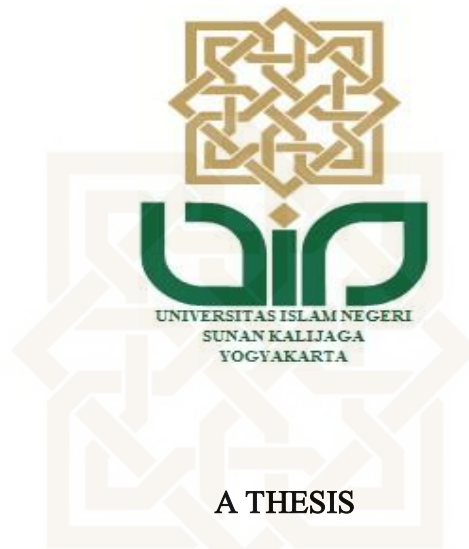


**ASMA BARLAS AND ABDULLAH SAEED'S QUR'ANIC  
INTERPRETATIONS: A STUDY OF HUSBAND'S AUTHORITY OVER HIS  
WIFE**



**A THESIS**

**SUBMITTED TO FACULTY OF USHULUDDIN AND ISLAMIC THOUGHT  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR OBTAINING BACHELOR DEGREE OF  
SARJANA AGAMA (S.Ag)**

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SUNAN KALIJAGA STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY  
YOGYAKARTA**

**2018**

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Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought  
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in - Yogyakarta

*Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh*

After having read, researched, and revised to whatever extent is necessary, we, as supervisor, hereby agree that this thesis:

Author : MUHAMMAD LUTHFI DHULKIFLI  
Student Number : 14530069  
Title : Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed Qur'anic  
Interpretations: A Study of Husband's Authority Over His  
Wife

Could be submitted in a partial fulfilment of requirements to obtain a bachelor degree in Qur'anic Sciences and Tafsir, and be defended immediately.

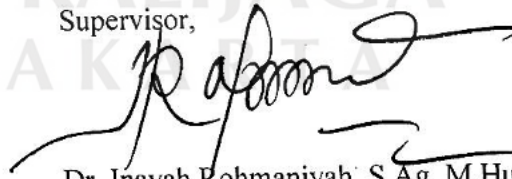
We thank for your attention.

*Wassalamu'alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatuh*

STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY  
SUNAN KALIJAGA  
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Yogyakarta, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018

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## STATEMENT

I hereby declare that this thesis has never been submitted to obtain a degree at any other university, and to my knowledge does not contain the work or opinion ever written or published by others, except the writing which is clearly referred to in this manuscript and mentioned in the bibliography.

Yogyakarta, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018

Signed



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**APPROVAL PAGE**

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MOTTO :

*“With Allah by Your Side Nothing is Impossible”*

K. H. M. Halimi Musta'in. Lc, AH (September, 2015)

*“Keep Up the Good Work”*

Abdullah Saeed to me (April, 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016)



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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

The best woman whom I've (*ever and forever*) found in this world, My mother

All the best for you...

I believe you're in the arm of the angel,

May you find some comfort there...

*In memoriam, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006.*



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8. For my great teachers: K.H.R. Muhammad Najib A.Q AH and his wife: the most humble teacher that I've ever met; K.H.M Halimi Musta'in Lc AH and his wife: my first teacher who brings me to the 'another level'.
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16. Everyone who makes sense in my life: May Allah give all the best and guide us, Aamiin.

Yogyakarta, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

Muhammad Luthfi Dhulkifli

## TRANSLITERATION

This thesis uses the transliteration's system of Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education and Culture, Republic of Indonesia, No. 158, Year 1987 and No. 0543b/U/1987.

### Letters of The Alphabet

Letter	Romanization	Letter	Romanization
ا	Not Symbolized	ض	ḍ
ب	b	ط	t
ت	t	ظ	ẓ
ث	ṯ	ع	'(ayn)
ج	j	غ	g
ح	ḥ	ف	f
خ	kh	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	ẓ	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	و	w
ش	sy	ه	h
ص	ṣ	ي	y

### Vowels and Diphthongs

Short Fathāḥ = a	Fathāḥ + alif = ā	Kasrah + ya' = ī
Short Kasrah = i	Fathāḥ + ya' = ā	Alif + wawu = au
Short Ḍammah = u	Ḍammah + wawu = ū	Alif + ya' = ai

### General Rules:

1. Alif lam ( ال ) is written by *al-* with the following word for example: القرآن *al-Qur'ān*. The definite article is always romanized *al-*, whether is it followed by a “sun letter” or not.
2. *Hamzah* in the initial position is not romanized; when medial or final it is romanized (‘), e.g. مسألة , *mas'alah*, خطي , *khaṭī'a*.
3. *Ta' marbūṭah*: in the end of the word by: *h*, e.g. صلاة , *ṣalāh*, الرسالة البهية , *al-Risālah al-bahiyyah*.
4. Consecutive short vowel in a word is separated by apostrophe e.g. أَنْتُمْ *a'antum*.
5. *Tasydīd* is romanized by doubling the letter e.g. عِدَّة *'iddah*.

