

## MEDIA NARRATIVES AND GENDER REPRESENTATION IN THE COVERAGE OF INARA RUSLI IN INDONESIAN ONLINE MEDIA USING THE SARA MILLS APPROACH

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### Abstrak

*Pemberitaan mengenai nikah siri Inara Rusli di media online Indonesia memunculkan perdebatan publik yang tidak hanya berkaitan dengan aspek hukum dan moral, tetapi juga menyentuh persoalan representasi gender dalam narasi media. Media berperan aktif membentuk pemaknaan terhadap perempuan melalui cara peristiwa dikonstruksikan, pihak yang diberi ruang bicara, serta sudut pandang yang diutamakan. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji bagaimana media online Indonesia merepresentasikan Inara Rusli dalam pemberitaan nikah siri serta bagaimana relasi kuasa gender dibangun melalui teks berita. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah analisis wacana kritis Sara Mills dengan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Data penelitian berupa teks berita dari CNN Indonesia, Kapanlagi.com, Inilah.com, dan Suaramerdeka.com yang terbit pada Januari 2026 dan membahas klaim nikah siri Inara Rusli dan Insanul Fahmi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media secara dominan memosisikan perempuan sebagai objek wacana yang harus membuktikan klaim dan mempertanggungjawabkan relasi personalnya di ruang publik. Sementara itu, laki-laki dan kuasa hukum lebih sering ditempatkan sebagai subjek yang memiliki otoritas naratif dan legitimasi hukum. Pola penceritaan tersebut memperlihatkan kecenderungan media dalam mereproduksi nilai patriarkal melalui penekanan pada aspek pembuktian, moralitas, dan legalitas yang diarahkan kepada perempuan. Analisis juga menemukan bahwa sudut pandang pembaca diarahkan untuk meragukan narasi perempuan, sementara suara perempuan sering kali dimediasi atau dipinggirkan. Kesimpulan penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa pemberitaan nikah siri Inara Rusli di media online Indonesia masih menunjukkan ketimpangan representasi gender dan belum sepenuhnya menerapkan prinsip jurnalisme yang sensitif gender.*

**Kata Kunci:** representasi gender, analisis wacana kritis, Sara Mills, media online

### Abstract

News coverage regarding Inara Rusli's nikah siri in Indonesian online media has generated public debate that is not only related to legal and moral aspects, but also touches on the issue of gender representation in media narratives. The media plays an active role in shaping meanings about women through the way events are constructed, the parties given space to speak, and the perspectives prioritized. This study aims to examine how Indonesian online media represent Inara Rusli in reporting on nikah siri and how gender power relations are built through news texts. The approach used is Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis with a descriptive qualitative method. The research data consist of news texts from CNN Indonesia, Kapanlagi.com, Inilah.com, and Suaramerdeka.com published in January 2026 and discussing claims of nikah siri involving Inara Rusli and Insanul Fahmi. The results show that the media dominantly positions women as objects of discourse who must prove claims and be accountable for their personal relationships in the public sphere. Meanwhile, men and legal counsel are more often placed as subjects who have narrative authority and legal legitimacy. This narrative pattern shows the media's tendency to reproduce patriarchal values through emphasis on aspects of proof, morality, and legality directed at women. The analysis also finds that the reader's perspective is directed to doubt women's narratives, while women's voices are often mediated or marginalized. The conclusion of this study emphasizes that reporting on Inara Rusli's nikah siri in Indonesian online media still shows inequality in gender representation and has not fully applied the principles of gender-sensitive journalism.

**Keywords:** gender representation, critical discourse analysis, Sara Mills, online media

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Online media in Indonesia plays a significant role in constructing meanings around social issues, including gender representation of female figures in the public sphere. News reporting is not entirely neutral, as language choices, narrative structures, and perspectives reflect ideological interests operating within a patriarchal cultural context. In practice, female public figures are more frequently framed through emotional aspects, personal morality, and the domestic sphere, while men are associated with authority and rational legitimacy, thereby reinforcing stereotypes and symbolic inequality. The intensity and speed of digital news distribution further amplify the impact of such constructions in shaping public opinion. Reporting on Inara Rusli demonstrates how women can be positioned as discursive objects who must prove and justify their personal relationships in the public sphere through emphasis on legitimacy, morality, and legal validation. The placement of quotations, selection of sources, and issue focus within news texts indicate power relations operating through language and narrative organization. Therefore, critical analysis is necessary to uncover gender representation practices in reporting personal conflicts involving female figures in online media.

