME Management: Its Influence on Innovation and Competitive Advantage in Padang City," *Tower of Knowledge* 18, no. 1 (2024): 80–87, <https://doi.org/10.31869/mi.v18i1.4871>.

³⁹ Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an and Translation*, (Surabaya: Halim, 2019), p. 84.

⁴⁰ Aksin Wijaya, *Suing the Authenticity of God's Revelation: Criticism of Gender Interpretation* (Yogyakarta: Safiria Insania Press, 2004), 186-187.

what was conveyed by the Prophet Muhammad was rejected by Allah, but the Qur'an respects the social conditions that existed at that time, which indeed men were more dominant than women in terms of the household. The appreciation of the Qur'an is not in order to blame and justify but in order to see socio-history.

As is well known, the scholars of interpretation differ in responding to or interpreting this verse. The debate in this verse is that it highlights a lot about the role of gender in the word *Qawwām*. Word *Qawwām* Most interpretations are interpreted as leaders, it is because there are advantages, the advantages in question are physical and the responsibility to provide for themselves. As explained by Tafsir al-Furqān Translating the word *Qawwām* in the verse of QS. al-Nisā' (4): 34 as a regulator, the reason for the leadership of men over women in this commentary is because men have advantages and are obliged to provide for their wives. The advantages in question are strength, courage, determination and accuracy. Furthermore, this interpretation also sees QS. al-Nisā' (4:11) about the advantage lies in the difference in the inheritance of boys and girls. Meanwhile, Tafsir al-Muntakhab explained that the reason for men's leadership over women is because men are given the ability to bear the burden of leadership and are required to try to provide for their families.⁴¹ Al-Thabari and al-Razi also in the commentary explain that *Qawwāmūna* on QS. al-Nisā' (4:34) is the man as the leader of the wife in the household. Then a similar view can also be seen in the tafsir *al-Jalālain*, *Muqātil*, *Rūh al-Bayān*, *al-Baghawī*, *al-Alūsī*, *Fath al-Qādīr*, *Zad al-Misīr*, *al-Biqāi* and *Samarqandī* who interpret the sentences *and because they (men) have provided for some of their wealth*. an obligation to pay dowry, alimony and kifayah which causes the priority of men over women.⁴²

Differences of opinion occurred among Muslim feminists, namely Asghar Ali Engineer and Amina Wadud Muhsin in their analysis of whether the statement of the Qur'an is normative as an absolute rule or contextual, so that the interpretation must be adjusted to the changing situation of the times and culture. They reconstruct the method of interpretation with a feminist hermeneutic approach, namely reading gender verses from a woman's perspective so that patriarchal classical interpretations can be revised into inclusive interpretations and gender equality.⁴³ If it is normative, then male leadership in the household is permanent, certainly a norm that cannot be negotiated anymore. But on the other hand, if it is contextual, then leadership in the household is adjusted to a certain social context. If the social context changes, then the doctrine will automatically change. What does it mean, that it is not absolute that men are the leaders in the household.⁴⁴ This is also supported by Muhammad Abduh in his Tafsir al-Manār that in QS. al-Nisā' (4:34)

⁴¹ Hamka Hasan, *Gender Interpretation: A Comparative Study Between Indonesian and Egyptian Figures*, (Ciputat, 2008), 104.

⁴² Hamka Hasan, *Gender Interpretation of a Comparative Study between Indonesian and Egyptian Figures* (Jakarta: Research and Development Agency and Training of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2009), 198.

⁴³ Reni Dian Anggraini, "Women in the Frame of the Qur'an: Amina Wadud's Interpretation Model," *Ushuluna: Journal of Ushuluddin Science* 8, no. 2 (2022): 95–109, 102, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ushuluna.v8i2.25860>.

⁴⁴ Waryono Muh, *Isnanto, Gender and Islam: Text and Context* (Yogyakarta: PSW UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2009), 68.

does not absolute the leadership of men over women, because the verse does not use the phrase "because Allah has given advantages to men", but uses the phrase "because Allah has given advantage among them over others".⁴⁵

So, what is the meaning *Qawwām* in QS. al-Nisā' (4): 34 using the theory of deconstruction brought by Jacques Derrida? The application of Derrida's deconstruction to the case of gender role balance is not very clearly open overall. The point is that if *Qawwām* in QS. al-Nisā' (4:34) is understood through the theory of deconstruction, so it will not find a point of solution. Why is that, because deconstruction will not justify or blame two groups that are still in dispute *Qawwām* in QS. al-Nisā' (4): 34 but looking for another meaning by looking at the two arguments or opinions that exist. In addition, the application of deconstruction will not find a single or final meaning but will continue to be sustainable. Because in fact, humans are always looking for the truth and will never feel satisfied. So to find the answer, humans will test a problem with a certain method to make a measure of whether the answer he finds is the real truth or not.⁴⁶

