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THE PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE OF FEMINISM IN THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

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Abstract

This study discusses feminist perspectives on morality and rationality in fighting for women's rights by highlighting how traditional moral and rational structures are often built on a patriarchal perspective that ignores women's experiences and judgments. Philosophical feminism views that morality and rationality, which have been understood in a patriarchal manner, have placed women in a position of subordination and limited their mobility in both the public and private spheres. This study uses a literature review method by collecting various sources such as books, scientific journals, and articles discussing feminist philosophy and the concept of freedom. The results of the study show that feminism emphasizes the importance of legal and public policy reform to achieve gender equality, as well as fighting for women's freedom in determining their personal and professional life choices. In addition, third-wave feminism, influenced by postmodernism, affirms the diversity of women's identities and experiences, rejecting a single generalization about women. In the context of law, feminism plays a role in criticizing systems that reinforce patriarchy and limit women's access to justice. Thus, the feminist perspective makes an important contribution to reinterpreting morality and rationality towards a more gender-equitable social order.

Keywords: Feminism, Women's Rights, Gender

Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas pandangan feminisme terhadap moral dan rasional dalam memperjuangkan hak-hak perempuan dengan menyoroti bagaimana struktur moral dan rasional tradisional kerap dibangun atas dasar perspektif patriarki yang mengabaikan pengalaman serta penilaian perempuan. Feminisme filosofis memandang bahwa moralitas dan rasionalitas yang selama ini dipahami secara patriarkal telah menempatkan perempuan dalam posisi subordinasi dan membatasi ruang gerak mereka di ranah publik maupun privat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kajian literatur dengan mengumpulkan berbagai sumber seperti buku, jurnal ilmiah, dan artikel yang membahas filsafat feminisme dan konsep kebebasan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa feminisme menekankan pentingnya reformasi hukum dan kebijakan publik untuk mencapai kesetaraan gender, serta memperjuangkan kebebasan perempuan dalam menentukan pilihan hidup pribadi dan profesional. Selain itu, feminisme gelombang ketiga yang dipengaruhi oleh postmodernisme menegaskan keragaman identitas dan pengalaman perempuan, menolak generalisasi tunggal tentang perempuan. Dalam konteks hukum, feminisme berperan dalam mengkritik sistem yang memperkuat patriarki serta membatasi akses perempuan terhadap keadilan. Dengan demikian, pandangan

feminisme memberikan kontribusi penting dalam menafsirkan ulang moralitas dan rasionalitas menuju tatanan sosial yang lebih adil gender.

Kata kunci: *Feminisme, Hak Perempuan, Gender*

INTRODUCTION

The issue of gender equality remains an important focus in modern social and philosophical studies. Simply put, gender can be understood as a theoretical tool to explain and explore the social and cultural mechanisms that give rise to the dichotomy between masculine and feminine, domestic and public roles, and superior and inferior positions. However, explaining why and how this dichotomous concept emerged is not a simple matter. The imbalance of roles between men and women is still evident in social, economic, and political life. Data from UN Women (2023) shows that globally, women still earn 23% less than men, and only 26% of leadership positions are held by women. This fact shows that gender inequality is not merely a moral issue, but also a structural one rooted in social and cultural systems.

According to Shofan (2006), gender mainstreaming is important because gender differences often give rise to various forms of social injustice that are legitimized by culture and even reinforced by religious interpretations. This reveals the existence of patriarchal bias that dominates social and religious discourse. Meanwhile, Afandi (2019) defines gender as a social construct that determines how men and women are categorized based on their responsibilities, characteristics, and social status. From birth, individuals have been directed to comply with certain gender norms, such as blue for boys and pink for girls, which indirectly limit freedom in expressing one's identity. Natural biological differences are often used to justify the unequal division of social roles between men and women.