Studies on women's representation in Indonesian media have widely employed critical discourse analysis approaches. (Fitriani & Hamdani, 2025) show that women in news coverage are often placed behind dominant narratives shaped by masculine perspectives. Other research highlights how media frame women in violence cases with tendencies toward victim-blaming (Nurhasanah & Sogiri, 2022). (Asheva & Tasyarasita, 2022) found that media narratives can construct women as emotional and problematic subjects. These findings demonstrate a consistent pattern of non-neutral gender representation and the use of language as an

instrument for reproducing stereotypes. Previous studies generally focus on violence cases or women as victims in criminal contexts, while research examining the representation of female public figures in widely exposed personal conflicts in digital media remains limited. Studies specifically analyzing subject-object positioning and reader construction within Sara Mills' framework in high-exposure female figure reporting are also still scarce. This gap positions the present research differently, namely in examining how gender power relations are constructed in online media narratives about female public figures involved in personal conflicts.

Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis approach has frequently been used to examine women's representation in media texts, particularly in criminal and sexual violence cases (Hartutik & S., 2023; Meilani et al., 2022). Previous applications generally yield similar findings, indicating that women are positioned as discursive objects whose narratives are mediated by masculine perspectives and biased news structures. This study applies Sara Mills' model to a different context: the reporting of a female public figure in the issue of *nikah siri* (unregistered marriage), situated at the intersection of religious values, legal legitimacy, and digital public opinion. In the Indonesian context, *nikah siri* is religiously considered valid but lacks state legal recognition, thus frequently generating moral and social controversy within media spaces. The case of Inara Rusli becomes problematic because its coverage does not merely discuss legality but also produces debates on women's morality, claim credibility, and netizen responses represented as the public voice. The application of Sara Mills' framework in this study goes beyond identifying subject-object positions; it also examines how news texts construct readers to evaluate the female figure within tensions between religious norms, state law, and the sensational logic of digital media. This contextual

and analytical distinction demonstrates the study's contribution in expanding the application of Sara Mills' model to personal conflict issues involving public figures that are rich in cultural and ideological dimensions in Indonesia.

Research concerning female public figures in online media indicates that gender relations are often framed unequally. (Prasetya & Suratnoaji, 2022) reveal that online media tend to position women as objects of moral scrutiny. (Annur & Mau, 2024) find that celebrity scandal reporting reinforces gender stereotypes through diction choices and issue emphasis. Media narratives place women in vulnerable positions subject to public judgment. Such representations are inseparable from economic interests and click-driven motives within the digital media industry. Sensational narratives are frequently prioritized over balanced perspectives. This condition illustrates that online media actively participate in shaping gender constructions. Female figures become mediums for reproducing patriarchal ideology within digital spaces.

In the context of digital media development, gender representation has also undergone cross-platform transformation. (Sonni et al., 2025) show that representations of masculinity and femininity differ according to media characteristics. Digital media possess flexibility in constructing more personal and interactive narratives, which affects how female figures are positioned in news coverage. (Widarwati et al., 2023) emphasize that gender representation is influenced by cultural contexts and media interests. Domestic and international media demonstrate differences in framing Indonesian female figures. These findings highlight the complexity of gender narratives in media. In-depth examination of a specific case thus becomes essential to understand such representation practices. A critical approach enables a sharper reading of media texts.

Based on the development of previous studies, there remains research space concerning media

narratives about female figures involved in widely exposed personal conflicts. Earlier research has predominantly focused on violence cases or formal institutions. The case of Inara Rusli offers a different context, as it involves personal life, morality, and gender expectations. Online media play a significant role in shaping public perceptions of this case. Analysis using Sara Mills' approach enables identification of Inara Rusli's position as either subject or object within news texts. This study can also reveal how readers are directed to evaluate the female figure. Focusing on media narratives provides understanding of the language practices employed. This context is relevant for enriching gender and media studies in Indonesia.

This research aims to examine media narratives and gender representation in reporting on Inara Rusli in CNN Indonesia, Kapanlagi.com, Inilah.com, and Suaramerdeka.com. The analysis focuses on textual structure, subject-object positioning, and reader construction in news produced by these four portals. Sara Mills' approach is employed to uncover power relations operating through language, source selection, and issue-framing strategies. This study explores how each platform frames the female figure in public conflict and how reporting practices contribute to the production of gendered meanings within digital spaces.

## 2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach within a critical paradigm to analyze gender representation in news texts. A qualitative approach enables the researcher to interpret meaning, narrative structures, and ideological dimensions of texts as social constructions inseparable from the context of meaning production and consumption (Creswell & Poth, 2021). The method applied is feminist critical discourse analysis using Sara Mills' model. Critical discourse analysis views texts as ideological arenas that reflect power relations

within society (Fairclough, 2020), while Sara Mills' model specifically emphasizes the analysis of subject positions, object positions, and reader positions within narrative structures.

The object of the study consists of news texts concerning the claim of *nikah siri* (unregistered marriage) between Inara Rusli and Insanul Fahmi published in January 2026 on CNN Indonesia, Kapanlagi.com, Inilah.com, and Suaramerdeka.com. January 2026 was selected because it represents the period of highest reporting intensity, when the issue gained broad attention and generated significant public responses in digital spaces. The selection of this period aims to capture the initial construction of media narratives at the peak of exposure.

