



The Qur'an and Gender Hermeneutics: A Comparative Study of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminist Approaches to Gender Verses

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Abstract: This study examines and compares five gender-interpretation models developed by Indonesian Muslim feminist thinkers: Qirā'ah Mubādalāh (Faqihuddin Abdul Qadir), Ma'rūf (Badriyah Fayumi), True Justice of Women (Nur Rofiah), contextual interpretation (Husein Muhammad), and Qur'anic Gender Writing (Nur Arfiyah Febriani). Focusing on their characteristics, convergences, differences, and contextual origins, the research analyzes how these approaches construct gender justice within Indonesia's social reality. Grounded in theological feminism and Gadamer's hermeneutics, it employs a qualitative-comparative method through literature study, in-depth interviews, and textual analysis of primary works and secondary sources on hermeneutics, Islamic feminism, and Qur'anic interpretation. The findings show that Indonesian transformational Muslim feminist hermeneutics is contextual, critically engages patriarchal biases in classical exegesis, and epistemologically prioritizes justice and women's liberation. While all five thinkers share a commitment to gender justice as a divine value, they differ in hermeneutic strategies, academic orientations, social experiences, and institutional positions. The study concludes that these approaches constitute a distinct, contextual, and transformative school of Qur'anic interpretation aimed at gender justice in Indonesia.

Keywords: Gender Hermeneutics; Husein Muhammad; qira'ah mubadalāh; Qur'anic gender writing; women's true justice.

1. Introduction

The Qur'an affirms the equality of men and women as a manifestation of God's justice, as reflected in numerous verses on the spiritual and social equality of humankind. Divine justice is the basis of ethics, law, and social relations, which demand the creation of a just and prosperous life. However, in historical practice, this principle is often not fully realized due to the dominance of interpretations influenced by patriarchal social constructions (Rahman, 1980). One reason why God's justice is not reflected in social life is the existence of patriarchal norms that have influenced the way religious institutions, including Islam, interpret sacred texts. Although early Islam brought significant changes in improving the status of women in pre-Islamic Arab society, classical interpretations often reflected a patriarchal worldview that limited women. Therefore, there is a gap between the principle of God's justice in the Qur'an and the reality of biased interpretations. This is a major challenge in efforts to build a more just and inclusive understanding of gender-related verses (Ahmed, 1992). To uncover the gap between the Qur'an's values of justice and the interpretations of the commentators, a deeper understanding of the cultural background (tsaqafah al-mufassir) and social context of the commentators is necessary, as both have a significant influence on how they interpret the Qur'an. Therefore, it is not surprising that the social, cultural, and political environment are reflected in the interpretation of the sacred text. In the interpretation of Q.S. Al-Nisa/4:5, for

example, the Qur'anic verse that reflects the background of the commentators gives rise to gender discourse:

وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَامًا....

" And do not entrust to those who are not yet of sound mind (al-sufahā') the wealth (of those) which Allah has made a support for your life..."

The verse prohibiting the handing over of wealth management to al-sufahā' is often interpreted biasedly in the classical exegetical tradition. A number of commentators, such as Al-Ṭabary, Al-Baghawī, Ibn Mundzir, and Ibn Kathir, categorized women as sufahā', arguing that they lack rationality and are incapable of managing finances. This interpretation stems from a patriarchal cultural context that limits women's roles in the economic and public sphere. Some scholars even forbid women from managing family finances. This view reinforces the stereotype that women are weak in economic decision-making. In contrast, commentators such as Al-Zamakhshary, Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzy, and Al-Nasafy interpret sufahā' more egalitarianly as anyone lacking managerial and financial allocation skills, without linking it to a specific gender. These differences in interpretation demonstrate the strong influence of the interpreters' social and cultural contexts on the meaning of the verse. In this context, Islamic feminism exists to critique and deconstruct patriarchal interpretations and return the interpretation of the Qur'an to its fundamental principles of justice and gender equality.

In the context of religious studies, feminism has become a new approach to addressing the challenges of religious dynamics in understanding sacred texts and traditions. Theological feminists Ursula King and Tina Beattie explain that theoretical perspectives on gender demonstrate a fundamental transformation from traditional andro-centric approaches to more critical and inclusive models. This understanding highlights that religion cannot be separated from gender bias, as religion is often used as a means to reproduce and strengthen patriarchal systems. Deconstructing the dominance of masculinity in religious theory and practice is at the heart of this paradigm shift, with feminism becoming a primary analytical tool to challenge religious narratives that normalize gender inequality (Beattie, 2004). Rita M. Gross and Ursula King position gender not simply as a biological fact, but as a product of social construction influenced by historical and cultural contexts, emphasizing that gender-based analysis is an integral element in understanding religion in depth (Gross, 1993).

Postmodern and postcolonial theories serve as important foundations for critiquing hegemonic and exclusive religious epistemologies. Postmodernism rejects the claims of singular truth within dominant religious narratives, while postcolonial theory reveals how religion is often used to maintain social control, including through subordinate gender constructs. In this context, Morny Joy views the neglect of gender diversity as a form of epistemological violence that suppresses the perspectives of women and non-Western societies. Theological feminism then emerged not only as a critique of patriarchy but also as an effort to dismantle power relations within religious discourse. In Islam, feminism developed through a reinterpretation of the Qur'an that emphasized gender equality. Figures such as Amina Wadud, through her book *Qur'an and Woman* and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza passed by In Memory of Her offers a feminist hermeneutics to liberate religion from patriarchal domination. Margot Badran divides Islamic feminism into two phases: early feminism influenced by modernization and post-1970s feminism based on a reinterpretation of the Qur'an and hadith. This second wave of feminism affirms monotheism as the basis for equality between men and women.