Freedom is one of the fundamental values in human life that serves as a benchmark for human existence and dignity. Harrison and Boyd (2003) assert that freedom is a right that every individual should have regardless of social or economic status. From a philosophical perspective, freedom is the path to truth that is practiced in the realm of ethics (Tutupary, 2016). However, reality shows that women's freedom is often limited by the patriarchal system that places them in a subordinate position. Therborn (2004) states that from the beginning, society has always been patriarchal, while Walby (1990) asserts that patriarchy is a social system that oppresses and exploits women through male domination. This view is reinforced by Weitz (2003), who states that in the 18th and 19th centuries, women were considered irrational beings and had to submit to men as their "owners."

As a form of resistance to this injustice, the feminist movement was born, demanding equality in the political, social, economic, and intellectual spheres. According to Kristeva (1986), feminism developed in three major waves: the first wave of feminism focused on political and educational rights; the second wave fought for equality in work, family, and sexuality; and the third wave emphasized diversity and rejected a single view of women through a postmodern approach. This development shows that feminism is not only a

social movement, but also has a philosophical foundation that reinterprets freedom and morality in the context of gender justice.

This study differs from previous studies, which generally highlight only the sociological or legal aspects of feminism. This study attempts to examine feminism's views on morality and rationality in fighting for women's rights through a modern philosophical approach. Thus, this study is expected to provide new insights into the relationship between morality, rationality, and women's freedom in a social structure that is still patriarchal. Theoretically, this study aims to broaden the understanding of feminism's contribution in reinterpreting the concepts of morality and rationality, which have been considered universal but are in fact gender biased. Practically, this study is expected to serve as a critical reflection for society and academics to build awareness of the importance of equality and women's freedom.

METHOD

This study uses the literature review method (library research) with a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were obtained from philosophy books, scientific journals, articles, and research reports relevant to the themes of feminism and women's freedom. Analysis was conducted through the process of identifying, classifying, and interpreting feminist theories and philosophical thoughts on freedom to construct conceptual arguments regarding morality, rationality, and gender justice from a feminist perspective.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Feminist legal theory, or feminist jurisprudence (in Aga Natalis, 2020:13), focuses on the concept of gender and women in everyday life. Feminist jurisprudence believes that historical factors are the cause of legal discrimination against women. Therefore, supporters of feminism in legal theory and jurisprudence must strive to change discriminatory legal structures, such as legal instruments and principles governing various areas of law. This reform is expected to make the law more responsive and reflective of women's perspectives.

Feminist legal theory stems from a basic belief about the relationship between law and women. Facts show that men provide knowledge about the law and aim to strengthen patriarchal social relationships. These relationships ignore the norms, experiences, and power of men (Fenita Dhea Ningrumsari, 2021: 18).

Feminists consistently argue that “*knowledge of reality*” is constructed from a male perspective, at least since the publication of

the book “*The Second Sex*” by Simon de Beauvoir. They argue that women's experiences are different from men's, often more dramatic. Catharine A. MacKinnon (1989: 168-242) quotes:

“The law regarding the status of women generated in this manner sees the status of women from the perspective of male authority. It makes the sex-related assumptions that apply to men consent to sex, comparative privacy, moral discourse voice, and gender-based political equality also apply to women.”

“The feminist approach takes up the perspective of women's inferiority to males. Understanding the reality of women from the inside out, establishing its unique characteristics, confronting the inaccessibility and ubiquity of male dominance, and vehemently denouncing women's plight as it pertains to all women.”

In terms of law, feminists play an important role in emphasizing modern groups such as the National Organization for Women by saying that women are subordinated because of customs and legal issues that limit their access and success in the public sphere. Why do feminists need theory? Theory is necessary to understand the various difficulties women face when dealing with the law. To pay attention to context and detail, generalizations based on past experiences are necessary. In this case, in an effort to understand and appreciate similarities in concrete situations, these generalizations are made. Feminists believe that theory does not exist “out there.” Instead, it is based on the ordinary and concrete experiences of individual women in their daily lives. These experiences then emerge as shared experiences through women's conversations.