## ABSTRACT

The interpretation of Q. 4:34 is a crucial point in relation to husband's authority over his wife in the family matter. The classical and textual interpretation of Q. 4:34 that supported by Sayyid Quṭb, Ibnu Kaṣīr, al-Jaṣāṣ, and al-Zamakhshari give husband's authority over his wife. For some contemporary scholars, these interpretations are textual and indicated as bias against women. Therefore, it needs an appropriate methodological framework to reinterpret Q. 4:34 in the Muslim context today. Among some contemporary scholars, Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed suggest an appropriate method on reading Q. 4:34. Barlas focuses on recovering egalitarian voice of Islam and Saeed suggests a contextual approach. Barlas and Saeed's approaches of reading Q. 4:34 was aimed to debate the classical interpretation that relies only on linguistic approach and is considered bias against women.

This research focuses on Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed Qur'anic interpretations as the representation of the contemporary scholars with their modern approaches. It is a comparative library research. The primary data includes Asma Barlas' book on *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* and Abdullah Saeed's book on *Interpreting the Qur'an: Toward Contemporary Approach and Reading the Qur'an in the Twenty-First Century: A Contemporary Approach*. This research analyzes Barlas and Saeed's interpretation of Q. 4:34 in case of husband's authority over his wife based on Max Weber and Khaled Abou Fadl authority's framework. In concern to the authority discussion, these frameworks give a deep exploration of husband's authority of Q. 4:34. At the end, this research try to analyze Barlas and Saeed's frame understanding of Q. 4:34 on Gadamer's hermeneutic concept.

This research concludes that Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed reject the traditional and coercive authorities within the patriarchal culture of the early Muslim period. They also reject the idea of charismatic authority as there is no parallel relation between God and husband. They share the interpretation of husband's obligation to provide economic resources for the family. According to them, equal authority should be the principle to create a mutual relationship between husband and wife in the family. Although Barlas and Saeed have a similar argument on authority's framework, they use a different approach to understand Q. 4:34. Barlas did not refer to pre-modern Qur'anic commentaries like Saeed did. Otherwise, Saeed who masters Arabic used several Qur'anic commentaries to cover his interpretation. From the hermeneutic perspective, the rule of Islamization in Pakistan during 1980 and being highly educated woman in the United States encourage Barlas to struggle for women's right. Meanwhile, Saeed's critical method of Qur'anic reading was developed since his move to Australia and Fazlur Rahman inspires most of the content of his book.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Research Background

In a marriage relationship, the husband and wife should be able to protect each other. Quoting some great commentators of the Qur'an such as al-Ṭabari, al-Gazali, and al-Rāzi, Quraish Shihab emphasize principles of equal responsibilities in the marriage.<sup>1</sup> A married couple shares a responsibility to build a harmonious life with truth, justice, and equality. Within this responsibility, a harmonious relationship built on love and mercy emerges.<sup>2</sup> The harmonious relationship plays a significant role to avoid divorce, particularly relating to husband's authority over his wife.

The husband's authority over his wife disrupts the marriage relationship and often lead to divorce. The Directorate General of the Religious Courts (*Badilag*) shows a high percentage of the divorce case and

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<sup>1</sup> The Qur'an suggests the husband to *ma'rūf* toward his wife for getting a degree (*darajah*). The husband behavior over his wife should be well-treating with a patience in her anger and full of politeness. It is necessary for the spouse to respect each other. See Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'an: Tafsir Maudhu'i Atas Berbagai Persoalan Umat*, (Bandung: IKAPI, 1996), page 209.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Qur'an prefers men and women to marry (Q. 4:25), bring with harmony (Q 4:128), and built with love and mercy (Q. 20:21). Furthermore, the marriage tie is considered to protection between men and women (Q. 2:187). See Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), page 78. See also Kecia Ali, "Marriage" in Oliver Leaman (ed), *The Qur'an: an Encyclopedia*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), page 389-390.

nearly 70 percent are proposed by wives.<sup>3</sup> The most common reason for the divorce is a disharmonious relationship, resulted from husband's authority over his wife.<sup>4</sup> It relates to the wife's submission under her husband's power.