According to Badran, Muslim feminism is characterized by gender awareness, engagement with Islamic tradition, and women's experiences. However, Yunahar Ilyas believes that men can also be Muslim feminists, like Asghar Ali Engineer, as long as they are committed to gender justice in Islam. This approach has successfully pushed for family law reform in Morocco, the elimination of misogynistic hadiths in Turkey, and the recognition of women as judges in Egypt, although it

continues to face resistance from patriarchal and conservative groups (Wadud, 1999). In the second wave of Islamic feminism, several figures such as Amina Wadud, Fatimah Mernissi, Ashghar Ali Engineer, Asma Barlas, Riffat Hassan, and Ziba Mir-Hosseini introduced a hermeneutical approach to interpreting the holy book. The concepts offered by these Muslim feminists aim to dismantle patriarchal bias in traditional interpretations by using an approach that emphasizes the principles of justice and gender equality. Aysha Hidayatullah in "Feminist Edges of the Qur'an" explores the interpretation of the Qur'an by Muslim feminists from the late 20th to the early 21st century. According to him, there are three main approaches in feminist interpretation of the Qur'an, namely historical contextualization, intratextual reading and the monotheism paradigm (Hidayatullah, 2014).

Aysha Hidayatullah highlights that many feminist interpreters begin with the assumption that the Quran supports gender equality, even though several verses on inheritance, women's testimony, and polygamy appear to contradict modern values of equality. She argues that some feminists attempt to resolve this tension through contextual and apologetic approaches, but these approaches do not necessarily fully reflect the literal meaning of the text. Therefore, she encourages a more honest reflection on the relationship between revelation, justice, and social context. Amina Wadud offers a holistic reading of the Quran, considering its historical context, linguistic structure, and worldview as a whole. She critiques atomistic interpretations and androcentric biases that ignore women's experiences. Meanwhile, Asghar Ali Engineer developed a liberation theology that emphasizes equality and humanity in gender relations. Asma Barlas places monotheism as the central principle of hermeneutics. For her, the oneness of God rejects all forms of patriarchy and oppression of women. Through a holistic reading, the principle of Divine justice, and the rejection of patriarchal representations of God, Barlas asserts that the Qur'an supports justice and gender equality when understood comprehensively (Barlas, 2019).

Resistance to this feminist hermeneutical approach is not uncommon, especially in regions with established Islamic traditions, such as the Middle East and Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. Criticisms often include the assumption that this method is too influenced by Western thought or is not in harmony with local Islamic practices. Adian Husaini, for example, argues that feminism often stems from an ideology of hatred as a form of resistance to oppression within Western Christian civilization. He also highlights that the feminist hermeneutics used often originates from a Christian academic tradition that views the biblical text not as divine revelation, which contradicts Islamic views (Husaini & Husni, 2015). Adian Husaini's views are reinforced by Sayyaf Nasrul Islami, who criticizes feminist hermeneutics for being too subjective and influenced by interpretive relativism. According to him, Muslim feminism often equates men and women absolutely, ignoring the concepts of fitrah and balance in Islam. He also believes that some feminists adopt a Marxist perspective in erasing biological and natural differences between men and women (Abidin, 2011).

In Indonesia, Muslim feminism has developed since the 1990s through translations of the works of international figures such as Amina Wadud, Fatima Mernissi, and Asghar Ali Engineer. However, Indonesian feminism has a more local character and is oriented towards social change in accordance with the Indonesian cultural context. Etin Anwar explains that the development of Islamic feminism in Indonesia has progressed through several historical phases, from emancipation to the proliferation of gender ideas. Meanwhile, Mansour Fakih divides the development of the gender movement into three stages: rejection, recognition, and maturity. This development was also supported by the emergence of progressive interpretations from Indonesian figures such as M. Quraish Shihab and Nurcholish Madjid, who advocated for a more just reading of Islam for women (Anwar, 2018). The women's movement and gender advocacy in Indonesia continue to develop through various theological studies and gender awareness training. Figures such as Ratna Megawangi, Marwah Daud Ibrahim, and Masdar F. Mas'udi have sought to dismantle patriarchal myths through studies of interpretation, Islamic jurisprudence, hadith, and Islamic books. This effort influenced the development of a fairer interpretation of the Qur'an towards women.

Studies of Muslim feminist hermeneutics in Indonesia are still relatively limited, especially those that compare the approaches of these figures comprehensively. Some prominent figures include

Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, Nur Rofiah, Badriyah Fayumi, Husein Muhammad, and Nur Arfiyah Febriani. They all advocate for gender justice, albeit using different hermeneutic frameworks. Faqihuddin's Qirā'ah Mubādalah approach emphasizes the principles of reciprocity and gender justice, while Nur Rofiah's concept of Essential Justice for Women highlights human equality, contextual justice, and recognition of women's experiences in interpreting the Qur'an (Rofiah, 2020). Badriyah Fayumi introduced the makruf approach as a primary principle in understanding gender relations and social dynamics. Makruf, meaning goodness, conformity, and justice according to sharia, is used to interpret Islamic values in an inclusive and relevant manner to the current context. This approach prioritizes harmony between religious teachings, common sense, and local cultural values, thus addressing the challenges of modern life without losing its spiritual essence. In the context of family and society, goodness and virtue serve as a foundation for strengthening the ethics of togetherness, respect, and responsibility. This approach aims to promote social transformation grounded in universal Islamic values, such as justice and compassion. Goodness and virtue serve not only as normative principles but also as a method that guides Muslims toward a dignified life, in line with the goal of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (blessing for all the universe)(Kodir, 2023).