In critical feminist legal studies, five main principles are used for thinking. These principles relate to women's experiences, the existence of implicit gender bias, double binds and the dilemma of difference, the replication of male domination models, and the opening up of women's choices (Fenita Dhea Ningrumsari, 2021). When compared to previous research, this discussion reinforces the findings of Fenita Dhea Ningrumsari (2021), who identified five main principles in feminist law: women's experiences, implicit gender bias, the dilemma of difference, the replication of male domination, and the expansion of choices for women. However, this discussion adds a new dimension, namely the relationship between rationality and morality in the struggle for women's rights. This broadens the scope of feminist legal theory analysis, which not only highlights social inequality but also considers ethical aspects and human values in the formation of law. From a historical perspective, the development of feminism, which can be divided into three main waves, also shows that women's struggles are dynamic and adaptive to changing times. The first wave demanded political rights, the second wave fought for social and economic equality, while the third wave emphasized diversity and individual identity in the context of postmodernism.

Thus, contemporary feminist legal theory does not only talk about equality, but also about the recognition of differences and the uniqueness of women's experiences. The main problem highlighted by philosophical feminism is structural inequality legitimized by social constructs. This stems from the perspective of philosophical feminism, which is based on the fundamental assumption that women have historically been in a position of subordination due to patriarchal social, cultural, and political structures. Feminism frames the issue of gender inequality as an epistemological, ethical, and ontological problem that concerns how humans understand power relations, moral values, and the existence of women in society.

From a feminist ethical perspective, the problem of female employees arises because of traditional androcentric morality, which defines moral responsibility based on male standards (e.g., the concepts of public duty, rationality, rigidity, and objectivity). Of

course, this provides a negative view with the argument that traditional morality ignores the values of women's experiences such as care work, empathy, and social relations. Feminism also creates the internalization of inequality through language, norms, media, and patriarchal culture. Women are often socialized to accept subordinate roles without realizing it. Another problem is symbolic violence, which post-structural feminists often construct through language and social practices that limit women's freedom to express their identity. This shows that the struggle for women's rights cannot be separated from the dismantling of the structures of meaning and discourse that define women's position.

The philosophical feminist perspective sees that the issue of women's rights is not merely a matter of law or policy, but touches on the most fundamental dimensions of social constructions of humanity, values, and power. Thus, the struggle for women's rights in this framework involves epistemological reconstruction, moral reform, and criticism of the socio-political structures that place women in a position of subordination. This philosophical approach provides an ethical and intellectual basis for women's liberation efforts and encourages the creation of a more just, egalitarian social system that respects human dignity regardless of gender.

a) Feminist Views on Morality and Rationality in Fighting for Women's Rights.

Feminist views on morality and rationality in fighting for women's rights emphasize criticism of how traditional moral and rational structures are often based on patriarchal perspectives that ignore women's experiences and judgments. Philosophical feminism considers that morality and rationality have tended to be interpreted in a patriarchal manner, which places women in a position of subordination. Therefore, feminism seeks to correct and redefine moral values and rationality to be more inclusive and fair to women.

Women are seen as rational beings who have the same ability to think and act rationally as men, so that equal rights must be granted based on the same principles of freedom and rationality. Feminism rejects the view that the oppression of women is the fault of women themselves and encourages women to prepare themselves to compete and gain equal status in society and the legal system. This view is rooted in the separation between the private and public spheres and affirms full freedom and individual equality for women.

Ethical feminism (feminist ethics) highlights how gender influences moral beliefs and practices, aiming to understand and critique moral systems that have neglected or harmed women. Feminist ethics demands the revision and correction of moral systems so that they reflect true justice for women, thereby arguing that fighting for women's rights is not only a legal issue, but also a transformation of moral values and rationality. Feminism considers the struggle for women's rights to be part of a moral and rational struggle that rejects patriarchal-dominated systems, demanding independence, equality, and gender justice in the basic values of society and law.

