Gender mainstreming in Islamic primary schools in South Sulawesi, Indonesia: a textbook analysis

Siti Azisah and Colleen Vale

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy employed to achieve gender equality and equity by considering the experiences, aspirations, needs and problems of women and men in the process of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating all policies and programs of various sectors of social development (Ministry of Women’s Empowerment Republic of Indonesia 2000). Gender mainstreaming originated from the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995, and was given official support in Indonesia when the government identified gender equality and gender justice as one of Indonesia’s national development objectives in its Broad Outline of State Policy (GBHN) 1999 (Parawansa 2000; Suryadi and Idris 2004). Moreover, President Abdurrahman Wahid issued Presidential Instruction No. 9 on gender mainstreaming in 2000. This policy gave instructions to all levels of government, including the Department of National Education and the Department of Religion, to implement gender-mainstreaming-based policy in each aspect of national development. As a consequence, Indonesian national development programs (PROPENAS) in the education sector from 2000 to 2004 have shown responsiveness to gender issues. This can be seen in three main activities, including the development of competency-based curriculum that is not gender biased and is gender responsive at every level of education (Ministry of Women’s Empowerment Republic of Indonesia 2000).

The Department of National Education, which has the responsibility to mainstream gender in education, has shown its commitment to the gender mainstreaming policy by doing a number of related activities starting in 2002 (Suryadi and Idris 2004). One of its
activities has been collaboration in textbook analysis with Women’s Studies Centres at universities in the major provincial cities around Indonesia. The results of the study found that some of the textbooks showed gender bias (Suryadi and Idris 2004). Based on the research, the Department of National Education collaborated with Women’s Studies Centres to undertake a number of activities including working with publishers, writers and illustrators for the publication of textbooks in 2004 (interview with the coordinator of gender mainstreaming in the Department of National Education, Jakarta, 2 January, 2006).

There are many studies of gender portrayals in school textbooks and curriculum materials around the world. (See, for example, Abraham 1989; Logsdon 1985; Muthali’in 2001; Parker 1997; Spender 1982; Spender and Sarah 1980; Suryadi and Idris 2004; Zittleman and Sadker 2002.) These studies reveal that males are dominant in curriculum material and textbooks (Abraham 1989; Deliyanni-kouimtzi 1992; Logsdon 1985; Spender and Sarah 1980) and gender roles are stereotyped (Logsdon 1985; Muthali’in 2001; Parker 1997; Spender 1982).

In 1980, Dale Spender revealed that gender role depictions in British curriculum material and textbooks were male predominant and in 1982 she found similar results and that females tended to be invisible. She argued in her book, Invisible Women, that ‘if sexism were to be removed from the curriculum there would be virtually nothing left to teach because our society knows so little that is not sexist’ (Spender 1982:3). Almost ten years later, Abraham found that males persistently dominated the textbooks. Like Spender and Abraham, Deliyanni-kouimtzi (1992), who studied the Greek government’s educational policy, discovered that textbooks used in Greek schools were dominated by depictions of men.

In Indonesia, Ahmad Muthali’in (2001) undertook a study of school textbooks and the learning process in primary schools in Central Java and Yogyakarta. He discovered gender bias in the texts and illustrations of the textbooks. Lyn Parker studied the school textbooks used by the primary and secondary schools in Bali as a part of her major study on gender and schools in Bali. She discovered that
pictures in those textbooks vividly depicted ‘gendered social roles’ (Parker 1997:5). By this, she means that there was gender stereotyping in the depiction of males and females in the textbooks. An earlier study conducted by Marta Logsdon (1985) investigated gender roles in moral education texts for elementary school students in Indonesia. She found that the percentage of pictures that depicted males in textbooks was far higher than that of females (72 per cent: 28 per cent). These studies informed the analytic framework for our study of gender role depictions in Islamic primary school textbooks in South Sulawesi.

Islamic primary schools in South Sulawesi were chosen for two reasons. The first reason was personal interest. The first author was born, studied and worked in a university in South Sulawesi, graduated from Islamic schools (madrasah) and works in an Islamic university. So, one of us has a personal knowledge of Islamic schools and education. The second reason was that a textbook analysis has not been completed since the implementation of the textbook writing program and it would be appropriate to conduct such a study in a province where gender mainstreaming is likely to challenge local ethnic culture and orthodox Islamic teaching. South Sulawesi provides such a context.