Husein Muhammad developed a contextual interpretation approach to gender verses by referring to the thoughts of al-Ghazali and al-Syathibi. This approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the context of language, audience, and speaker in the Quranic text. He also considers external contexts such as the traditions, culture, and social conditions of Arab society at the time of revelation. According to him, interpretation must involve a rational analysis of the symbols, social changes, and historical context surrounding the text to produce a relevant and fair understanding. Meanwhile, Nur Arfiyah Febriani, using her approach, Qur'anic Gender Writing offers a critical hermeneutics focused on rereading gender-based verses. This approach begins with identifying gender themes and terms in the Quran, followed by semantic, historical, and philosophical analysis to avoid patriarchal bias. The interpretation is then examined using classical Arabic linguistic principles combined with a critical-contextual approach and modern gender theory. The goal is to affirm that the Quran supports the principles of justice, equality, and cooperative relations between men and women (Febriani, 2025).

The study of five Indonesian transformational Muslim feminist approaches is important for several reasons. First, these approaches attempt to deconstruct traditional interpretations built within a patriarchal framework. Second, these approaches emphasize women as epistemic subjects in religious discourse. Third, this study is relevant to the context of Indonesia, the largest Muslim country with diverse cultures and social realities that differ from those of Middle Eastern and Western feminism. Fourth, these five figures are considered transformational feminists because they not only reinterpret religious texts but also seek to transform social structures that perpetuate gender inequality. However, these approaches have faced criticism from traditionalists. Cep Gilang, for example, believes that Qirā'ah Mubādalah is too influenced by feminism, thus ignoring the principles of classical interpretation and sharia law. Husein Muhammad's approach has also been criticized for using Western hermeneutics and maqā (Islamic doctrine).yesid al-syarī'ah which is considered to have the potential to shift the meaning of the qat'i text.

This study examines academic gaps, particularly the lack of critical dialogue between Islamic feminism and traditional interpretations, as well as the lack of practical studies on the application of feminist hermeneutics to social transformation. To address these issues, the study utilizes theological feminism and Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics to analyze the effectiveness, validity, and relevance of five Indonesian Muslim feminist interpretation approaches in building contextual and adaptive gender justice.

2. Research methods

The study of the Qur'an and Gender Hermeneutics: A Comparative Study of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminist Approaches to Gender Verses is a qualitative study focused on the exploration of meaning, in-depth analysis, and understanding of the methodology of interpreting

gender verses. This approach is used because the study does not aim to measure phenomena quantitatively, but rather to understand how the interpretation methods of Indonesian Muslim feminists are formed through the social, cultural, and ideological contexts of each figure. The research is interpretive and reflective by placing the interaction between text, reader, and tradition as the center of analysis (Creswell, 2014).

The research methods used included library research and field research. Library research was conducted through analysis of the main works of Husein Muhammad, Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, Nur Rofiah, Badriyah Fayumi, and Nur Arfiyah Febriani. Secondary sources, including literature on Islamic feminism, hermeneutics, and gender interpretation, were also used to strengthen the theoretical and comparative framework of the study. Field research was conducted through direct interviews with representative figures (Sugiyono, 2022). Data collection techniques included library research, observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews. Observations were conducted at academic forums, seminars, and discussions related to gender interpretation to examine the implementation of the feminist hermeneutic approach in a social context. Documentation in the form of seminar recordings, scientific publications, and reports from organizations such as KUPI were used to strengthen the empirical data. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the views, experiences, and ideological motivations of figures in developing gender interpretation methods. All of these methods are used to produce a comprehensive analysis of the relevance, effectiveness, and contribution of Indonesian Muslim feminist hermeneutics in constructing a contextual and gender-just interpretation of the Qur'an (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

3. Results and Discussion

A comparative study of the similarities and differences between the approaches of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists can be explored based on the historical aspects of their emergence, their epistemological foundations, and their interpretive methods. These similarities and differences also shape the new character of the hermeneutical current of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists.

a. *Similarities in the Approach of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists*

From a historical perspective, feminists share common challenges and motivations. They confront the unequal relations between men and women legitimized in the name of religion. This creates epistemological and ethical concerns, which are the primary drivers for their search for ways to reinterpret religious texts for greater gender equity. They are driven to present a face of Islam that is *rahmatan lil-'ālamīn* (blessing for all the worlds), capable of liberating women from structural oppression. The approach they develop is based on the principles of justice, equality, and benefit. This motivation also arises from their observation that many classical interpretations are decontextualized and tend to be masculine-biased. Feminists also share an intellectual and social commitment to reforming Islamic discourse so that it is not merely textual but also responsive to women's social conditions.