Feminism also rejects morality used as a tool to oppress women and criticizes the dominance of masculine values in traditional moral theory that prioritizes independence, abstract rationality, and universality. Thus, moral feminism reflects the need to

reconstruct a more inclusive morality that pays attention to gender equality. Liberal feminism emphasizes that women are also rational beings with the same capacity for thought and action as men. Gender equality must be based on the recognition that women have equal rationality to make free and autonomous decisions. Therefore, women are entitled to the same freedom and opportunities to participate in social and political life rationally and equally. However, feminism also criticizes the traditional definition of rationality, which is considered patriarchal and exclusive. Feminism views rationality not only in the form of abstract logical thinking, but also includes emotional aspects and life experiences that were previously ignored by classical rational theory.

There are also studies on the relationship between feminism and rational choice theory, in which feminism criticizes assumptions of rationality that are insensitive to issues of gender and power, and proposes an approach that takes into greater consideration the dynamics of power and gender strategies. This strand of feminism focuses on efforts to achieve gender equality through legal and public policy reform. They believe that gender equality can be achieved through improvements to existing systems and institutions. Feminism emphasizes the importance of women's choices in their personal and professional lives. This involves removing barriers that prevent women from making decisions, and feminists fight for women's rights as follows:

1. The right to education and equal access.
2. The right to work and receive fair and equal pay with men.
3. The right to participate in politics and make state policies.
4. The right to protection from violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination.
5. The right to make their own reproductive choices, including access to contraception and reproductive health services.
6. Rights within the household, such as the right to voluntary marriage, the right to divorce, and equality in managing family life.

In this case, feminism views women's rights as a fundamental part of human rights that must be respected and fought for so that women can live free from discrimination and receive equal treatment in all areas of life. Feminism then asserts that women's rights must include freedom, equality, and justice in various aspects of life, including social, political, economic, and legal.

Feminism fights for rights such as equal education, the right to work with fair wages, political participation, protection from violence and discrimination, the right to reproductive health, and equality before the law. The feminist movement opposes patriarchal structures that oppress women and seeks to change legal systems and social norms to ensure that women's rights are respected and protected. Feminist criticism of the law highlights gender bias and structural inequalities and supports policies that strengthen the comprehensive protection of women's rights.

b) Feminist Thinking on Social Paradigms Related to Women's Rights.

Feminist theory is based on the need to understand the causes of women's oppression with the aim of overturning the male-dominated social order. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, this movement experienced tremendous growth and this period is also known as the second wave of feminism (Stevi Jackson and Jackie Jones, 2009). According to Kristeva, there are three waves or stages of feminism: In the first wave of feminism, the feminist movement focused more on political inequality, especially in fighting for women's suffrage or emancipation in the political sphere (Indah Lestari, 2006). This early feminist movement began in 1792-1960, starting with the writings of an 18th-century philosopher and feminist named Mary Wollstonecraft. In her work entitled *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Mary Wollstonecraft inspired the women's movement and struggle that continued into the 20th century, where women successfully achieved their right to vote (political rights).

In her book, she wrote that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be so only because they do not receive as much education. She advocated that men and women should be considered equal in every dimension of life, especially in socio-political matters. Second-wave feminism was more of a women's liberation movement, commonly known as Women's Liberation. This movement was a revolutionary collective movement, as evident since its emergence in 1960–1980.

It can be said that this was a period that emerged as a reaction by women (feminists) to their dissatisfaction with various discriminatory practices. It is well known that legally and politically, this had actually been achieved by first-wave feminism, but in practice it was not fully realized. Third-wave feminism, also known as post-feminism, began in 1980 and continues today. This movement is very popular and is often referred to by modern feminists. However, many feminist figures are second-wave feminists. Judging from its ideas and slogans, for example, third-wave feminism promotes diversity and change, such as globalization, postcolonialism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism. In this case, third-wave feminism is greatly influenced by postmodernism, which is the originator of third-wave feminism.