There are three factors contribute to divorce that related to husband's authority over his wife: *first*, the existence of patriarchal culture, *second*, the unequal power of the family and *third*, patriarchal readings of the Qur'anic verse.<sup>5</sup> One of the patriarchal readings is the interpretation of Q. 4:34.<sup>6</sup>

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ

---

<sup>3</sup> The divorce proposed by wives commonly known as “*Cerai Gugat*” in Indonesian law. “*Cerai Gugat*” is asserted to maintain a superior right of the husband in an act of divorce. The words *cerai gugat* imply that a wife cannot divorce her husband but instead can only ask her husband to divorce her. See Euis Nurlaelawati, *Modernization, Tradition, and Identity: The Kompilasi Hukum Islam and Legal Practice in the Indonesian Religious Court*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010) page 121.

<sup>4</sup> The various reasons for divorcement by wives are disharmonic relations, disresponsibilities, dishonest, and economic factors. The comparison of women filed are 268.381 cases and men filed are 113.850 cases in 2014. See Kementerian Agama RI, *Ketika Perempuan Bersikap: Tren Cerai Gugat Masyarakat Muslim*, (Jakarta: Puslitbang Kehidupan Keagamaan, 2016) page 3.

<sup>5</sup> Most of the Indonesian wives were taught to submit, silent, and devote their lives to the well-being of the family. In Indonesian patriarchal society, men were the acknowledges heads of the households. The women just accepting their fate and accentuate to the domestic sphere. Although education was valued for women, marriage and raising a family was still seen as their primary life. See Fatahillah A. Syukur, *Mediasi Perkara KDRT (Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga) Teori dan Praktek di Pengadilan Indonesia*, (Bandung: Mandar Maju, 2011) page 26-36.

<sup>6</sup> Out of a total of 6.000 verses in the Qur'an, it has been argued that only six establish some kind of man's authority over women. One of the most critical Qur'anic passages is Q. 4:34. Shaheen Sardar Ali identifies the verses that indicated establish man's authority: Q. 2:221, 2:228, 2:282, Q. 4:3, 4:34, and Q. 24:30. See on Judith E Tucker, *Women, Family, and Gender in Islamic Law*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) page 24.

نُشُورَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا  
عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلاً إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيماً كَبِيراً

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient and guard in (the husband’s) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (Next) refuse to share their beds, (And last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all)”.<sup>7</sup>

Sayyid Quṭb interprets Q. 4:34 by providing husband privilege for being the leader for the wife.<sup>8</sup> Some commentators of the Qur’an such as Ibnu Kaṣīr<sup>9</sup>, al-Jaṣāṣ<sup>10</sup>, and al-Zamakhsyari<sup>11</sup> also give the similar interpretation of wife’s inferiority toward her husband. In fact, these interpretations are textual and bias against women. Women are constructed in the texts as

<sup>7</sup> Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur’an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, Volume One (Cambridge: The Murray Printing Company, 1946) page 190.

<sup>8</sup> Sayyid Quṭb restricts Q. 4:34 in husband and wife relationship. See Amina Wadud, *Qur’an and Woman*, page 72 and Sayyid Quṭb, *Tafsīr Fī Zīlāl al-Qur’an*, (Beirut: Dar al-Tashrūq, 1412 H) part 2 page 650 in Maktabah Syamilah al-Rawdah 3.48.

<sup>9</sup> The men are maintainers of his wife because they are stronger and better than the women, see Ibnu Kaṣīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur’an Al-‘Aẓīm*, (Kairo: Dar Ṭayyibah li al-Naṣr wa al-Tauzi’, 1999) part 4 page 20.

<sup>10</sup> God was preferred men over the women. Therefore, a wife must obey her husband because See Al-Jaṣāṣ, *Aḥkām Al-Qur’an*, First Edition (Beirut: Dar Iḥya’ al-Turaṣ al-‘Arabī, 2000) part 3 page 148 in Maktabah Syamilah al-Rawdah 3.48.

<sup>11</sup> Zamakhsyari argues that “Men are in the charge of the affairs of the women”. See Zamakhsyari, *al-Kasyāf*, (Riyadh: 1998) part 2 page 67. See also Amina Wadud, *Qur’an and Woman*, page 71.

deficient and under husband's authority.<sup>12</sup> As Amina Wadud argues, any interpretation which narrowly applies the Qur'anic guidelines only on the textual interpretation does injustice to the text.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, it needs an appropriate methodological framework to understand Q. 4:34 in the Muslim context today.