Data were collected using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) news articles directly addressing the *nikah siri* claim involving Inara Rusli and Insanul Fahmi; (2) published in January 2026; (3) categorized as straight news (hard news), rather than opinion or feature articles; and (4) containing statements, clarifications, or responses related to the issue. Articles that merely mentioned the names without discussing the substance of the claim, opinion content, and duplicate news were excluded. Based on these criteria, a number of articles were obtained from each media outlet (the actual number per outlet will be specified in the final manuscript). All texts were archived along with publication dates, titles, and sources to ensure data traceability.

The units of analysis include headlines, leads, body text, and quoted sources. The analysis focuses on identifying subject positions (parties granted narrative authority), object positions (parties represented or discussed), and reader positions (how the text directs readers to accept, doubt, or evaluate a representation). The researcher examines how narrative structure, diction choices, and quotation distribution construct gendered power relations within the text. The analytical process is conducted

interpretatively by relating findings to Sara Mills' theoretical framework.

Data validity is maintained through repeated readings, consistent application of analytical categories, and interpretative triangulation across media outlets to identify similar and differing representation patterns. Systematic documentation is carried out to ensure that the analytical process remains traceable and meets the credibility principles of discourse research (Krippendorff, 2022).

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### RESULT

##### CNN Indonesia News Report

The CNN Indonesia article entitled "*Insanul Fahmi Speaks Candidly About His Unregistered Marriage with Inara Rusli*," published on Monday, 22 January 2026, discusses Insanul Fahmi's confession regarding the *nikah siri* (unregistered marriage) he entered into with Inara Rusli. The news narrative is structured by positioning Insanul Fahmi's statements as the central source of information and primary explanation of the event. The media outlines the chronology of the relationship, the reasons behind the unregistered marriage, and the domestic conflict that preceded the decision.

The structure of the text demonstrates the dominance of the male voice in explaining marital relations and domestic conflict. Meanwhile, the positions of Inara Rusli and the legal wife, Wardatina Mawa, appear in unequal proportions. The coverage emphasizes self-defense and moral legitimacy from the male perspective. The sequence of information and diction choices indicate gendered power relations within the text. Using Sara Mills' approach, this representation can be analyzed through subject position, object position, and reader position.

##### Subject Position

In this article, Insanul Fahmi is positioned as the primary subject who controls the narrative

flow. The media opens the report by highlighting his confession and willingness to explain the unregistered marriage that became a public issue. This positioning creates the impression that the truth of the event originates from the male perspective.

#### **Data 1 (CNN Indonesia)**

Insanul Fahmi is portrayed as an active actor who consciously discloses information to the public. The media provides space for him to explain the event in a narrative style emphasizing openness and honesty.

*“Insanul Fahmi revealed details of his unregistered marriage with Inara Rusli. He spoke candidly after the relationship came under public scrutiny because he had not officially divorced his wife, Wardatina Mawa.”*

This excerpt shows that Insanul Fahmi is positioned as the party holding full authority over the story. The diction “*revealed*” and “*spoke candidly*” constructs an image of courage and transparency. The media does not present alternative perspectives to balance this confession. Insanul Fahmi appears as the narrative controller who determines how the event is understood by readers. This subject position illustrates the dominance of a masculine perspective in reporting personal relationship conflicts.

The reinforcement of this subject position is also evident when the media elaborates on the timing and validity of the unregistered marriage based on Insanul Fahmi’s statement.

#### **Data 2 (CNN Indonesia)**

The media again positions Insanul Fahmi as the primary source in explaining the legitimacy of the unregistered marriage.

*“The man stated that he had been religiously married to Inara Rusli since mid-*

*2025. The religiously registered marriage was attended only by the bride’s family.”*

This quotation shows that the *nikah siri* is framed as religiously legitimate based on the male claim. The media does not include other perspectives to examine or balance the narrative. Insanul Fahmi is positioned not only as the actor but also as the principal interpreter of the meaning of the unregistered marriage. This reinforces the strong male subject position within the textual structure.

#### **Object Position**

In this coverage, Inara Rusli is positioned as a narrative object explained through Insanul Fahmi’s perspective. The media does not provide direct space for Inara to express her own viewpoint. Her presence and image are constructed through the claims, defenses, and judgments of the male party.

#### **Data 3 (CNN Indonesia)**

The media presents a defense of Inara Rusli, yet the defense is voiced by Insanul Fahmi.

*“Insanul Fahmi then denied that Inara Rusli had been the cause of the breakdown of his household with Mawa.”*

This quotation indicates that Inara is not granted the position of subject capable of defending herself. She appears as an object of moral judgment explained by a male voice. The media does not present Inara’s direct statement to clarify her own position. This pattern reveals an imbalance in gendered power relations, where women lack control over the narrative about themselves.