The interpretive approach of Indonesian transformational Muslim feminist figures such as Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, Husein Muhammad, Badriyah Fayumi, Nur Rofiah, and Nur Arfiyah Febriani shows a fundamental meeting point in siding with the principle of justice (*al-'isālah*) and gender equality (*al-musāwah*) derived from the fundamental values of the Qur'an. These five figures departed from epistemological concerns over mainstream religious interpretations, which tend to be masculine-biased because they only represent men's perspectives and experiences. They agreed that the inequality of gender relations in Muslim society is not a reflection of the substance of revelation, but rather the result of a patriarchal, literalistic interpretation process that is insensitive to the complexity of women's experiences. Therefore, they shared an effort to reread Islamic texts contextually, critically, and ethically, taking into account the socio-historical conditions and spiritual aspirations of women as full subjects within the structure of Islamic knowledge.

These figures depart from the same theological foundation, namely monotheism as a principle of liberation, and position women as full subjects in Islamic teachings. They use an interpretive approach that prioritizes the socio-historical context and rejects a literal reading of verses related to gender relations. Furthermore, their approaches share a commonality in positioning women's experiences as a valid source in the construction of contemporary Islamic epistemology. They reject the notion that women's experiences are only worthy of being objects of study or illustrations of texts. Instead, women's biological and social experiences serve as legitimate and authoritative hermeneutic lenses in interpreting Islamic teachings. In this regard, Qira'ah Mubādalāh, contextual interpretation, Ma'ruf, Justice Hakiki Perempuan, and Qur'anic Gender Writing share a common methodological foundation in their efforts to reconstruct the relationship between text and reality by positioning women as epistemological subjects, not merely recipients of interpretation. This similarity confirms that all these approaches are part of a transformative interpretation movement, in which female scholars and women's involvement in religious interpretation are central to the effort to present an Islam that is liberating and substantively just.

Another striking similarity is that all these approaches do not reject the authority of the Qur'an and Islamic tradition, but rather propose a renewed methodology of interpretation as a form of intellectual responsibility to the dynamics of the times. These figures demonstrate a critical and constructive attitude toward the legacy of classical interpretation, while respecting the contributions of previous scholars, but not accepting their results as stagnant and final. They agree that interpretation must always be dialogical, open, and contextual, not stopping at the literal form of the text, but exploring the *maqā* (meaning) of the text, *yesid* (purpose) and higher ethical values, such as mercy, justice, benefit, and reciprocity. From the overall similarity of approaches, a common thread is found in the transformative interpretation procedure built by Indonesian transformationist Muslim feminists. This is mapped as a layered process as follows: (1) Problem identification→ (2) Basic principles→ (3) Epistemological orientation→ (4) Methodology→ (5) Transformation objectives→ (6) Practical implementation. First, the approach begins with a problem awareness of gender inequality in interpretation. Second, the transformational interpretation approach is based on the values of justice, equality, benefit, and monotheism as liberation. Third, the approach is oriented towards women as epistemological subjects and women's experiences as hermeneutic lenses. Fourth, the interpretation method is contextual, critical, ethical, and dialogical. Fifth, the goal of interpretive transformation is to create an Islam that is liberating, substantively just, and responsive to women's social realities. Finally, in its practical implementation, they build an interpretive approach with operational work such as Qira'ah Mubādalāh, Ta'wil (contextual interpretation), Ma'ruf, Women's True Justice, and Qur'anic Gender Writing.

b. Differences in the Approach of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists

Despite the same spirit, each Indonesian transformational Muslim feminist has a different emphasis and methodology in developing their interpretive approach. Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, for example, built Qira'ah Mubādalāh on the foundation of relational interrelationships between men and women, which stemmed from a critique of the dominance of masculine experience in the history of Islamic interpretation and the hierarchical structure of the Arabic language. In contrast, Husein Muhammad adopted a contextual interpretive approach, emphasizing the importance of critiquing classical, literalistic and stagnant interpretive methods. He emphasized a sociological analysis of the structures of patriarchal domination in interpretation and the importance of reading the text in light of social change and public welfare. Therefore, his approach does not emphasize reciprocal relations as in Mubādalāh, but rather is rooted in an epistemological critique of methodological conservatism.

Meanwhile, the Ma'ruf approach developed by Badriyah Fayumi focuses more on ethical and relational readings in the domestic context, particularly in understanding marital relations that are often formally validated but morally unequal. She uses the ma'ruf in the Qur'an as an ethical and social framework, bridging the gap between normative texts and real-life dynamics. The difference with Nur Rofiah's approach lies in the emphasis. Nur Rofiah formulated Women's Essential Justice

as an approach that explicitly and comprehensively grounds itself in women's biological and social experiences, thereby establishing it as an epistemological category for a more substantive rereading of Islamic teachings. Nur Rofiah's approach is also more structural and systemic, targeting not only domestic relations but also social and legal injustices against women in patriarchal society more broadly.