In South Sulawesi the vast majority of people see themselves as belonging to one of the following four ethnic groups: the Bugis, the Makasar, the Toraja and the Mandar. Each of these ethnic groups has its own language and there are several distinctive regional scripts still in some use. The Bugis and the Makasar, however, are the two dominant ethnic groups, especially since the creation of the province of West Sulawesi which contains many Mandar. An important feature of their shared gender role ideology and patriarchal cultural values is the *siri’* complex. *Siri’* is defined by Hamka (cited by Abidin 1999) as dignity, self-esteem and shame. These values of honour and shame define the norms for behaviour in everyday life, including gender relations. According to *siri’* values, a woman is a symbol of family dignity and a man must take care of family dignity (*to masiri’*) (Hading 2003). In Bugis–Makasar society, it is shameful for a man if a male outside the family comes into contact with a female member of his family, either his wife or his daughter. To protect a woman from contact with other
males, Bugis–Makasar culture segregates men and women into defined spaces and roles. Accordingly, ‘the woman’s domain is around the house and the man’s domain reaches the border of the sky (the horizon)’ (Pelras 1996:101). This spatial separation and segregation led to the gender division of labour where women’s roles are limited to around the house, while men’s roles are the opposite, that is, they are not limited to staying at home. In practice, however, Bugis and Makasar women can be found in occupations and activities outside the home, including trading, labouring, agricultural work, migration for work, professional work, and politics.

This spatial separation according to gender coincides with orthodox Islamic practice in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan where a woman’s place is also at home and she can go only to public places if her father or husband allows her. According to this orthodox Islamic practice, a muhrim (a male family member) must accompany a woman in public (Engineer 2005).

This paper is part of a broader study of gender mainstreaming in Islamic primary education in Indonesia. In this paper the influence of gender mainstreaming policy on textbooks is examined. Several research questions were posed. Did the policy have an impact on textbooks published after 2004 for all the subject areas? Did it reach all year levels? Can the policy’s influence be detected in the textbooks published locally for the local market and for those published nationally for the national market? Do local textbooks more strongly reflect patriarchal values and practices than national textbooks? Did changes in textbooks influence all schools?

**Background and methods of the study**

In Indonesia, two government departments are responsible for education. The Department of National Education is responsible for general education in Indonesia. The schools governed by the Department are called sekolah: Sekolah Dasar (SD) for primary school, Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP) for junior high, and Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA) for senior high, and there are vocational schools. All of these schools follow the curriculum of the Department of National Education. The Department of Religion is responsible for
Islamic Education. The schools governed by the Department of Religion are called *madrasah*: Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah (MI) for primary school, Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) for junior high, and Madrasah Aliyah (MA) for senior high. These schools follow the curriculum of the Department of Religion. *Madrasah*, such as MI, provide a general education similar to SD, focusing on knowledge preparation for further study (President of the Republic of Indonesia 2003). Both the MI and the SD graduates can continue their education to junior high — Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) or Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP). Private schools follow the curriculum of either of the two departments. A private school named *sekolah* has to follow the curriculum of the Department of National Education, and a private school named *madrasah* has to follow the curriculum of the Department of Religion.

The name of a public or government-owned and private or non-government-owned school is identified by the last letter or the last name. For example, a government-owned MI and SD are usually followed by the letter N becoming MIN and SDN. N stands for negeri (state). A privately-owned MI or SD is often followed by the name of an independent institution such as MIA (Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah As’adiyah) and SDM (Sekolah Dasar Muhammadiyah).

Three Islamic primary schools were selected for this study. These three schools represented state and private Islamic schools in three different geographical locations. The schools were a MIN (Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah Negeri), located in a village in kabupaten Bone, a MIA (Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah As’adiyah), a private school run by As’adiyah educational institution located in Sengkang, the main town of kabupaten Wajo, and an SDM (Sekolah Dasar Muhammadiyah), a private school run by Muhammadiyah and located in Makassar, the capital city of South Sulawesi.