Inara’s object position becomes even more apparent when the media discloses that she was not fully aware of the status of Insanul Fahmi’s first marriage.

**Data 4 (CNN Indonesia)**

The media frames Inara as a party who passively received information after the event occurred.

*“In addition, Inara only found out that Insan had not divorced Mawa, as he had previously claimed, a few days after they married.”*

This quotation portrays Inara as a woman in a vulnerable and uninformed position. She is represented as someone who experienced the event rather than someone who made decisions. The media does not explore Inara’s subjective experience but instead positions her as part of a conflict narrated from the male perspective. This representation reinforces the positioning of women as objects within the news text.

**Reader Position**

The overall narrative structure directs readers to understand the event from Insanul Fahmi’s perspective. The media builds empathy toward the male figure by emphasizing his emotional reasons and domestic conflicts. Readers are invited to view the unregistered marriage as a response to communication failure in his first household.

**Data 5 (CNN Indonesia)**

The media places readers within a framework centered on the male figure’s search for peace.

*“The decision to remarry was acknowledged by Insanul as a form of seeking the peace he did not find in his first home.”*

This quotation normalizes the act of entering into an unregistered marriage by emphasizing the psychological and emotional aspects of the male figure. The language used directs readers to justify the decision. The media constructs moral legitimacy through a narrative of suffering and domestic conflict. The reader’s position is implicitly guided toward understanding and accepting the male perspective. The female voice,

particularly that of the legal wife, appears later and functions as clarification rather than as the narrative center.

**Data 6 (CNN Indonesia)**

The media presents the legal wife’s statement in a less dominant position after the main narrative has been established.

*“I don’t know yet; what matters is that he (my husband) has not at all pronounced divorce against me.”*

This quotation positions readers to compare claims; however, the prior narrative structure has already established trust in Insanul Fahmi’s account. The sequence of information makes the female voice appear late and less powerful. The media continues to direct readers to interpret the conflict primarily through the male perspective. This pattern demonstrates how online media reproduce patriarchal power relations within news discourse.

**Kapanlagi.com News Report**

The Kapanlagi.com article entitled *“Wardatina Mawa’s Side Challenges Inara Rusli to Show Proof of Unregistered Marriage,”* published on 10 January 2026 at 07:00 WIB, addresses the continued conflict surrounding the claim of an unregistered marriage between Inara Rusli and Insanul Fahmi. The narrative focuses on statements from Wardatina Mawa’s side delivered through her legal counsel. The media frames the issue of *nikah siri* (unregistered marriage) as a matter of legal and moral proof.

The structure of the text positions Inara Rusli’s claim as the contested object, while the dominant voice comes from Mawa’s side. This perspective demonstrates the media’s tendency to foreground legal authority and the defense of the lawful wife. Gender representation becomes visible through the way the media constructs women in oppositional positions. Sara Mills’ approach enables an analysis of power relations

through subject, object, and reader positions within this text.

### Subject Position

In this coverage, the primary subject is not Inara Rusli but Wardatina Mawa's side, represented by her legal counsel. The media provides dominant space for Mawa's lawyer to deliver accusations, challenges, and evaluations of the unregistered marriage claim. A male legal subject appears as an authoritative figure representing legal interests.

### Data 1 (Kapanlagi.com)

The article opens the narrative by presenting Wardatina Mawa's firm stance in questioning Inara Rusli's claim of an unregistered marriage. This statement becomes the primary basis for framing the issue in the text.

*"The claim of an unregistered marriage between Inara Rusli and Insanul Fahmi continues to spark heated debate in society. Wardatina Mawa's side, through her legal counsel, challenges Inara to prove the marriage legally and transparently before the law."*

This excerpt demonstrates that the speaking authority belongs to Mawa's side, not to Inara Rusli. The use of the word "challenges" constructs a confrontational image that places Inara in a defensive position. The media directs the narrative toward demands for proof rather than toward the woman's personal experience. The male legal subject appears as the arbiter of truth, while the woman is positioned as the party required to substantiate her claim.

The reinforcement of this subject position is further strengthened through direct quotations from Mawa's legal counsel, who appears as a representation of rational and legal authority.

### Data 2 (Kapanlagi.com)

The media grants broad space to Mawa's lawyer to explain his client's position and question the validity of the claimed unregistered marriage.

*"Althur Napitupulu, Mawa's lawyer, questioned the validity and timing of the alleged unregistered marriage. To this day, Mawa's side claims to have never seen any physical evidence or witnesses confirming the existence of such a marriage."*

This quotation reveals the dominance of the legal counsel's voice as the discursive subject. The media frames the narrative within a framework of legality and formal evidence. By emphasizing the absence of proof, the text strengthens Mawa's position as the holder of legal legitimacy. The subject in this report possesses the authority to judge the truth or falsity of another woman's claim.