Some contemporary scholars such as Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed offers an appropriate methodological framework in order to understand Q. 4:34. For Barlas and Saeed, the classical interpretation of Q. 4:34 is not relevant to contemporary concerns and situations. Both Barlas and Saeed try to challenge the classical interpretation of Q. 4:34 to protect women's rights more adequately. Barlas and Saeed suggest different approaches on reading Q. 4:34. Barlas focuses on recovering the liberating and egalitarian voice of Islam. On the other hand, Saeed suggests a contextual approach in the light of the context which was revealed, interpreted, and applied. Barlas and Saeed's approaches of reading Q. 4:34 was concentrated to debate the classical interpretation that normative and is considered bias against women.

---

<sup>12</sup> The early commentators of the Qur'an often impute superior intellectual capacity to men when reading Q. 4:34 by expressing in terms of men's purportedly greater "knowledge (*'ilm*) and discernment (*tamyīz*), intelligence (*'aql*) and managerial abilities, or capacity to make judgments. See Aisha Geissinger, *Gender and Muslims Constructions of Exegetical Authority: A rereading of Classical Genre of Qur'an Commentary*, (Leiden: Brill, 2015) page 43-44.

<sup>13</sup> Amina Wadud, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) page 199.



Asma Barlas examines the Qur'anic classical interpretations which are indicated as bias against women in Western philosophical style. Barlas is a Muslim woman scholar who had been engaged in a study of women's issues from a non-patriarchal Qur'anic framework. On the other hand, Abdullah Saeed is categorized as a contemporary Muslim scholar who holds a strategic position on advocating the method of Western style but has a personal devotion to the classical interpretation of Qur'an. Basically, Barlas and Saeed's two different methods of Qur'anic reading was constructed from horizons that frame their understanding.

#### **B. Research Questions**

Considering the research background, several questions arise:

1. What is the interpretation of Q. 4:34 according to Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed in case of husband's authority over his wife?
2. What is the analysis of Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed's interpretation of Q. 4:34?

#### **C. Research Objectives**

This research is expected to:

1. Understand the interpretation of Q. 4:34 and its relation to the discussion of husband's authority over his wife.
2. Analyze Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed's construction that frame their interpretation of Q. 4:34.

The result of this research will have both academic and practical contributions. Academically, it contributes to the contemporary discourse of Qur'anic studies. It will also be a reference for some academic research, especially in the discussion of Islamic modern thinkers and critical literature studies. Practically, this thesis submitted for obtaining a bachelor degree from the department of Qur'an and Tafsir studies, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga.

#### D. Review of Previous Works

The purpose of a prior research review is to help researcher familiar with the work that has already been conducted in the selected topic areas.<sup>14</sup> There were many numbers of familiar research that will divide into three parts:

##### 1. Research on Women and Qur'anic interpretations

Eva Meizara and Basti *on their article analyze the differences in the intensity of marital conflict on married couples who live together and living separately. This article uses the quantitative method with 74 samplings of wives.*<sup>15</sup> The next, Dien Sumiyatningsih observes the practice of article 34 of Marriage Laws No.1/1974 that associated with

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<sup>14</sup> Geoffrey R. Marczyk (ed), *Essentials of Research Design and Methodology*, (New Jersey: John Wiley & Son Inc, 2005) page 33.

<sup>15</sup> Eva Meizara and Basti "Konflik Perkawinan dan Model Penyelesaian Konflik Pada Pasangan Suami Istri" *Psikologi*, Vol 2 No 1 December 2008.

child nurturing from gender equity.<sup>16</sup> Another research is Nurhasanah and Rozalinda's work that showed the divorce case by woman proposed in Padang religious court that has a significantly increased around 62 - 67 percent in all case and the factors influencing.<sup>17</sup>

In relation to the Qur'anic interpretations, there is Manuela Marin's article. Marin shows that the assumption of male superiority and the necessity to discipline deviant wives are assumptions common to all diversity approach of Q. 4:34. This diversity reflects the fluid and sometimes conflicting nature of scholarly debates that reveal unexpected views of social practices in Islamic societies.<sup>18</sup> Also in arguing Q. 4:34, there is Shannon Dunn and Rosemary B. Kellison that identify a debate among Qur'anic interpreters, as premodern and contemporary scholars argue for and against the use of individual reason (*ijtihad*) in their rulings dealing with the role and status of women.<sup>19</sup> The last, there is a thesis of Muammar Zayn Qadafi shows Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd's feminist thought

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<sup>16</sup> Dien Sumiyatningsih, "Pergeseran Peran Laki-laki Dan Perempuan Dalam Kajian Feminis" *Waskita Journal* of Satya Wacana Christian University.