The Qur'anic Gender Writing approach developed by Nur Arfiyah Febriani takes a more aesthetic-symbolic direction and is based on feminist literary criticism. Different from other approaches that are more ethical, sociological, or normative, Febriani proposes an interpretation of the Qur'an inspired by the spirit of *écriture féminine*, namely writing that rejects the symbolic dominance of masculinity in language and interpretation. She emphasizes the importance of representing women's experiences through style, rhythm, and emotional expression in constructing the meaning of the text. Interpretation for her is not only a matter of scientific methodology, but also an expression of cultural resistance to phallogentrism in religious discourse. While Faqihuddin, Husein, Badriyah, and Nur Rofiah focus more on the structure of interpretation and the principles of ethics and justice, Febriani's approach is more directed towards symbolic reconstruction, discourse style, and epistemic language that favors women's subjectivity as writers and interpreters.

The differences in the construction of the approaches of the five Indonesian transformational Muslim feminists lie in the thematic focus, methodological strategies, and points of emphasis used in interpreting gender verses. Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir developed the Qira'ah Mubadalah approach, which emphasizes the principle of reciprocity in gender relations, namely by positioning men and women as subjects who exchange roles in religious texts. Meanwhile, Husein Muhammad prioritizes a contextual-emancipatory approach that interprets the Qur'an based on universal values such as monotheism, justice, and mercy, and distinguishes between universal and particular verses according to the social conditions in which the text was revealed. On the other hand, Badriyah Fayumi constructs her approach through the keyword *ma'ruf* in the Qur'an, namely normative ethical standards that prioritize the common good in all aspects of family and social life, including in marital relations, divorce, and parenting. Nur Rofiah's approach is based on a systemic and hierarchical framework in reading the Qur'an, by placing women's biological and social experiences as the basis for an ethical and just reading. She developed the concept of Essential Justice for Women, which seeks to affirm women's unique conditions while simultaneously critiquing structural inequalities that perpetuate subordination. Nur Arfiyah Febriani developed an approach that explicitly favors women by actively and progressively reconstructing interpretations. She emphasized the need for gender-just interpretations to counteract gender-biased interpretations.

The Transformational Muslim Feminist interpretation approach is characterized by a diversity of working methods that reflect epistemological and strategic integrity in responding to gender inequality based on religious texts. The structuralist-linguistic character is seen in the grammatical and semantic analysis of verse structures, as is done in the Qira'ah Mubādalāh approach, to uncover the hidden interconnected meanings in the form of language. Meanwhile, the contextual-rational character in the contextual interpretation approach of Husein Muhammad places the text within the socio-political historical landscape in which it was revealed, using critical reasoning regarding the context of the audience and the power structures of the Prophet's time. The normative-ethical character of *Ma'ruf* prioritizes moral principles, mercy, and deliberation as the main parameters for assessing the appropriateness and relevance of an interpretation in contemporary social practice. In the Essential Justice for Women approach, the feminist-substantialist character is seen, this approach is based on the biological and social experiences unique to women as a source of legitimate interpretive knowledge, so that it is able to present justice that sides existentially. Finally, the advocacy-transformational character is seen in Qur'anic Gender Writing to show the interpretation's bias towards structural changes, including legal reform, public education, and social policies that support women's equality and protection, making interpretation a real tool of liberation and social influence.

Similarities and Differences in the Approaches of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists		
No	Aspects of Similarity	Aspects of Difference
1	Social Challenges	Pressure point (Strategy)
2	Motivation	Academic Allocation
3	Sentence foundation	Scope
4	Function	Epistemological Construction
5	Emphasizing social and historical context	Technical working methods of interpretation
6	The ultimate goal of interpretation	Character and Interpretation Scheme

Table 1. Similarities and Differences in the Approaches of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists

Hermeneutical Approach of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists

As previously described, the Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminist approach demonstrates significant common ground in responding to social challenges, ideological impulses, the normative foundations of religious texts, and their hermeneutic orientation and function. These similarities indicate a similar epistemological pattern in interpreting gender justice. In this context, theological feminist theory serves as an analytical tool capable of examining the roots of these similarities. It can be concluded that these similarities arise because feminists believe that gender justice is God's will, that men and women are equal before God, and that the entire work of the transformational Muslim feminist approach supports the empowerment of women within religious authority and the empowerment of sacred texts.

Meanwhile, the Transformational Muslim Feminist approach demonstrates differences across various theoretical and practical dimensions. These differences include the emphasis of hermeneutic strategies, the academic and sociological orientation of each approach, the scope of study covered, and distinctions in the epistemological constructions underlying their theoretical constructions. Furthermore, interpretive techniques (both in terms of methodology, textual analysis procedures, and conceptual frameworks) display diversity, as evident in the characters and interpretive schemes produced by each figure. To more deeply understand the factors behind this variation, Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutic approach, particularly through his theory of *Wirkungsgeschichte* (the history of effective influence), offers a relevant analytical tool. This theory allows us to explore how the historical horizon, socio-cultural background, and life experiences of each feminist shape their pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*). Furthermore, the *Horizontverschmelzung* theory in Gadamer's hermeneutics refers to the fusion of horizons between the historical understanding of the text and the horizon of the reader's contemporary experience to produce new meanings in a dialogical manner (Gadamer, 1999).