The MIN curriculum is comprised of 30 per cent Islamic subjects and 70 per cent secular subjects (Department of Religion Republic of Indonesia 2004). The Islamic subjects include theology and ethics, Qur’an and Muhammadan tradition, Islamic law (*fikh*), Islamic cultural history and Arabic. The secular subjects include social science, science and technology, mathematics and humanities.
As’adiyah is an Islamic institution founded by KHM As’ad, a Bugis Muslim scholar born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in 1930. The central office of the institute is located in the town of Sengkang. In the beginning, the school was called Madrasah Arabiyah Al Islamiyah (MAI). The school was named As’adiyah after his death in 1952 (Al Bone 1986; Walinga 1981). From that year, As’adiyah developed into a large educational institution. It has three types of schools: pesantren (boarding school), madrasah (MIA, MTsA and MAA) and sekolah (SD). As’adiyah also has an undergraduate program for Islamic Studies and a special program for kiai muda (young Muslim scholars). At present, As’adiyah has 250 active branches all over Indonesia. It was founded with the philosophy of purifying Islamic teaching. As with MIN, MIA follows the curriculum of the Department of Religion. In addition, the schools adopt some local curriculum content which is decided upon by the general leader of As’adiyah. MIA allocates eight hours and forty minutes for Islamic subjects every week.

Muhammadiyah is one of the two largest Islamic organisations in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah is an Islamic social organisation well-known for providing education (Fuad 2002; 2004). Originally Muhammadiyah’s general schools were modelled on the schools of the Dutch colonial government and Christian schools; Muhammadiyah schools adopted the national education system after Indonesia gained its independence (Fuad 2004). Nowadays, Muhammadiyah runs madrasah and pesantren (boarding schools); however the general schools such as SDM and colleges are still the dominant type of educational institution. SDM adopted their curriculum from the Department of National Education, with additional curriculum decided by Muhammadiyah. The school allocates eight hours per week for Islamic subjects, forty minutes less than MIA.

Although the textbooks used by these three schools were all identified in this study, not all were analysed. We developed a set of criteria to select the textbooks which would be analysed in the study. Firstly, we selected textbooks that included content that was most likely to reflect gender ideology and practices based on the religion and culture of the society. Hence the following subjects were chosen: Islamic studies, languages (both national and local) and social science.
The content of these subjects more explicitly reflect cultural norms, values and practices. Other subjects, such as science and mathematics, were not included. This is because these subjects did not explicitly expose the norms and practices of the society in the content of their curriculum, although cultural norms, values and practices may form part of the hidden curriculum in these subjects.

The next criterion for textbooks selection was the grade levels. Three grade levels were chosen. Grade one was chosen to represent the early years of schooling, grade three for the middle years of primary schooling and grade six as the final year of the primary school. By selecting these three grade levels, we would be able to provide an analysis of textbooks across the primary school years.

The third criterion, place of publication, was used to ensure that both local and national publications were included in the study. The books published locally were only for the local curriculum content, that is the particular regional language spoken locally. The rest of the textbooks used by the three schools were published nationally. For the textbooks published nationally and locally we endeavoured to identify the extent to which different values and practices were reflected in the textbooks written and published at the national and the local level.

The final criterion was the year of publication. Textbooks published before and after the implementation of the gender mainstreaming policy in 2004 were included in the study. This was done in order to identify whether there had been progress in gender role representation in the textbooks published after the implementation of the policy of gender mainstreaming in education. The issuing of gender mainstreaming policy would have been a signal of the government’s attitude to publishers and writers. After taking into account these criteria we selected 21 textbooks for analysis. A list of these textbooks is included in the appendix.

**Framework of analysis**

When analysing the textbooks, we used the following categories: visibility (visible or invisible), equity (balance or imbalance), gender role (stereotype or non-stereotyped), language (neutral or gender-based) and whether the text was progressive or non-progressive.
This framework was derived from a number of studies mentioned earlier.

The first category was visibility (Litosseliti 2006; Spender 1982; Zittleman and Sadker 2002). This category was used to assess the presence of male and female representation both in the text and illustrations. If both males and females were depicted either together or alone (Gooden and Gooden 2001), the text was coded as male visible and/or female visible. Alternatively if the textbooks depicted only one sex and the opposite sex was absent, the textbook was coded as males invisible or females invisible. In the context of orthodox Islamic values and Bugis-Makasar culture, the depiction of women alone in a textbook is non-traditional and progressive.

For the textbooks where both males and females were visible, the next category was the equity of depictions with respect to balance or imbalance, that is, equal or unequal gender representation. This category was employed to assess the frequency and space allocation for males and females. Imbalance means that one particular sex was predominant (Abraham 1989; Deliyanni-kouimtzii 1992; Logsdon 1985; Spender and Sarah 1980) and the other was poorly represented in the texts and/or illustrations. For example, an imbalance would be a ratio of females to males of 1:3, or the opposite, 3:1. To determine the degree of balance, we analysed the sex of the central characters in the stories in the textbooks and the sex of the people who were the focus or in the foreground of the illustrations even though both males and females may have been depicted. Balance means that both genders were represented equally. If gender representation of females to males was better than a ratio of 2:3 the textbook was coded as balanced.