<sup>17</sup> Nurhasanah and Rozalinda, "Persepsi Perempuan Terhadap Perceraian: Studi Analisis Terhadap Meningkatnya Angka Gugatan Cerai Di Pengadilan Agama Padang" *Jurnal Ilmiah Kajian Gender*, Vol 4 No 2 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Manuela Marin, "Disciplining Wives: A Historical Reading of Qur'an 4:34", *Studi Islamica*, No 97, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Shannon Dunn and Rosemary B. Kellison, "At the Intersection of Scripture and Law: Qur'an 4:34 and Violence Against Women", *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol 26, No 2, Fall 2010.

such women witness, leadership, inheritance, and a balanced principle of men and women.<sup>20</sup>

## 2. Research on Asma Barlas

Fauziyah in his article concluded that according to Barlas, the family is not a patriarchal concept because it is not about the privilege or power of men.<sup>21</sup> Ahmad Shadiq on his said that Barlas' construction of woman liberation readings is a proof that Qur'an is an anti-patriarchy book.<sup>22</sup> Nurkhalis' article gives a glimpse of hermeneutic discussion by some modern scholars included Asma Barlas that has led the development of Qur'anic interpretation.<sup>23</sup> Vanessa Rivera in his article discusses a feminist hermeneutics in an effort to establish discourse of gender justice from Muslim women's voice.<sup>24</sup> Then, Aysha A. Hidayatullah gives some arguments on the Qur'anic reinterpretation in order to recover principles

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<sup>20</sup> Mu'ammarr Zayn Qadafy, "A Study on Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd's Qur'anic Principle of Gender Equality" Thesis of Faculty of Ushuluddin Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Fauziyah, "Egalitarianisme Dalam Keluarga Menurut Al-Qur'an: Studi Pemikiran Barlas Barlas terhadap QS al-Nisā' Ayat 1" *Palastren*, Vol 1 No 2 December 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Ahmad Shadiq, "Membebaskan Perempuan dari Patriarki: Analisis Normativitas-Historisitas Pemikiran Asma Barlas" Thesis of Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Thought Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University Yogyakarta, 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Nurkhalis, "Diskursus Hermeneutik dalam Paradigma Keislaman dan Kemodernan" *Substansia*, Vol 17 No 1 April 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Vanessa Rivera De La Fuente, "Feminist Hermeneutics of the Qur'an and Epistemic Justice" *Analyze Journal of Gender and Feminist Studies*, No 4, 2015.

of male-female equality by studying the works of Riffat Hassan, Azizah Al-Hibri, Amina Wadud, and Asma Barlas.<sup>25</sup>

### 3. Research on Abdullah Saeed

A large number of Abdullah Saeed's thought are made in journal, thesis, article, news, or book review. Some found writing is Lien Iffah Naf'atu Fina's research. This research shows Abdullah Saeed's effort in developing a contextual interpretation. Although the ideas are inspired by Fazlur Rahman, Saeed has completed the issues with determining the universal and particular meaning.<sup>26</sup> The next, Aan Najib explores the methodology of contextual approach by Abdullah Saeed and particularly his hierarchy-values concept.<sup>27</sup> Also in the discussion of Abdullah Saeed's method, Shahzadi Pakezaa and Ashgar Ali Chishti gives a highlight of some modern approaches and particularly Abdullah Saeed's thought to reach the more relevant understanding of Qur'an.<sup>28</sup> The last, thesis of

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<sup>25</sup> Aysha A. Hidayatullah, "Feminist Interpretation of the Qur'an in a Comparative Feminist Setting", *Journal of Feminist Studies of Religion*, Vol 30, No 2, Fall 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Lien Iffah Naf'atu Fina, "Interpretasi Kontekstual Abdullah Saeed: Sebuah Penyempurnaan Terhadap Gagasan Tafsir Fazlur Rahman" *Hermeneutik*, Vol 9 No 1 June 2015.

<sup>27</sup> Aan Najib, "Contextual Qur'anic Interpretation: The Study on Concept of "Hierarchy of Values" Abdullah Saeed", *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture*, Vol 4 No 2 December 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Shahzadi Pakezaa and Ashgar Ali Chishti, "Critical Study of Approaches to the Exegesis of the Holy Qur'an", *Pakistan Journal of Islamic Research*, Vol 10, 2012.

Ahmad Rizza Habibi concluded that reorientation through Q. 4:34 can be applied by both husband and wife for the leadership of the family.<sup>29</sup>

There are several reasons why this research is something new and give the contribution of knowledge. *First*, this research will analyze from the perspective of authority's framework and the Qur'anic interpretation. *Second*, this research will directly combine (or compare) Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed's Qur'anic interpretation that has never been conducted.

#### E. Theoretical Framework

The function of theory is to rich a source of hypotheses that can be examined empirically. This theory brings the researcher to an important point that should not be glossed over.<sup>30</sup> This research will use two theories: The first theory uses to analyze the interpretation of Q. 4:34. The second theory uses to explore of Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed's background of Qur'anic reading.