Meaning *Qawwām* in the perspective of deconstruction, Derrida can be explained by analytical steps that dismantle the traditional binary understanding between men as "leaders" and women as "followers". Here's how to understand the concept *Qawwām* Through a deconstruction approach:

- 1) Understand traditional and binary texts in the context of *Qawwām*. Verse QS. An-Nisa (4:34) states that "*arrijalu qawwāmūna 'ala an-nisa*," which is often translated as "man is the leader over woman." This traditional understanding views that men are the leaders of the family because they are given advantages (*fadl*), the advantages in question are those that have been explained previously and the responsibility of providing for the family. From these advantages and responsibilities presents a binary formed: Male → Leader → Superior → Active. Meanwhile, women are → led by inferior → passive →. Derrida's deconstruction challenges this hierarchy and attempts to explore alternative meanings of the word *Qawwām* by considering the context and dynamics of meaning.
- 2) Dismantling the Hierarchy of the Meaning of *Qawwām*. In deconstruction, Derrida emphasizes that meaning is never fixed or absolute, but always depends on context and reinterpretation. This narrative is reinforced by the study of Amril & Ridho (2024), which explains that deconstruction is not just a method, but rather a reading event that continues to challenge the structure of binary opposition and highlight the marginal side, opening up new interpretive spaces without holding on to the final meaning.⁴⁷ In the context of Arabic, the word *Qawwām* comes from the root word *qama* which means to stand, support or take care of. This term emphasizes that the role of *qawwām* is not just an authority, but rather a sustaining

⁴⁵ Siti Ruhaini et al Dzuhayanti, *Methodological Reconstruction of the Discourse on Gender Equality in Islam*, (Yogyakarta, PSW UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2002), 124.

⁴⁶ Zanzabil Adwa Fitriani, Ahmad Nasrulloh, and Sigit Nugroho, Islamic Perspectives On the Significance Between Philosophy and Science, *Aqlania: Journal of Islamic Philosophy and Theology* 13, no. 2 (2022), 248.

⁴⁷ Amril M and Muhamad Ridho, "Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction Theory," *Tambusai Education Journal* 8, no. 3 (2024): 49764-49769.

and nurturing function in gender relations, especially in the family.⁴⁸ *Qawwām* indicates the role of a person who is responsible for maintaining balance, not as a ruler or absolute authority. Deconstruction highlights that this responsibility is not a matter of superiority, but a specific function that can shift according to conditions. Viewing *Qawwām* is based on functional meaning, not essential. Men are called *Qawwām* because they spend part of their wealth (according to the context of the verse). The hierarchy between men and women in this verse is dismantled as a conditional division of roles, not nature. Therefore, it is important to look at the existing situation and conditions, because the recent reality of the role of women in various things can be witnessed today.

- 3) Unlocking a new meaning of *Qawwām*. By dismantling traditional hierarchies, the meaning of *Qawwām* can be expanded as a collective responsibility, meaning that men and women can equally play the role of *Qawwām* in the context of the modern family. This concept places the function of *the Qawwām* not as a single authority, but as a joint role involving both parties, tailored to each other's strengths and abilities.⁴⁹ This role depends on ability, not gender alone. For example, in a family where women are the main breadwinners, women can perform *the function of Qawwām*. Then *Qawwām* is also a dynamic principle, meaning that *Qawwām* is not a rigid role, but a dynamic principle that changes according to social and cultural needs. Deconstruction, therefore, views that this responsibility is interchangeable between men and women.
- 4) Deconstruction of *Fadl* values (excesses). In QS. al-Nisā' (4:34) is said to "*put some of them above others.*" In deconstruction: *Fadl* (excess) does not mean the absolute superiority of men over women. These advantages can be interpreted as specific advantages (such as physical strength or economic responsibility in the context of traditional societies), which are not always relevant in today's modern context. Deconstruction shows that excess can change according to the context. In different contexts, women can have certain advantages that make them *Qawwām*. The *position of the Qawwām* is relative; just as physical superiority or ratio is not absolute, it is the social context and the function imposed that determines a person's suitability as a ruler, regardless of gender.⁵⁰
- 5) The implication of *Qawwām* with the deconstruction approach is that *Qawwām* is no longer interpreted in a binary and hierarchical manner, but equality in roles. Men and women alike have the capacity to become *Qawwām* based on their responsibilities and abilities. *Qawwām* is a situation-dependent relational responsibility. It is not a fixed position attached to a particular gender. In modern society, the division of responsibilities between men and women does not always

⁴⁸ Deswanti Nabilah Putri, Wildan Taufiq, and Ahmad Izzan, "Women's Leadership in Tafsir At-Tabari and Tafsir Al-Mishbāh," *Mashadiruna Journal of Qur'an Science and Tafsir* 3, no. 1 (2024): 61–74, 68, <https://doi.org/10.15575/mjiat.v3i1.33962>.