The third category was gender role: stereotyped or non-stereotyped (Gooden and Gooden 2001; Litosseliti 2006; Logsdon 1985; Muthali‘in 2001; Parker 1997; Spender 1982; Stewart, Cooper, Stewart and Friedley 2003). Gender stereotype was defined by Shaw (cited in Gooden and Gooden 2001:90) as ‘assumptions made about characteristics of each gender, such as physical appearance, physical abilities, attitudes, interests, or occupation.’ Litosseliti (2006) found that ‘the male characters tended to have more powerful and varied occupational roles (for example, bank manager, school principal,
doctor) than the female characters, who occupied the more stereotypical roles of nurse, housewives, or secretary’ (Litosseliti 2006:87). Furthermore, Stewart and others (2003) discovered that in some mathematics textbooks, men were depicted as active, alert and scientific. Women were often depicted as dull and insignificant and were rarely involved in a career situation (Stewart and others 2003). On the other hand, non-stereotyped examples documented by Gooden and Gooden (2001:96) were ‘female children included as dressing up as a pilot, ambulance driver, and scuba driver. One male child was seen attending a tea party and another helping with the laundry.’

Another category was gender neutral or non-sexist language. Marta Logsdon (1985) remarked that the Indonesian language does not present sexist language. The third person singular pronouns in Indonesian, dia, ia and -nya, are non-gender-specific. Dia can refer to he or she or it and -nya can refer to his or her or its. Makasar and Bugis, the local languages that were included in this analysis, are, if anything, even more gender neutral than Indonesian. This is because these local languages more often use the same word when referring to males and females. For example, the word amuré in Bugis is used for both aunt and uncle whereas tante and paman are used in Indonesian.

The final category used was progressive or not progressive. This category was used to summarise the other four categories. So, a progressive textbook has both males and females visible and equally represented and is more likely to depict non-stereotyping and to use neutral language. A non-progressive textbook retained more than one aspect of gender bias and gender stereotyping.

**Gender depiction in each discipline**

The textbooks were classified into four broad disciplines: Islamic studies, local languages, national language and social sciences.

**Islamic studies**

In the discipline of Islamic studies, seven textbooks were analysed (see the list in the appendix). In these Islamic Studies textbooks, males and females were visible, but the depictions were male-dominated. These findings were similar to those of Delianni-kouimtzi (1992), Abraham (1989), Logsdon (1985), and Spender (1982). Also, these textbooks
illustrated obvious gender role stereotypes for both males and females in the family, in the community and in the professions. For example, a mother was depicted as being responsible for cooking (Rosyid and Alfat 2002a:19; Rosyid and Alfat 2002b:29–31) and a father or a man was depicted in more powerful and a wider range of professions such as leader and principal. This finding is congruent with Litosseliti’s argument that the male characters tended to have more powerful and varied occupational roles. However, a progressive depiction of gender representations and roles was also evident, for example, the illustration in figure 1. In this picture there is an equal number of girls and boys, but there was still gender segregation since the girls are sitting in front and boys at the back. This arrangement in the classroom, however, is progressive since traditionally boys were privileged by sitting at the front of the classroom. Progressive representations were more evident in the lower grade and the newer textbook publications. The textbook for grade one, written by Rosyid and Alfat (2002a), includes several images with equal numbers of males and females depicted in the same role (see pp. 4, 6, 34–7, 48). The text also showed a non-stereotype depiction of a husband and wife preparing food for their friend (see p. 48). The textbooks for grade three written by the same author and published in the same year showed several images with equal gender representation, but there were also a lot of stereotyped depictions. The textbooks for grade six, also written by the same author and published in the same year, showed gender role stereotypes and unequal gender representation, yet the textbooks used a lot of gender neutral words

Figure 1. Equal but segregated gender representation
Source: Maksum 2004a:10
such as Muslim, president, and sibling. The most recently published textbook, written by Maksum (2004c) for grade six, included several depictions showing equal gender roles and representation (see the cover, pp. 1, 26, 29 and 42). This textbook also includes a girl as a model of good behaviour (p. 8). Though girls are stereotyped as ‘good’, inclusion of a girl as a role model could be an indication of a more progressive approach to selection of examples. Since there were some progressive gender role depictions and the number of female representations improved in the textbook published in 2004, one can contend that the policy of gender mainstreaming has influenced gender representation in textbooks.