The Hermeneutical Approach of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists through Theological Feminist Theory

Theological Feminist Theory positions gender justice as a fundamental principle representing the transcendental will, namely God's will. Rosemary Radford Ruether asserts that gender justice is an expression of the integrity of divine creation (Ruether, 1983). Amina Wadud, Riffat Hasan, and Asma Barlas emphasize the urgency of interpreting the Qur'an based on the principle of *al-'adalah* (justice) from the attribute of God the Most Just (Wadud, 1999). Furthermore, the second principle of this theory is the spiritual equality of men and women before God. This idea rejects the gender hierarchy in the vertical-spiritual relationship between humans and God, as stated by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. Asma Barlas reveals that the Qur'an conceptualizes men and women as equal spiritual partners, although patriarchal narratives often reduce this message (Barlas, 2019). The third principle within the framework of theological feminism is the empowerment of women in religious authority and the process of interpreting sacred texts. Letty M. Russell emphasized the importance of women's roles in building religious communities based on justice. Amina Wadud opened a

discourse on the legitimacy of women as imams and interpreters of the Quran, as an effort to renegotiate traditional boundaries within religious structures. Meanwhile, Kwok Pui Lan emphasized the importance of contextual hermeneutics from the perspective of Asian women experiencing the intersection of cultural patriarchy and Western colonial-religious hegemony (Lan, 2005).

a. *The Hermeneutical Approach of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists Based on the Principle of Gender Justice as God's Will*

Gender equality as God's will is strongly legitimized in the Qira'ah Mubadalah approach developed by Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir. This approach is based on verses of the Qur'an that emphasize the principle of mutuality, equal partnership, and spiritual equality between men and women, such as QS. al-Hujurat [49]:13, QS. al-Nisa' [4]:1, and QS. Ali 'Imran [3]:195. Faqihuddin emphasized that the linguistic structure of the Qur'an often uses mufā'alah forms such as ta'ārafū, ta'āwanū, and tarāḍaw which indicates a reciprocal relationship. This principle is understood as a manifestation of monotheism that rejects the domination of one party over another. Gender relations in Islam, according to him, must be built on cooperation, compassion, and justice, as reflected in QS. al-Baqarah [2]:187 and QS. al-Rum [30]:21. The hadith al-nisā' shaqā'iq al-rijāl is also understood as an affirmation of the ontological equality of women and men. Hussein Muhammad's contextual interpretation approach places divine justice as the primary epistemological foundation in reading gender verses. He rejects literalistic interpretations that perpetuate women's subordination and emphasizes the importance of maqāyesid al-syarī'ah to ensure that interpretation remains aligned with social justice. For him, interpretation must be liberating and humanizing, so that the values of human rights, equality, and mercy become an important part of reading the text (Muhammad, 2005).

Badriyah Fayumi, through the Ma'ruf approach, makes the principles of goodness and social propriety an ethical instrument of interpretation. The husband-wife relationship is understood as an equal relationship, mutual respect, and free from symbolic and structural violence. The principle of ma'ruf is positioned as a bridge between revelation and dynamic social reality (Fayumi, 2024). In the concept of Essential Justice for Women, Nur Rofiah views patriarchy as a form of injustice that contradicts monotheism. Women's biological and social experiences serve as the epistemological basis for reading texts substantively and contextually. Gender verses are understood progressively by placing justice as the ultimate goal of sharia. Nur Arfiyah Febriani's Qur'anic Gender Writing approach critiques androcentric interpretations through thematic, comparative, and historical-contextual methods. This approach emphasizes that valid interpretation must support the values of justice, reciprocity, and anti-discrimination. Thus, the five approaches of Indonesian transformational Muslim feminists equally affirm that gender equality is a concrete manifestation of God's justice in human life.

b. *The Hermeneutical Approach of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists Based on the Principle of Spiritual Equality Before God*

The Indonesian transformational Muslim feminist approach affirms that men and women have spiritual equality before God. Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, through Qirā'ah Mubāḍalah, makes tawhid a theological foundation that rejects hierarchy between humans. The phrase lā ilāha illallāh is understood not only as an acknowledgment of the oneness of God, but also a rejection of gender domination. Spiritual equality is reinforced through QS. Ali 'Imran [3]:195 and QS. At-Taubah [9]:71, which emphasize that men and women have equal spiritual responsibilities and status. The hadith "al-nisā' syaqā'iq al-rijāl" also serves as a hermeneutic basis for reading religious texts in an egalitarian manner (Kodir, 2023). Hussein Muhammad developed a contextual interpretation that positions tawhid as a principle of liberation and anti-domination. Human equality is measured by piety, not gender, as emphasized in QS. al-Hujurat [49]:13. Interpretations that perpetuate the subordination of women are considered contrary to the essence of monotheism and God's justice.

Badriyah Fayumi, through her ma'ruf approach, emphasizes ethical and spiritual relationships that are mutually respectful between men and women. QS. At-Taubah [9]:71 serves as the basis for women having equal spiritual capacity and religious responsibilities. Household relations are understood as a space of mutual respect and respect, not domination. Nur Rofiah, through her concept of Essential Justice for Women, emphasizes that women and men have the same status as 'abd and khalifah. Spiritual equality is understood as the essence of humanity that cannot be limited by patriarchal constructs or women's biological functions. Meanwhile, Nur Arfiyah Febriani, through her book Qur'anic Gender Writing, emphasizes that all humans have a direct relationship with God without gender hierarchy. Verses such as QS. At-Taubah [9]:71 and QS. Al-Aḥzāb [33]:35 indicates that men and women receive equal spiritual responsibilities and rewards. This approach also criticizes the masculine bias in classical interpretations and asserts that Qur'anic terms are fundamentally inclusive and gender-neutral.