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<sup>29</sup> Ahmad Rizza Habibi, "Reorientation of Rights and Duties of Husband and Wife (Analytical Studies of Compilation of Islamic Law on Abdullah Saeed's Progressive Islamic Thought)", Thesis Faculty of Syari'ah State Islamic University Maulana Malik Ibrahim, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> Geoffrey R. Marczyk (ed), *Essentials of Research Design and Methodology*, page 31.



## 1. Theory of Authority

Authority is the power or right to give orders and make others obey.<sup>31</sup> The concept of authority is clearly attested in the Qur'an but is not imparted by a single term or expression. The most common Arabic word for authority is *sulṭān*. *Sulṭān* occur frequently in the Qur'an, although solely as a verbal noun with an abstract sense. According to the classical exegetes, *sulṭān* denotes the meaning of “proof ” or “argument”.<sup>32</sup> *Sulṭān* only occasionally seems to mean authority and mostly in association with “proof”. Other terms which denote some form of authority are *quwwa* (power)<sup>33</sup>, *amr* (command)<sup>34</sup>, *ḥukm* ( judgment or decision)<sup>35</sup> and *mulk* (sovereignty, possession or power)<sup>36</sup>. With the

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<sup>31</sup> AS Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974) page 51.

<sup>32</sup> *Sulṭān* occurs thirty-three times in the Qur'an. This term most commonly signifies proof or evidence to support the prophets' positions and arguments. *sulṭān* refers to ultimate and absolute authority. It is also a title of the ruler who possesses and exercises absolute authority, power, and dominion. See Rafik Berjak, “*Burhān, Baina, Sulṭān*” in Oliver Leaman, *The Qur'an: an Encyclopedia*, (New York: Routledge, 2006) page 126.

<sup>33</sup> Some meaning of *quwwa* are strength, vigor, potency, power, force, violence, ability, capability and so on. See Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, Third Edition, (New York: Spoken Language Service Inc, 1976) page 802.

<sup>34</sup> *Amr* means order, authority, instruction, power, decree, ordinance, and many more. See on See Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, page 26.

<sup>35</sup> *Ḥukm* also means regulation, rule, provision, order, command, authority, control, power, regime, and so on. See Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, page 196.

exception of Q. 4:59,<sup>37</sup> which might hint at political authority, the authority with which the Qur'an concerned is essentially religious with credal, theological, legal, eschatological and moral implications.<sup>38</sup>

Max Weber defined authority as legitimacy exercised power. Authority is a part of the power which is included command and control. Weber distinguishes authority into three types i.e legal, traditional, and charismatic authority.<sup>39</sup> *First*, Legal authority based on a belief in the legality of impersonal rules and in the procedures for making and applying rules. *Second*, Traditional authority rest on habitual attitudes and beliefs in the legitimacy of standardized and sanctified practices.

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<sup>36</sup> *Mulk* means rule, domination, supreme authority, power, kingship, holding, the right of possession, and so on. See Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, page 922.

<sup>37</sup> Q. 4:59: O ye who believe! Obey God, and obey the Apostle, And those charged With authority among you. If ye differ in anything Among, yourselves, refer it To God and His Apostle, If ye do believe in God And the Last Day: That is best, and most suitable For final determination. This verse obliges Muslims to obey two things: first, they must obey God; second, they must obey the Messenger and those vested with authority (*ulū al-amr*). The arrangement of the words shows that the obedience of *ulū al-amr* might be regarded as having the same status and being as much obligatory as is the obedience to the Messenger because the Qur'an uses just one verb for both of them without repeating that verb. See Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, page 198. See also Oliver Leaman, *The Qur'an: an Encyclopedia*, page 378

<sup>38</sup> Wadad Kadi, "Authority" in Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed), *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, Volume One (Brill: Leiden, 2001) page 187-188. See also Mustansir Mir, *Dictionary of Qur'anic Terms and Concepts*, (New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1987), page 22-23.

<sup>39</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (ed) (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978) page 215. See also Bryan S Turner, *Max Weber Classic Monograph Volume VII: Weber and Islam*, (New York: Routledge, 1998) page 23.

*Third*, Charismatic authority is an unstable dynamism not to rules or traditions, but to a person of imputed holiness, heroism or some extraordinary quality. Legal and traditional authority is a stable and continuing relationship, but a charisma is short lived.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, Khaled Abou Fadl divided authority into two parts: a coercive authority and a persuasive authority. Coercive authority is the ability to direct the conduct of another person to comply with the use of inducement, threat, or punishment so the people have no choice.<sup>41</sup> Persuasive authority is the ability to direct the conduct of person because of trust. Persuasive authority does not mean the complete surrender of judgment or an unconditional surrender of autonomy. Otherwise, the complete surrender of judgment or autonomy often turns into a coercive authority.<sup>42</sup>

## 2. Theory of Gadamer's Hermeneutics

The hermeneutic concepts of Gadamer are: historically effected consciousness, pre-understanding, fusion of horizons, and application.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Bryan S Turner, *Weber and Islam*, page 23.