**Local languages: Bugis and Makasar**

There were eight local language textbooks analysed, all published before 2004 (see appendix). Depictions of women alone were absent in the majority of these local language textbooks, but men alone were visible, as can be seen in figure 2. Women were visible only when they were depicted with men. This is related to the patriarchal cultural values of Bugis and Makasar, and the concept of *muhrim* in Islamic teaching mentioned earlier. Because a woman is a symbol of family *siri’* (honour), a woman should be in the domestic domain. A woman can go into the public only if she is accompanied by her *muhrim*, or male family member. According to *siri’*, men are responsible for the wellbeing of the female family members. Since men were depicted alone but not women, in most of the texts, men were predominant. In

![Figure 2. A male figure dominated most of the space of local language textbooks](source: Pannamo 1995a:1)
addition to this, stereotyped gender roles for males and females were evident in textbooks in the form of the type of jobs, language, position and access to education of males and females. The textbooks illustrated men in various productive occupations, such as farmers, gardeners and fishermen while women did a range of domestic jobs, such as cooking, shopping and processing produce. Equal gender representation was rarely found, yet there was a lot of gender-neutral language. In one textbook gender-neutral language predominated.

Looking at gender role depiction in the local language textbooks, women alone were invisible. The illustrations of the textbooks were male predominant and gender stereotyped. It would appear that the government’s gender mainstreaming policy has had little influence on local language texts. The schools still used the old publication materials even though their content was similar to those in textbooks published in 2004 (Pannamo 2004). For example, the textbooks written by Pannamo in 1995 and 2004 were almost the same. The changes were only in the structure of the textbook and some additional words in Indonesian were included. As noted above, all the local language textbooks were local publications. Since the local languages textbooks used by schools in the study were published before 2004, it is not surprising that the local culture values were represented in these textbooks. However it would seem that the policy gender mainstreaming, and gender-neutral textbooks in particular, has not impacted on local publications of educational materials published in 2004. Local writers have not adopted the policy or been encouraged to by local schools or local education authorities.

**National language**

The national language textbooks selected were *Aku Cinta Bahasa Indonesia* (I love Indonesian) 1, 3, and 6. Males and females were visible on their own and with each other, but more males than females were depicted (either alone or with women) in these textbooks. In all three textbooks, males alone were depicted more frequently than females alone. The ratio of females to males in these textbooks varied from one female to ten males (1:10) to one female to two males (1:2). This finding was consistent with Logsdon (1985). When males and females
were depicted together, females were still under-represented, that is, in one picture, two or three, even four males to one female were represented in the image. Furthermore, gender stereotyping was evident in three textbooks in terms of the occupations of men and women as well as the type of work and play for boys and girls. For example, in figure 3 the boy is reading and the girl is sweeping the floor.

Progressive representations in terms of balance in gender representation and non-stereotyped roles, however, were more apparent than those in the textbooks for local language and Islamic studies published before 2004. The textbooks for Indonesian depicted more females in a non-stereotypical way. For example, a female student acted as a leader at a flag-raising ceremony for the National Youth Anniversary. The texts also included many females as central characters of several stories. For example, one textbook narrated a story about Asnah (a girl) and Mrs Citra (a rich woman), who helped with the evacuation of a village community during a flood disaster. Another story with a female central character was a story about a girl who did not obey her mother’s advice to be clean and neat. A further example was a non-stereotyped depiction of a boy watering the flowers, which is usually understood as a girl’s job. According to this analysis of textbooks, the policy of gender mainstreaming has exerted some influence on gender representation in the textbooks for Indonesia’s national language, though they remain male dominated.
Social science

Three textbooks for social science were selected. Each textbook was written by a different author (see appendix). In these three textbooks, males and females were visible on their own and together except in the text for grade six, where no females were shown alone. In social science for grade one, more females than males were depicted on their own, which was not the case with the textbooks for the other grades, in which males were predominant. Female predominance in the early grades indicates that these texts promoted the role of girls and women. The social science textbooks recorded the highest frequency for depictions of males and females together when compared with the textbooks of other subjects. Males and females were mostly depicted in balanced gender representation that was contrary to Logsdon’s (1985) findings. The texts also recognised the diverse role of women in Indonesian society today in both the narrations and illustrations. For example, one text included the following statement:

*Kini, wanita-wanita Indonesia sudah sangat maju. Banyak wanita Indonesia yang menjadi insinyur, dokter, hakim, guru, dan lain-lain. Bahkan ada yang menjadi anggota TNI dan POLRI. Ternyata cita-cita Raden Ajeng Kartini sudah tercapai* (Said and others 2004:19)

[Today, Indonesian women have become more emancipated. Many Indonesian women become engineers, doctors, judges, teachers, and so forth. What is more, many of them become members of the Indonesian National Army and the Indonesian Police Force. Obviously, Kartini’s dreams have become a reality].