### Object Position

In this article, Inara Rusli is positioned as the object of the narrative whose claim is questioned and doubted. The media does not present Inara's direct voice to clarify her position. Her identity is constructed through the perspective of those who legally challenge her.

### Data 3 (Kapanlagi.com)

The media portrays Inara Rusli as the party required to account for her unregistered marriage claim in both public and legal spheres.

*"From our perspective, it is actually simple—if she claims to have entered into an unregistered marriage, then please show when the marriage took place."*

This quotation shows that Inara is positioned as the object of a demand for proof. The language used diminishes the complexity of the issue by simplifying it. The media does not provide space for Inara to respond to the challenge. This object position demonstrates how women are placed as

parties who must validate their legitimacy before legal authority. Inara's object position is further reinforced through the association of the unregistered marriage claim with alleged moral misconduct.

#### **Data 4 (Kapanlagi.com)**

The media links the unregistered marriage claim to potential justification of adultery allegations reported by Mawa's side.

*"Althur warned that the unregistered marriage should not be used as justification or a shield to cover up the alleged adultery reported by Mawa."*

This quotation illustrates how Inara is placed within a problematic moral framework. The claim of unregistered marriage is positioned as something suspicious. The media constructs an image of the woman as potentially violating social norms. Inara is not given the opportunity to explain the context or her personal experience directly.

#### **Reader Position**

The narrative structure of the Kapanlagi.com article directs readers to understand the issue of unregistered marriage from Wardatina Mawa's perspective. The media builds readers' trust in the legal and moral narrative conveyed by the legal counsel. From the outset, readers are guided to question Inara Rusli's claim.

#### **Data 5 (Kapanlagi.com)**

The media uses analogy to reinforce the reader's interpretive framework regarding the unregistered marriage claim.

*"He likened the situation to someone obtaining a driver's license after hitting another person in order to avoid punishment."*

This analogy shapes a negative perception of the unregistered marriage claim. Readers are

directed to view the act as an attempt to evade legal responsibility. The media positions readers to be critical of Inara rather than of broader structural power relations. This linguistic strategy reinforces the legitimacy of Mawa's side's perspective. Readers are guided to align with the legal narrative presented by the dominant subject.

#### **Data 6 (Kapanlagi.com)**

The repetition of the absence-of-evidence claim strengthens a reading framework that casts doubt on Inara Rusli's position.

*"Until this moment, we as legal counsel—and Mawa as well—have not received such evidence."*

This repetition reinforces the reader's position as one invited to doubt the woman's claim. The media strengthens the hierarchy of voices by positioning legal counsel as the primary source of truth. Inara Rusli remains in the object position without direct access to narrative space. This structure demonstrates how online media construct unequal gender representation through perspective selection and language use.

#### **Inilah.com News Report**

The Inilah.com article entitled "*Mawa Demands Proof of Fahmi–Inara's Unregistered Marriage*," published on Sunday, 11 January 2026 at 03:03 WIB, highlights the controversy surrounding the alleged unregistered marriage between Inara Rusli and Insanul Fahmi from legal and moral perspectives. The main narrative is constructed through statements from Wardatina Mawa's legal counsel, who questions the validity of the marriage. The media positions the issue of *nikah siri* (unregistered marriage) as part of a broader legal conflict, namely allegations of adultery.

The structure of the text presents a discursive struggle between claims of legality and moral defense. Inara Rusli appears in two contradictory positions: as the accused party and as a woman

who ultimately chooses to withdraw. This coverage illustrates how the media manage women's voices through layered representations. Sara Mills' framework helps uncover power relations in the positioning of subject, object, and reader within this text.

### Subject Position

In this article, the initial subject position is occupied by Wardatina Mawa's legal counsel, who actively constructs a narrative of doubt regarding the unregistered marriage claim. The media provide dominant space for a male figure as legal authority who delivers judgments and demands. The subject is portrayed as rational, firm, and possessing legitimacy to determine what is right or wrong.

### Data 1 (Inilah.com)

The opening paragraph positions Mawa's legal counsel as the main actor voicing demands for proof of the unregistered marriage claim.

*"Wardatina Mawa's legal counsel, Fedhli Faisal, demanded proof of the unregistered marriage conducted by Inara Rusli and Insanul Fahmi."*

This quotation indicates that the discursive subject is the legal representative speaking on behalf of the lawful wife. The word "demanded" conveys pressure and insistence, placing Inara in a position of accountability. The media begin the narrative with a male legal voice rather than with clarification from the accused woman. This structure demonstrates the dominance of a legal perspective in constructing truth. The dominance of the subject is further reinforced through direct quotations emphasizing the absence of evidence.

### Data 2 (Inilah.com)

The media present the legal counsel's statement in detail to underscore doubt about the *nikah siri* claim.