⁴⁹ Wardah Nuroniyah, The Concept of *Qiwamah* and the Phenomenon of Women as the Head of the Family, *Equality* 4, no. 1 (2022): 113–135.

⁵⁰ Laelati Dwina Apriani, Muhamad Iqbal Mustofa, and Eni Zulaiha, "Reinterpretation of Abortion: A Feminist Interpretation Study of Women's Reproductive Health Rights," *Ta'wiluna: Journal of Qur'anic Knowledge, Tafsir and Islamic Thought* 5, no. 3 (2024): 595–606, 600, <https://doi.org/10.58401/takwiluna.v5i3.1783>.

have to follow a traditional pattern. Modern family institutions demand a redistribution of responsibilities if women have a major role in the maintenance or management of the household, then logically they can also become *Qawwām* within the framework of Islamic principles of justice.⁵¹ Therefore, the verses that are the author's research become a moral guide to carry out the role with justice, not to establish a fixed hierarchy.

If regular readings are related to *Qawwām* (leadership in the household) always seeks the true meaning or the most correct. Therefore, deconstruction criticizes such a point of view, because in every text there is some invisible or hidden meaning behind it. Therefore, through this theory we will be able to find out the text about *Qawwām* (leadership in the household) is no longer a complete order but a place of struggle that has been opened. In deconstruction, the meaning is not one or even final, but the meaning will always increase and change according to the reader's reading by looking at the existing situation and conditions. If the meaning *Qawwām* interpreted singularly or final as a male leader for women, then deconstruction will dismantle that meaning *Qawwām* It does not only mean a leader but has many meanings and will continue to change according to the reality of existing conditions.

Therefore, the author sees using the theory of deconstruction brought by Jacques Derrida that the balance of gender roles with meaning *Qawwām* Not only does it have the meaning of being a leader, but it can be a helper, protector, role model, and so on. Derrida's deconstruction opens up space for interpreting the word *Qawwām* dynamically, flexibly, and contextually. Meaning *Qawwām* It is no longer a matter of who is superior or inferior, but a matter of responsibility that anyone can bear based on their ability and condition. This allows for the reinterpretation of gender verses in the Qur'an to answer the challenges of a more just and inclusive modern society. As an ever-evolving framework of thought, deconstruction drives a redefinition of meaning *Qawwām* who are not stuck in a rigid hierarchy. The support of contemporary Islamic studies affirms that the meaning of *Qawwām* should consider the social, economic, and cultural context, not just a literal interpretation. Studies such as Deconstruction of Meaning *Qawwāmūna* in the Context of Modern Gender Relations affirms that *Qawwām* It can be interpreted as a competency-based responsibility manager, not just domination.⁵² Other semantic and historical approaches assert that the word *Qawwām* It does not automatically mean a superior leader, but rather an enforcer of justice a role that anyone can carry out within the framework of shared responsibility. Thus, the interpretation of *Qawwām* through the lens of deconstruction allows for a more equitable, inclusive, and responsive interpretation of the Qur'an to the challenges of the times.

⁵¹ Fauzan Azizan, "Gender and the Polemic of Family Institutions: A Critical Study of the Islamic Worldview," *Qawwam: Journal for Gender Mainstreaming* 16, no. 1 (2022): 28, 32, <https://doi.org/10.20414/qawwam.v16i1.5282>.

⁵² Adrika Fithrotul Aini, "Contextual Interpretation of Qur'an Verses on the Relationship between Men and Women," *Al-Mada: Religious, Social, and Cultural Journal* 4, no. 1 (2021): 92–109, 97, <https://doi.org/10.31538/almada.v4i1.1125>.

Conclusion

The meaning of *Qawwām* with the theory using Derrida's deconstruction, can be described as a concept that has a binary opposition (male as leader and female as lead). Derrida's deconstruction seeks to show that how this meaning is not fixed, but rather depends on the social, cultural, and linguistic context that frames it or with the words that surround it. For example, when the husband does not fulfill his *Qawwām* function (such as failing to provide for himself), then women often take on similar roles, which shows the flexibility of this concept in the practice of life. The deconstruction brought by Derrida, can reveal that the term *Qawwām* does not necessarily refer to male superiority, but rather to a situational division of roles. Thus, the relationship between husband and wife can be seen as a dynamic partnership that complements each other, not hierarchical. This perspective opens up space for the reinterpretation of the verse in the context of gender equality that is more inclusive.

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