The texts also depicted the participation of girls in boys’ traditional play, for example, an image of three boys and two girls who are going to play kites (see figure 5 from Adisukarjo and others 2004), as well as boys doing domestic work such as cleaning the house (Said and others 2004) and a boy making up his bed (Sartono, Enco and Suharsanto 2002).

Gender role depictions in the social science textbooks, however, were still rich with gender role stereotypes that were similar to the findings of Muthali’in (2001), Parker (1997) and Logsdon (1985). There were gender divisions of labour in households, different type of jobs for different genders, different toys for boys and girls and a
gendered division of labour in the community. In brief, these textbooks were more progressive than other subjects in terms of visibility and balanced gender representation. Yet, gender stereotypes were still evident. Hence, the policy has had some limited impact.

**Year of publication: before and after 2004**

There were 13 textbooks published before 2004 and 8 published in 2004. All local language texts and some of the Islamic studies text were old publications. In the textbooks published before 2004, males were predominant in all cases. Furthermore, in 7 out of 12 textbooks published before 2004, females were invisible except when with men. The invisibility of women in the old textbook publications reflected the traditional cultural values of the writers. In addition, stereotyped gender roles were evident which were consistent with the findings of Muthali’în (2001), Parker (1997), Logsdon (1995) and Spender (1982). In spite of that, some equal representation and non-traditional jobs were evident.

The majority of books published in 2004 were still male predominant, with stereotyped gender roles and representation. Nevertheless, there was a lot of improvement in the depiction of gender roles and representation. In the new publications, females could be found in non-stereotype gender role representations that were difficult to find in the textbooks published before 2004. Furthermore, the majority of these textbooks depicted women as visible on their own, which was not the case with the depictions before 2004. The visibility of females in textbooks could also be seen by the increase in the depiction of males and females together. Moreover, progressive gender roles and representations in the books published for the curriculum in 2004 were more frequent and there was a wider range of progressive gender representations and roles than in the earlier publications. The current Islamic Studies textbook for grade one depicted equal representation on several pages (cover, pp. 6, 10, 11, 12, 23, 25, 29, 45, 47, 53, 56, and 60) and the previous textbook only allocated a few pages for this type of representation. The promotion of girls and women in a variety of roles did not appear in the books published before 2004, but they were evident in the new publications.
Grade level comparisons

Of 21 textbooks analysed, 6 were from grade one, 7 from grade three and 8 were from grade six. Gender role depictions in the lower grades were more equitable in terms of the visibility of females. In grade one, 5 out of the 6 textbooks depicted females alone. In grade three, females alone were visible in 3 out of 7 textbooks while in grade six females alone were visible in 2 out of 8 textbooks. The disappearance of females in the textbooks of later grade levels is evidence of continuing gender bias. The traditional culture and Islamic practice of segregating the sexes at puberty is still influencing the writers of the textbooks.

The lower grade was also more progressive in terms of fewer stereotyped roles for males and females. For example, gender role depiction in the textbook for Aqidah Ahlaq (Islamic studies) published in 2002 revealed that the grade one textbook included one gender stereotype (p. 19). The textbook for grade three devoted five sections to stereotyped males and females (pp. 29–31). The grade six assigned four sections to male and female stereotypes: a man was a leader, a gentleman, and was responsible, truthful and wise for his people (pp. 14–15). Also males were depicted in the front and females were at the back (pp. 30, 41) signifying the space division according to gender and the power of men.

Furthermore, the textbooks for the lower grade were more progressive in terms of equal gender representation and non-traditional gender roles. For example, in the same Aqidah Akhlaq

Figure 4. A boy is feeding a chicken
Source: Chairan 1992c
textbooks published in 2002, grade one portrayed a number of equal
gender representation images (pp. 4, 6, 34–7, 48) as well as male
depiction in female-dominated activity (p. 48). Grade three also
depicted a number of equal gender representations (pp. 10, 12, 65, 76),
but there was no depiction of non-stereotyped male or female roles.
The textbook for grade six did not show any equal gender
representations at all. Therefore, the lower grades were more
progressive in depicting gender roles than the higher grades. This
pattern was observed in the textbooks for other subjects in the study,
including those published in 2004.