*"From our perspective, it is actually simple. If they (Inara–Insanul) claim to have entered into an unregistered marriage, then please show when it took place. Until now, up to this very second, we as legal counsel—and Mawa as well—have not received such evidence."*

This quotation portrays the subject as the authority of judgment. The language used diminishes the woman's claim by simplifying a complex issue. The media do not provide equal space for Inara to explain her position in this section. The legal subject appears as the determinant of the validity of a personal relationship.

### Object Position

In the early part of the article, Inara Rusli is positioned as an object whose claim is questioned and associated with alleged moral misconduct. The media construct her image through a legal lens and suspicion. Her identity is shaped more by accusations than by her personal voice.

### Data 3 (Inilah.com)

The media link the unregistered marriage claim to an alleged attempt to evade legal consequences.

*"Do not use an unregistered marriage as a shield because there is a report of adultery."*

This quotation shows that Inara is positioned as a moral object worthy of suspicion. The unregistered marriage is not framed as a religious practice but as a strategy of justification. The media reinforce negative associations by linking her personal relationship to alleged legal violations. Inara is not given space to articulate her motives or the context of her decision. The objectification of Inara is further emphasized through the use of analogy.

**Data 4 (Inilah.com)**

The media include an analogy that strengthens the negative image of the unregistered marriage claim.

*“It is like someone who causes an accident and then obtains a driver’s license afterward in order to make the accident invalid.”*

This analogy directs readers to perceive the unregistered marriage as a manipulative act. Inara is positioned as an object associated with wrongdoing and dishonesty. The media adopt the legal counsel’s perspective without presenting a balancing view. This metaphorical language reinforces stigma against women in relational conflicts.

**Alternative Subject Position (Inara Rusli)**

In the final section of the article, a shift occurs in which Inara moves from object to a limited subject position. The media begin to present statements from Inara’s legal counsel, framing her as a woman who makes a moral decision.

**Data 5 (Inilah.com)**

The media present a statement from Inara’s legal counsel emphasizing her stance.

*“After our client learned the true status of Mr. Ihsan, our client chose to withdraw and no longer wished to be involved with Mr. Insan.”*

This quotation indicates a shift in representation, portraying Inara as a subject with agency over her choices. She is depicted as having principles and moral boundaries. The media begin to provide space for a female narrative, though still mediated through legal representation. Inara’s subjectivity does not appear directly. This change in representation is reinforced by the portrayal of her emotional background.

**Data 6 (Inilah.com)**

The media connect Inara’s decision to her past emotional experience.

*“She once experienced what it felt like for a woman to be betrayed by her husband.”*

This quotation frames Inara as a woman acting out of empathy and personal experience. However, this representation still situates women within the emotional realm rather than the rational one. The media differentiate the male position—grounded in legal reasoning—from the female position—explained through feelings.

**Reader Position**

The narrative structure of the Inilah.com article directs readers to follow a trajectory of suspicion toward the unregistered marriage claim before later being invited to partially understand Inara’s decision. Readers are first positioned to doubt, then given limited space for empathy. The dominance of the legal voice at the beginning shapes the reader’s initial perception. The narrative shift at the end does not entirely erase the stigma constructed earlier.

The media position readers to accept legal authority as the primary source of truth. This representation demonstrates how media selectively manage women’s voices within conflicts of relationship and morality.

**Suaramerdeka.com News Report**

The Suaramerdeka.com article entitled *“Unregistered Marriage Questioned, Wardatina Mawa’s Side Challenges Inara Rusli to Present Evidence and Witnesses,”* published on Saturday, 10 January 2026 at 20:45 WIB, addresses the controversy surrounding the alleged unregistered marriage between Inara Rusli and Insanul Fahmi from a formal legal perspective. The narrative focuses on the demand for proof delivered by Wardatina Mawa’s legal counsel. The media position the *nikah siri* (unregistered marriage) claim as a matter of legality and chronology rather than as a personal or religious relationship.

The text is structured with strong emphasis on statements from legal counsel as the primary source of information. Inara Rusli is presented as the party challenged to substantiate her claim in the legal arena. This coverage demonstrates the dominance of legal discourse in framing gendered relational conflict. Sara Mills' approach reveals how subject, object, and reader positions are constructed within the media text.

### **Subject Position**

The primary subject position in this article is occupied by Wardatina Mawa's legal counsel, who actively constructs the framework of legal truth. The media grant dominant space to a male figure representing legal authority. The narrative progresses by following the statements, evaluations, and demands articulated by legal counsel.

### **Data 1 (Suaramerdeka.com)**

The opening paragraph directly positions the legal representative as the main actor questioning the unregistered marriage claim.

*“Wardatina Mawa’s side openly questioned the validity of the relationship and challenged that the unregistered marriage evidence long claimed in public truly be presented concretely.”*

This quotation shows that the narrative subject holds the power to define what is considered valid or invalid. The word “challenged” signals an unequal power relation, where one party evaluates while the other must provide proof. The media do not open the narrative with Inara's voice but immediately with accusations and demands. This structure reinforces the dominance of the legal subject in meaning construction. The dominance of the subject is further emphasized through the focus on the absence of evidence.