c. *The Hermeneutical Approach of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists Based on the Principle of Women's Empowerment in Religious Leadership and Interpretation of Sacred Texts*

Pendekatan The Indonesian transformational Muslim feminist approach places women's empowerment as a primary goal in interpreting sacred texts and religious leadership. Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir's Qira'ah Mubādalāh emphasizes the principle of mutuality as the foundation of Islamic hermeneutics. Through reciprocal reading of verses and hadith, women are positioned as full subjects in Islamic teachings, not passive objects of interpretation. Verses such as QS. Al-Taubah [9]:71 and QS. Ali Imran [3]:195 demonstrate men and women as equal partners in moral, social, and spiritual responsibilities. This approach simultaneously deconstructs the dominance of masculine interpretation and opens up space for religious authority for women. Husein Muhammad, through contextual interpretation, positions the Qur'an as an instrument of liberation from patriarchal structures. Using linguistic, historical, and maqā approaches, yesid al-syarī'ah, he reinterpreted the verses that had been used to legitimize women's subordination, such as QS. al-Nisā' [4]:34. Husein emphasized that women have the same rights to become interpreters, leaders, and agents of social change.

Badriyah Fayumi developed the ma'ruf approach as an ethical principle that connects revelation with social reality. Through this concept, gender relations are understood based on the values of justice, respect, and benefit. Fayumi's interpretation rejects patriarchal practices that harm women and affirms women's rights to social, emotional, and spiritual autonomy. Nur Rofiah, through the concept of Women's Essential Justice, makes women's biological and social experiences the epistemological basis for interpretation. This approach views patriarchy as a form of structural injustice that contradicts monotheism. Quranic verses are read progressively to bring substantive justice to women. Meanwhile, Qur'anic Gender Writing, developed by Nur Arfiyah Febriani, presents thematic, comparative, and historical-critical interpretation methods to dismantle patriarchal bias in classical interpretation. This approach positions women as subjects of knowledge and moral agents in Islam. All approaches of Indonesian transformational Muslim feminists share the same goal: realizing gender equality, spiritual justice, and women's empowerment in the interpretation of sacred texts.

d. *The Hermeneutical Approach of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists Based on Gadamer's Theory*

According to Hans-Georg Gadamer, understanding a text is influenced by the history, tradition, and experience of the interpreter. In the context of Indonesian transformational Muslim feminists, the geographical background and educational mobility of figures such as Husein Muhammad, Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, Badriyah Fayumi, Nur Rofiah, and Nur Arfiyah Febriani shape their interpretive horizons. The urban environment and cross-cultural experiences contribute to a reading of Islam that is more critical of patriarchy and more open to gender equality (Smith, 2011). From the perspective of Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Wirkungsgeschichte*, the thinking of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminists is shaped by their historical experiences, social environment, and intellectual journey. The geographical backgrounds of figures such as Husein Muhammad, Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, Badriyah Fayumi, Nur Rofiah, and Nur Arfiyah Febriani demonstrate the

social and academic mobility across regions and countries that influences their perspectives on gender relations in Islam. Cities such as Cirebon and Ankara are important spaces in shaping their horizons of understanding. Cirebon, with its strong pesantren tradition but still influenced by patriarchal culture, shaped the early awareness of figures like Husein Muhammad and Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir regarding gender inequality in religious practice. Meanwhile, Ankara provided a socio-political experience that demonstrated how women's bodies were often used as a battleground for ideologies between secularism and religious symbols.

These figures' gender awareness stems from diverse life experiences. Faqihuddin, for example, grew up in a family that instilled values of justice despite living in a patriarchal culture. His experience witnessing women being marginalized from religious spaces and experiencing forced marriages fostered a critical understanding of women's issues. Husein Muhammad began to recognize the importance of feminism after attending a seminar on women and religion in the early 1990s. Badriyah Fayumi gained gender awareness through a family environment close to Islamic law and women's activism. Nur Rofiah developed social sensitivity after losing both parents at a young age, which was further deepened through feminist reading and academic experiences in Turkey. Meanwhile, Nur Arfiyah Febriani grew up in a family that did not differentiate between boys and girls in parenting. Their academic journeys demonstrate a paradigm shift from a normative perspective to a critical and contextual approach. Initially, some figures remained skeptical of feminism, but intellectual experience, dialogue with activists, and reflection on social realities led them to reinterpret religious texts more justly. From this process emerged various gender hermeneutic approaches that position the Quran as a living and relevant text for the struggle for justice, equality, and humanity for women.

No	Similarities	Factor
1	Motivation	These figures expressed concerns about gender inequality legitimized by religious interpretations, both through direct life experience and intellectual reflection.
2	Verse Foundation	Based on the transcendent values of the Qur'an (such as <i>Rahmah</i> , <i>al-'adl</i> , <i>al-ma'rūf</i> , <i>al-musāwah</i> , <i>asy-syūrā</i>) which have the weight of universal justice.
3	Interpretation Function	The realization that interpretation is a tool for social transformation is reinforced by the post-Reformasi Indonesian context, the rise of the women's movement, and the opening of public space for discourse on gender justice.
4	Contextual & Historical Approach	All characters demonstrate an awareness of the importance of integrating the historical context of the text with contemporary conditions. This is because they live amid similar patriarchal social structures, albeit in different geographical settings.
5	The Ultimate Goal of Interpretation	Their goal is to realize a just, equal, and liberating Islam, in accordance with the essence of revelation. This stems from the realization that religion should not be used as a tool to legitimize injustice, but rather as a solution to structural problems in society.