Place of publication and market

The majority of textbooks analysed were published nationally for the
national market. The only textbooks published locally were textbooks
used for the local content of the curriculum, that is the subject local
language. These textbooks were only used locally. The textbooks
published locally were male predominant. Women were mostly
invisible and not depicted on their own. They were visible in the
majority of books only if they were depicted with men. Men were
visible with and without women. Even though the Makasar and Bugis languages use more gender-neutral terms than the Indonesian language, there was evidence of gender role stereotyping (see figure 4). The majority of textbooks published by national publishers were male predominant and loaded with stereotyped gender roles. They visibly depict women alone and with men, however, and they were much more progressive than the local publications in terms of more equal gender representation and non-stereotype gender roles as shown in figure 5, where boys and girls are playing with kites together. Traditionally, playing with kites was an activity for boys, but in this illustration girls are also shown.

**School comparison**

In this section we compare the three schools according to the textbooks they used for local languages and Islamic studies to find out whether there was a difference between the schools regarding the use of more progressive texts. Social science and Indonesian language textbooks were not used for comparison because MIN, in a village in kabupaten Bone, and SDM, in Makassar, used the same non-Islamic subject textbooks from the same authors and publishers. Their textbooks were mainly published by PT Tiga Serangkai Pustaka Mandiri in Solo, Central Java, and these textbooks were not analysed in this study. MIA, in a provincial town in kabupaten Wajo, used different non-Islamic subject textbooks. The majority of MIA’s textbooks were published by CV Yudistira, Jakarta, in 2004. Although MIA’s textbooks were different from those of MIN and SDM, the content of these non-Islamic subject textbooks was not compared as the three schools used post-2004 publications. As discussed above, national publications post-2004 for social science and Indonesian language were more progressive with respect to the visibility of females, balanced images of males and females and presence of some non-stereotyped roles.

The three schools used different textbooks for local language and a different selection of compulsory and supplementary textbooks for Islamic studies. MIN used local language textbooks entitled *Lanterna* published in 1992 for all grades. The *Lanterna* textbooks for grades one, three and six showed that males and female were visible either on their
own or together with males. MIA used textbooks entitled *Mattappa* for grade one and three. These books were written by Pannamo in 1995. Grade six of MIA used the textbook which was a biography of the founder of As’adiyah. SDM used textbooks called *Bahasa Makassar* for grades three and six. These textbooks were written by Tika Abdul Fattah in 1995. We did not get the textbook of grade one as the grade one teacher did not show the first author this textbook. She said that she only used an unpublished source in teaching. Neither of the local language textbooks of SDM and MIA portrayed women alone. Women were visible only when they were depicted with men.

In fact, the local language texts were textbooks used by all the schools (*madrasah* or *sekolah*) in each district. That is, all the schools in Bone used *Lanterna* textbooks, all the schools in Wajo used *Mattapa* textbooks, and in Makassar, all the schools used *Bahasa Makassar*. So, the textbooks of local language reflected the local culture of the districts where the schools were located rather than reflecting the types of school, either Islamic or general. The only local language textbook that reflected the local Islamic culture was the biography of the As’adiyah founder.

The selections of Islamic studies textbooks in three schools were different in terms of the compulsory and supplementary textbooks. The difference was actually related to the type of school: *madrasah* or *sekolah*. MIN and MIA are both *madrasah*, while SDM is *sekolah*. MIN and MIA used several compulsory textbooks for several subjects of Islamic studies. All of their textbooks for those subjects were published before 2004. In this study, we only analysed the textbooks for one Islamic subject: Aqidah Akhlaq (theology and ethics). These textbooks were written by Rosyid and Alfat in 2002. SDM, like other general schools (*Sekolah Dasar* or *SD*), used the compulsory Islamic studies textbooks published in 2004.