### **Data 2 (Suaramerdeka.com)**

The media present the legal counsel's statement detailing the lack of evidence as the basis for doubt.

*“From the beginning until today, we as legal counsel, including our client, have never seen proof of that unregistered marriage. When did it take place, how was the process conducted, and who were the witnesses—none of this has ever been explained.”*

This statement strengthens the subject's position as the authority of verification. The media establish legal criteria as the sole standard of truth. The woman's claim is positioned as invalid as long as it does not conform to formal legal frameworks. The subject speaks in a firm and rational tone, creating an impression of full legitimacy.

### **Object Position**

Inara Rusli is positioned as a discursive object whose claim is continuously questioned. The media frame her as a party required to account for her statement in the public sphere. She is not granted direct speaking space but is instead represented through the evaluations of others.

### **Data 3 (Suaramerdeka.com)**

The media narrative positions Inara's confession as a unilateral statement lacking legal weight.

*“A confession of unregistered marriage cannot simply stop at a narrative conveyed through media, podcasts, or unilateral statements.”*

This quotation demonstrates how the woman's voice is delegitimized when not accompanied by formal evidence. The media construct Inara as an object whose words are considered weak and lacking credibility. The terms “narrative” and “unilateral statement” convey subjectivity that appears unreliable. This representation places the woman in a defensive position. The objectification of Inara is further

reinforced by linking the unregistered marriage claim to alleged legal violations.

#### **Data 4 (Suaramerdeka.com)**

The media associate the unregistered marriage with potential defense against adultery allegations.

*“He also reminded that the claim of an unregistered marriage does not automatically nullify the ongoing report of alleged adultery.”*

This quotation constructs a negative association with Inara’s personal relationship. The unregistered marriage is not framed as a religious practice but as a legal defense strategy. Inara is positioned as an object potentially using an intimate relationship to avoid legal consequences. The media do not provide clarification or contextual explanation from the woman’s perspective.

#### **Reader Position**

The narrative structure of Suaramerdeka.com positions readers to doubt the unregistered marriage claim from the outset. Readers are invited to follow a legal argument demanding evidence, chronology, and witnesses. The narrative is layered with repeated demands for proof, reinforcing the impression of the woman’s claim as illegitimate.

Inara’s attempt at restorative justice is mentioned briefly and presented as unsuccessful. This directs readers to view her as legally weak. The media position readers alongside the perspective of legal counsel. This representation demonstrates how online media reproduce patriarchal power relations through the dominance of legal discourse and the silencing of women’s voices.

## **DISCUSSION**

The online media coverage of Inara Rusli’s unregistered (nikah siri) marriage illustrates how a woman’s personal relationship is constructed as a public issue laden with moral and legal judgment. The media do not merely convey facts; they also construct frameworks of meaning through the selection of sources and textual structure. Sara Mills’ critical discourse analysis approach emphasizes that the positioning of subject and object within a text carries ideological implications. The representation of women in this case demonstrates a tendency toward subordination within media narratives. This pattern aligns with the findings of (Nahdliyah & Robot, 2024), which reveal gender inequality in reporting on violence against women. Media frequently position women as parties who must explain and defend themselves. Power relations are reflected in the dominance of authoritative voices. This practice shows that news texts do not stand as neutral entities.

The subject position in the coverage is more often occupied by men and representations of legal institutions. Insanul Fahmi and the legal counsel of Wardatina Mawa appear as active agents directing the narrative flow. The media provide substantial space for explanations and evaluations from their perspectives. This construction reinforces the association of masculinity with rationality and legitimacy. (Sonni et al., 2025) explain that media frequently frame men as legitimate decision-makers. A similar pattern is evident in reporting on public figures in Indonesia. (Rakhmawati & Gumelar, 2025) found that media tend to normalize male voices in celebrity infidelity cases. The dominance of male subjects limits the diversity of perspectives within the text.

Women in this coverage are more often positioned as objects of the narrative. Inara Rusli is portrayed through accusations, suspicions, and demands for proof. The media rarely present women’s voices directly and independently. This

representation reveals a mechanism of objectification within news texts. (Pertiwi & Mulya, 2022) show that women in public scandals are often reduced to symbols of morality. A similar pattern is evident when the claim of *nikah siri* is repeatedly questioned. The media link women's personal relationships to alleged legal violations. This practice reinforces stigma against women in the public sphere.

A shift in representation emerges when Inara is depicted as choosing to withdraw from the relationship. This narrative frames the woman as principled and empathetic. However, this subjectivity is still conveyed through legal counsel. (Amelia et al., 2025) assert that women are frequently represented within the emotional domain. Their inner experiences become the primary rationale for explaining women's decisions. The media do not provide space for women's rational arguments to appear directly. Women's subjectivity remains confined within boundaries controlled by the narrative. This representation demonstrates the media's ambivalence in presenting women's voices. Inequality persists despite shifts in positioning.

