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**The Thin Line Between Emancipation and Oppression of Muslim Women: Subalternity in France**  
Alifia Tasya Karisa, Maharani Hapsari, Dr., S.IP., M.A.  
Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2023 | Diunduh dari <http://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/>

## **The Thin Line Between Emancipation and Oppression of Muslim Women: Subalternity in France under Laïcité**

### **ABSTRACT**

Laïcité is a French term for their secular system that guarantees the liberty of conscience and freedom of individuals and separates them from any religious order. In France today's politics, they use the name of laïcité to protect gender equality in the Republic, including immigrant Muslim women. This thesis offers that immigrant Muslim women become the victim of the dominant narrative in France that led them to become the marginalized by using Gayatri Spivak's Subalternity theory. The dominant narrative attempts to emancipate immigrant Muslim women in order for them to participate further in the public sphere by banning the veil to protect women's rights, however they are often misrepresented because of oversimplification of their experience and their voice as immigrant Muslim women are often overlooked. As a result, immigrant Muslim women emancipate themselves by wearing the veil. However, their emancipation is considered as an act of submission to the patriarchal Islamic culture, and they receive discrimination in doing their activities in the public sphere, in finding jobs and housing, and they are considered as creating social barriers. The thesis aims to elucidate the challenges to the emancipation of immigrant Muslim women in France by analyzing the historical context of laïcité, the emergence of Islam in French politics, and the attempts to their emancipation through qualitative study with the help of existing scholar works.

Key words: immigrant Muslim women, laïcité, gender equality, subalternity, discrimination

### **ABSTRAK**

Laïcité adalah istilah untuk sistem sekuler di Prancis yang menjamin kebebasan individu dengan memisahkan masyarakatnya dari aturan agama mana pun. Saat ini, sistem politik di Prancis menggunakan laïcité untuk melindungi kesetaraan gender warga negaranya, termasuk para perempuan imigran muslim. Penelitian ini mengungkap narasi bahwa perempuan imigran muslim di Prancis menjadi korban narasi dominan yang menjadikan mereka termarginalkan dengan menggunakan teori Subalternity dari Gayatri Spivak. Narasi dominan tersebut berupaya untuk membebaskan perempuan imigran muslim dalam berpartisipasi di ruang publik dengan melarang penggunaan hijab yang bertujuan untuk melindungi hak-hak perempuan, namun para perempuan imigran muslim sering kali disalahartikan karena pengalaman dan suara mereka diremehkan dan diabaikan. Akibatnya, bentuk emansipasi para perempuan imigran muslim adalah dengan menggunakan hijab. Upaya emansipasi ini dianggap sebagai bentuk kepatuhan terhadap budaya Islam yang patriarki sehingga mendapat diskriminasi dalam beraktivitas di ruang publik, dalam mencari pekerjaan dan tempat tinggal, serta dianggap menimbulkan hambatan sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan tantangan emansipasi perempuan imigran muslim di Prancis dengan menganalisis konteks sejarah laïcité, kemunculan Islam dalam politik di Prancis, dan upaya emansipasi mereka melalui kajian kualitatif dengan menggunakan penelitian-penelitian sebelumnya sebagai sumber pendukung.

Kata kunci: perempuan Muslim imigran, laïcité, kesetaraan gender, subalternity, diskriminasi