Another difference between MIN, MIA and SDM was in their selection of supplementary textbooks for Islamic studies. MIN used the new textbooks published in 2004, as did SDM, whereas MIA used the textbooks published before 2004. The difference between SDM and the other SD was the supplementary subjects of Islamic studies. SDM used complementary Islamic textbooks similar to the MIN and
MIA compulsory textbooks, but the general SD only relied on the compulsory text. They were also a difference in the time allocated for Islamic subjects during each week. General SD allocated two hours whereas SDM allocated 12 hours. As discussed previously, the textbooks published in 2004 were more progressive in term of equal gender role representation than those published before 2004.

Looking at the local language and the Islamic studies textbooks selected by the three schools, it can be concluded that MIN used the most progressive textbooks for local language where females alone were visible, while SDM used the most progressive Islamic studies textbooks. Overall, MIA used the least progressive and most gender-biased textbooks for both local language and Islamic studies of the three schools.

**Conclusion**

The efforts of the Indonesian government to mainstream gender in education have shown some positive results, although the influence has varied according to discipline, grade levels, schools, place of publication and the market.

Gender role depiction according to the disciplines revealed that social science textbooks had the highest frequency of female visibility and equal gender representation, yet they were still rich with gender stereotypes. On the other hand, the local language textbooks, all published prior to the announcement of mainstreaming policy, showed the opposite. Females were invisible in most of these textbooks, yet they had high frequencies of gender-neutral language.

The year of publication, whether it was before or after the 2004 curriculum was implemented, did make a difference. The textbooks published in 2004 were more progressive. Women were more visible and frequent in these textbooks and though the textbooks remained male-dominant and stereotyped, non-stereotyped representations were present.

The portrayals of gender roles were also different according to the level of schooling. The textbooks for the lower grades were more progressive than those for the upper grades in term of visibility of women, fewer stereotypes as well as more equal gender roles and representation.
Moreover, in terms of place of publication and the market, the national publications were more progressive. There was more equal gender representation and non-stereotyped roles. This did not apply in the local publications that were all published before the issuance of the policy. Nevertheless, schools continued to use the older publications for teaching local languages.

Furthermore, the three schools had different textbooks. The SDM of Makassar used the more progressive, newer Islamic textbooks, and the other two schools used less progressive old textbooks. MIN, however, used a more progressive local language text that depicted women alone and with men — depictions that were not included in the other language texts used by either of the other two schools located in the town and in the city. In general, MIA used the least progressive textbooks for both local language and Islamic studies.

Since many textbooks published before 2004 in this study comprised local language textbooks and several textbooks of Islamic studies, there is the possibility that textbooks in these disciplines will have progressive gender role depiction in future publications. It remains to be seen whether the textbooks will be more progressive for all year levels for these subjects and whether the schools will choose to use the newer publications for these subjects. The Ministry of National Education needs to continue to encourage and persuade publishers to produce progressive textbooks and the Ministry of Religious Affairs needs to work with schools in the provinces to encourage them to use gender-neutral textbooks.

Siti Azisah is a PhD student at Victoria University, Australia, and she is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education (Tarbiyah), State Islamic University Alauddin, Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Her email addresses are: siti.azisah@live.vu.edu.au and sitiazisah@yahoo.com

Colleen Vale is an Associate Professor in the School of Education, Victoria University, Australia. Her email address is: colleen.vale@vu.edu.au

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Muthali’in, A 2001, Bias gender dalam pendidikan (Gender bias in education), Muhammadiyah University Press, Surakarta.

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Appendix: Textbooks used in the study

Islamic studies


4. Maksum, M 2004a, *Khasanah akhlaq mahmudah dalam pendidikan agama Islam kelas 1 SD* (Good ethics in Islamic education for grade one primary school), Tiga Serangkai, Solo.

5. Maksum, M 2004b, *Khasanah akhlaq mahmudah dalam pendidikan agama Islam kelas 3 SD* (Good ethics in Islamic education for grade three primary school), Tiga Serangkai, Solo.


Local languages


13. Ismail, Syeh H Daud 1989, *Riwayat bidup almarhum KHM As’ad: Pendiri utama As’adiyah* (The biography of the late KHM As’ad: The founding father of As’adiyah), Sengkang, South Sulawesi.


15. Tika, Abdul Pattah 1995a, *Bahasa Makassar untuk kelas 6 sekolah dasar* (Makasar language for grade six primary school), Bina Daya Cipta, Ujung Pandang.

**Indonesian language**


**Social science**

19. Adisukarjo, Sudjatmoko and others 2004, *Horizon pengetahuan sosial untuk kelas 1 SD* (The horizon of social science for grade one primary school), part 1A, Yudhistira (MIA), Jakarta.