The legal framework becomes the primary foundation in framing this *nikah siri* case. The media prioritize issues of evidence, chronology, and formal legality. This approach places women's lived experiences outside the central focus. (Setiadi, 2024) notes that legal narratives in media often neglect gender perspectives. *Nikah siri* is treated merely as a legal defense mechanism. The social and cultural dimensions of the relationship receive insufficient attention. (Purwanto, 2025) shows that representations of Muslim women are often simplified in both Western and local discourses. A similar pattern appears in this coverage. The media marginalize the complexity of women's experiences.

The reader's position within the text is directed toward accepting the perspective of legal authority. The structure of the news encourages readers to doubt women's claims from the outset.

The repetition of demands for evidence strengthens the perception of the illegitimacy of women's voices. (Yusuf, 2022) emphasizes the importance of gender-sensitive reporting principles. These principles are not fully reflected in this coverage. The media prioritize conflict over representational justice. Readers are positioned alongside the dominant perspective. This reinforces the internalization of patriarchal values in news consumption.

A cross-media comparison reveals a significant paradox. CNN Indonesia, Kapanlagi.com, Inilah.com, and Suaramerdeka.com have different editorial orientations, audience segmentations, and reporting styles, yet they reproduce similar patterns of gender representation. CNN Indonesia tends to emphasize legal legitimacy and factual chronology; Kapanlagi.com highlights personal and celebrity dimensions; meanwhile, Inilah.com and Suaramerdeka.com display variations between immediacy and social implications. These differences affect only the presentation style and the intensity of legal narratives, not the subject-object relational structure constructed within the texts. Women remain positioned as parties to be verified, questioned, and linked to moral legitimacy, while male voices and legal institutions function as the center of narrative authority. This pattern indicates that gender bias does not merely depend on explicit media ideology but operates as a discursive practice internalized within news production mechanisms. This finding aligns with (Hasan et al., 2025), who identified similar tendencies in visual and textual media, and (Ida et al., 2023), who emphasized the influence of ideology on framing Muslim women. (Klomkaew & Kanokpermpoon, 2025) also demonstrate that language choice is a primary instrument in constructing gender issues. The similarity of representation patterns across platforms suggests a normalization of women's construction as objects of moral and legal verification. Thus, the subject-object relations in

Sara Mills' model appear to operate beyond differences in media characteristics and indicate the presence of a broader gender discourse regime within journalistic practice.

Cross-contextual studies show that problematic gender representation is not merely a local phenomenon. (Bracco et al., 2024) found similar patterns in European media coverage concerning gender minorities. (Meuller, 2024) revealed how media construct stigma through narratives of gender-based violence. (Fitriawan et al., 2025) demonstrated the persistence of misogynistic values in Indonesian cultural products. (Nur & Riyadi, 2023) confirmed that even religious texts are not free from gendered power relations. (Fajri & Isti'annah, 2025) identified patterns of marginalization in representations of vulnerable groups. The findings of this study reinforce these previous works. Online media remain arenas for the reproduction of patriarchal ideology.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that online media coverage of Inara Rusli's unregistered (nikah siri) marriage in Indonesia does not merely represent an event but also constructs a gender discourse embedded with power relations. Through Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis approach, it becomes evident that the subject position within media texts is consistently occupied by men and legal authorities, while women are more frequently positioned as narrative objects who must explain, prove, and justify their personal relationships. The media tend to place male voices at the center of rationality and legitimacy, whereas women's voices appear in a limited capacity, often mediated through intermediaries and framed within emotional and moral domains. This pattern illustrates that news texts function as arenas of meaning production that are not neutral and systematically reproduce gender inequality.

A comparison of coverage by CNN Indonesia, Kapanlagi.com, Inilah.com, and

Suaramerdeka.com reveals a consistent pattern of gender representation despite their differing editorial characteristics and audience segmentation. The dominance of legal frameworks and demands for proof confines women's experiences to aspects of formal legality, while the social, cultural, and religious complexities surrounding the practice of nikah siri are marginalized from the core narrative. Readers are positioned to align with legal authority and to rationalize doubt toward women's claims as a legitimate stance.

Theoretically, these findings extend the application of Sara Mills' model by demonstrating that subject-object relations and reader construction are influenced not only by explicit media ideology but also operate as relatively stable cross-platform discursive patterns within digital journalistic practice. This pattern indicates the presence of discourse production mechanisms that transcend differences in reporting style and normalize the subordination of women in public conflicts. The implications of this study point to the need for more gender-sensitive editorial policies, a reconfiguration of source-selection strategies, and the provision of proportional space for women's voices without the dominance of authoritative mediation, so that journalistic practices do not continue to reproduce representational inequality in the digital public sphere.

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