<sup>41</sup> Khaled Abou Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority, and Women*, (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001) page 51.

<sup>42</sup> Khaled Abou Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name*, page 56.

<sup>43</sup> This classification considers on Sahiron Syamsuddin argument. Gadamer does not give a specific description to interpret the text. Gadamer does not want to bring hermeneutic in every social disciplinary subject as a universal idea. For Gadamer, the focus of philosophy is common sense, basic, and principle material. Then, Gadamer gives a discussion about specific methods to the expert in every single subject. See Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an*, (Yogyakarta: Pesantren Nawesea Press, 2017), page 78-84.

*First*, historically effected consciousness (*Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*) is primarily consciousness of the hermeneutical situation. The effective history is work when we learn to understand ourselves and recognize it in all understanding, whether we are expressly aware of it or not.<sup>44</sup> The interpreter's understanding depends on the hermeneutical situation such tradition, culture, social or life experience.

*Second*, pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*). Pre-understanding is the first step of the interpreter when reading a text. The importance of pre-understanding is to dialogue between the interpreter and the text.<sup>45</sup>

*Third*, fusion of horizons (*Horizont-vershmelzung*). The horizon is something into which we move and that moves with us. Horizons change for a person who is moving. The horizon in which the person understand lives and the historical horizon which he places is always in motion.<sup>46</sup> The interpreter must conscious that the interpreter is at the intersection of the horizon of text and horizon of the reader.

*Fourth*, application (*Anwendung*) is the hermeneutical problem between the inner fusion of understanding and interpretation. The application should be an integral part of the hermeneutical process as the

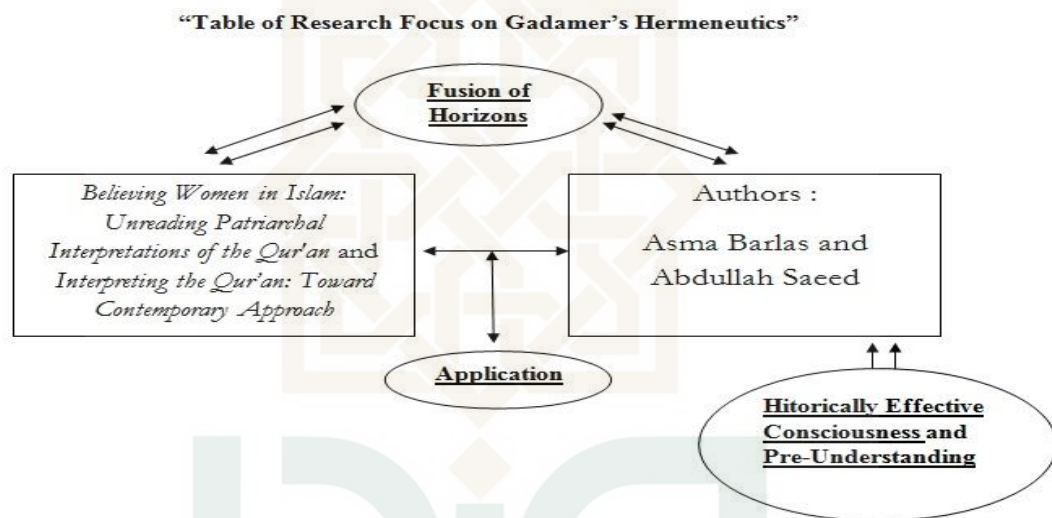
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<sup>44</sup> Hans-George Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Revised Edition (London: Continuum, 2004) page 300.

<sup>45</sup> Sahiron Syamsuddin, *Hermeneutika dan Pengembangan Ulumul Qur'an*, page 80.

<sup>46</sup> Hans-George Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, page 303.

understanding and interpretation.<sup>47</sup> This theory will apply the text to be understood to the interpreter's present situation. Regarding the large discussion of application, this research concern to see the historical background, pre-understanding, and horizons of the scholars that influence the result of their interpretation.



## F. Research Methodology

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problems.<sup>48</sup> The methodology of this research covered:

### 1. Research Design

This research is comparative research. It works with data already available and analyzes it to make a critical evaluation.

<sup>47</sup> Hans-George Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, page 306-307.

<sup>48</sup> C. R. Khotari, *Research Methodology: Method and Techniques*, Second Revised Edition, (New Delhi: New Age International Publisher, 2004) page 8.