According to Lyotard and Vattimo, the influence of postmodernism on third-wave feminism can be seen in four characteristics. These four characteristics include offering a revolutionary approach to social studies (questioning the validity of objective science), ignoring history (rejecting humanism and singular freedom), questioning the rigidity of readings between natural sciences (humanities, social sciences, arts and literature, fiction and theory, image, and reality), and focusing on alternative discourses (postmodernism attempts to revisit what has been discarded, forgotten, considered irrational, unimportant, traditional, rejected, marginalized, and silenced). They consider third-wave feminism to be different from postfeminism.

This is because post-feminism is a movement that rejects the ideas of second-wave feminism. In terms of ideas and concepts, for example, third-wave feminism promotes diversity and change such as globalization, postcolonialism, poststructuralism, and

postmodernism. In this case, third-wave feminism is greatly influenced by postmodernism, which is the originator of third-wave feminism.

The feminist movement is a form of social movement built by women to create justice on earth. In general, Maxine Molyneux defines a social movement as a movement carried out to achieve a common goal. (Wahyudi, 2005). Sukanti quotes Ralph Turner and Lewis M. Killian, who define social movements as a collectivity that lasts for a relatively long time and has the goal of bringing about change or challenging change in society (Sukanti Suryochondr, 1984).

Women's struggle for equal rights has been answered and has yielded satisfactory results. Modern women are considered to have the same access as men in terms of education, employment, politics, and several aspects of social life. However, this does not mean that women and men are already equal. In some countries, women's bodies are still considered objects, as can be seen in advertisements that expose parts of women's bodies that are considered sexual, coupled with the fact that issues of rape, sexual violence, and domestic violence are still frequently heard.

Feminism can be described as a form of social change and social resistance. In other words, feminism is a movement that aims to achieve equality and equal rights with men. The feminist movement is not merely a form of resistance against men, but a form of resistance against a social order that considers men to be superior. The feminist movement exists to break down the social system in which men have complete power or dominate women. This system of male domination over women is commonly referred to as patriarchal culture.

CONCLUSIONS

Supporters of feminism in legal theory and jurisprudence must strive to change discriminatory legal structures, such as legal instruments and principles governing various areas of law. In terms of law, feminists play an important role in influencing modern groups such as the National Organization for Women by arguing that women are subordinated due to customs and legal issues that limit their access and success in the public sphere. Instead, it is based on the ordinary and concrete experiences of women in their daily lives. Feminism's view of morality and rationality in fighting for women's rights emphasizes criticism of how traditional moral and rational structures are often based on a patriarchal perspective that ignores women's experiences and judgments.

Philosophical feminism considers that morality and rationality have tended to be interpreted in a patriarchal manner, which places women in a position of subordination. Women are seen as rational beings who have the ability to think and act rationally in the same way as men, so that equal rights must be granted based on the same principles of freedom and rationality. This form of feminism rejects the view that the oppression of women is their own fault and encourages women to prepare themselves to compete and gain equal status in society and the legal system.

Thus, moral feminism reflects the need to reconstruct a more inclusive morality that pays attention to gender equality. Gender equality must be based on the recognition that

women have equal rationality to make free and autonomous decisions. Therefore, women are entitled to the same freedom and opportunities to participate in social and political life rationally and equally. Feminism views rationality not only in the form of abstract logical thinking, but also includes emotional aspects and life experiences that were previously ignored by classical rational theory. This involves removing barriers that prevent women from making decisions, and feminists fight for women's rights to work and receive fair and equal pay with men. In this case, feminism sees women's rights as a fundamental part of human rights that must be respected and fought for so that women can live free from discrimination and receive equal treatment in all areas of life. Feminism then asserts that women's rights must include freedom, equality, and justice in various aspects of life, including social, political, economic, and legal.

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