## 2. Types of Data

There are a primary data source and secondary data source. The primary data includes books of Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed i.e *Believing Woman in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretation of the Qur'an*, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* and *Reading the Qur'an in the Twenty-First Century: A Contemporary Approach*.

The secondary data are books and articles related to Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed's Qur'anic interpretation. Barlas' article includes Qur'anic Hermeneutics and Social politics; Women's Reading in the Qur'an; The Qur'an and Hermeneutics: Reading the Qur'an's Opposition to Patriarchy. Saeed's books and articles include *The Qur'an: an Introduction*; *Islam in Australia*; *Contextualizing*; *Reading the Qur'an*; and *Some Reflections on the Contextualist Approach to the Ethico-Legal Text of the Qur'an*.

## 3. Data Accumulation Techniques

The analysis process of this research are: *first*, choose the material object which is Asma Barlas with a book on *Believing Woman in Islam* and Abdullah Saeed with a book on *Interpreting the Qur'an*. *Second*, analyze Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed's interpretation of the authority concepts of Max Weber and Khaled Abou Fadl. *Third*, identify both figures interpretation on the Gadamer's hermeneutic concept.



#### 4. Technique of Data Analysis

The process of data analysis is holistic that the researcher observed and studied to understand as the complete entity.<sup>49</sup> This research analyzes through an *integrated comparative method*.<sup>50</sup> It compares the data in an integrated mode to give a dialectic and communicative research.

#### 5. Chapter Organization

This research will be divided into five chapters: the first chapter is an introduction, including research background; research problems; the objection of research; prior research to see the difference between the others; theoretical framework as a basic research; research methodology; and data analysis techniques.

The second chapter talks about the short life background and conceptual interpretation of Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed. Chapter three covers Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed's interpretation of Q. 4:34 and its connection to the authority concepts.

Chapter four traces the dialectical process of Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed's interpretation in Gadamer's hermeneutics. The last, chapter five contains a conclusion and the importance of this research. It will also contain a recommendation for readers to the next research.

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<sup>49</sup> Piergiorgio Corbetta, *Social Research: Theory, Methods, and Techniques*, (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2003) page 281.

<sup>50</sup> Abdul Mustaqim, *Metode Penelitian Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir*, (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2014) page 134.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### A. Conclusion

1. Asma Barlas and Abdullah Saeed reject the traditional and coercive authorities within the patriarchal culture of the early Muslim period. Barlas and Saeed also reject the idea of charismatic authority as there is no parallel relation between God and husband. They share the interpretation of husband's obligation to provide economic resources for the family. For them, equal authority should be the principle to create a mutual relationship between husband and wife in the family. Nevertheless, Barlas and Saeed use a different approach on understanding Q. 4:34. Barlas did not refer to pre-modern Qur'anic commentaries like Saeed did. Otherwise, Saeed who masters Arabic used several Qur'anic commentaries to cover his interpretation. This approach leads to an assumption that Barlas is less capable of Islamic studies.
2. From the hermeneutic perspective, the rule of Islamization in Pakistan during 1980 and being highly educated woman in the United States encourage Barlas to struggle for women's right. Barlas has no traditional background in Islamic studies and got her ideas from numerous women Muslim intellectuals in the contemporary period. Her major on philosophy brings about an interpretive insight of Paul Ricoeur who argued that all texts are open for liberating interpretation. That is why

Barlas uses the liberation concept of reading the Qur'an. Meanwhile, Saeed's critical method of Qur'anic reading was developed since his move to Australia. One of the anxiety issues that brings the horizon of Saeed is the tragedy of September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and the subsequent war on terror. The fact that the terrorist was Muslims have a consequence of many Australian became suspicious of both Islam and Muslims in Australia. Aftermath, Saeed published *Interpreting the Qur'an* which he intended to give a better understanding of Islam under the light of Qur'an. Fazlur Rahman inspires most of the content of his book, even though Saeed never became his formal student.

## **B. Recommendation**

Recently, there are many contemporary scholars (Muslim and Non-Muslim) show their attempt to read the Qur'an by employing a modern approach. Contemporary scholars have often brought about a new trend in reading the Qur'an. At the same time, the development of Qur'anic studies has been massive in the academic field. Abdullah Saeed and Asma Barlas are among those contemporary scholars who employ modern approach. However, modern approach alone is inadequate to resolve the true problem in the contemporary Muslim society. It is important to explore more of the various Qur'anic reading from the other scholars.

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<http://faculty.ithaca.edu/abarlas/>, [www.abdullahsaeed.org](http://www.abdullahsaeed.org).

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- Scholarship of Language Center, Kampung English Pare, Kediri (2016)
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