Table 3. Similarities: Factors of the Indonesian Muslim Feminist Hermeneutics Approach

The differences in hermeneutical approaches of Indonesian transformational Muslim feminists stem from their differing life experiences, academic paths, social contexts, and institutional positions. These differing interpretive strategies are influenced by their concrete experiences in interpreting social realities. Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, for example, developed *Qirā'ah Mubādalah* by emphasizing the principle of mutuality, influenced by his experience of observing the exclusion of women in traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). Conversely, Nur Rofiah developed a

more philosophical and epistemological approach through her academic experience in Ankara and her involvement in critical discourses on gender and Islam.

Differences are also evident in their academic orientation and target audience. Nur Arfiyah Febriani, who worked in formal higher education, developed a more systematic and theoretical model of interpretation, while Husein Muhammad and Faqihuddin emphasized a more practical and applicable approach because they dealt directly with Islamic boarding schools and grassroots communities. In the advocacy sphere, Badriyah Fayumi utilized the concept of *ma'ruf* to develop an Islamic social ethic that is responsive to issues of family law and women's protection, drawing on her experience as a legislator and public policy activist. Differences in epistemological construction are also evident in the technicalities of their interpretations. Husein Muhammad placed great emphasis on linguistic aspects and verse classification, while Nur Rofiah developed a three-stage scheme of revelation to read the message of the Quran historically and gradually. These differences are influenced by internal factors such as personal motivation, academic experience, activism paths, and the orientation of the institutions in which they work. In addition, external factors such as Indonesia's post-Reformation socio-political situation, patriarchal culture, and geographical and cultural diversity also shape their hermeneutical styles. Although different in method and focus, all these approaches are directed towards a common goal, namely to present an Islam that is just, equal, and frees women from the structures of gender injustice.

Mosaic of Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminist Hermeneutics

The issue of feminism and religion (especially Islam) in Indonesia began to strengthen from the 1980s to the 1990s, marked by the emergence of an early generation of critical thinkers against gender-biased interpretations of religion. Nina Nurmila stated that Muslim feminism emerged in Indonesia about a decade later than secular feminism because it was only during this period that pioneers of Indonesian Muslim feminists emerged after they completed gender-related education abroad (Nurmila, 2021). In the early period, Muslim feminists such as Siti Musdah Mulia emerged, highlighting the issues of polygamy and gender justice in Islamic law (Mulia, 2006). Lies Marcoes-Natsir developed Islamic-based gender education in the late 1980s to the 1990s, particularly on reproductive health issues (Marcoes-Natsir, 1993). Siti Noordjannah Djohantini also strengthened the socio-religious role of Muhammadiyah women through Aisyiyah since the early 1990s (Marcoes-Natsir, 1993). In 1999, Zaitunah Subhan published *Tafsir Kebencian*, which became a milestone in the critique of classical interpretations with a patriarchal perspective (Subhan, 1999).

The support of progressive male intellectuals is also significant, such as Masdar F. Mas'udi (1993) with his work *Islam and Women's Reproductive Rights: A Fiqh Dialogue on Empowerment*, and Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) (president 1999–2001) who consistently defended the rights of women and minorities through policies presented through changes in ministerial nomenclature, Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 concerning Gender Mainstreaming, and protection for vulnerable women such as migrant workers.

In the 2000s, Islamic feminism in Indonesia grew through the strengthening of academic institutions and civil society organizations. Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin played a key role in expanding the study of gender and Islam and later became active internationally through the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). During the same period, Alimatul Qibtiyah and Neng Dara Affiah championed women's issues through the National Commission on Violence Against Women, while Etin Anwar developed contextual Islamic feminism in the academic world. Farha Ciciek Asegaf also contributed to strengthening the education of female ulama. 2001 marked a significant milestone when Husein Muhammad founded Rahima and introduced women's perspectives on the Quran in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). That same year, Nasaruddin Umar published *Arguments for Gender Equality from a Quranic Perspective*, while Syafiq Hasyim actively developed discourse on gender and Islamic democracy. Support for women's religious space was also strengthened by KH. Sahal Mahfudz, who opened up women's participation in Nahdlatul Ulama religious forums.

Entering the 2010s and continuing to the present, Indonesian Islamic feminism has increasingly gained institutional legitimacy and widespread recognition. Academics such as Eva F. Nisa, Dina Afrianty, Siti Syamsiyatun, Sri Suhandjati Sukri, and Eka Srimulyani have expanded the study of Islamic feminism to the international level. The culmination of this movement's consolidation was seen in the 2017 and 2022 Indonesian Women's Ulama Congresses (KUPI), which produced progressive fatwas on sexual violence, child marriage, and environmental protection. Furthermore, this period was also marked by the birth of new methodologies within Islamic feminism. Nur Rofiah initiated the concept of Women's Essential Justice, Badriyah Fayumi developed the theory of *ma'ruf*, Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir introduced *Qira'ah Mubadalah*, and Nur Arfiyah Febriani offered *Qur'anic Gender Writing*. These developments demonstrate that Indonesian Islamic feminism has moved beyond merely criticizing patriarchy to developing a more systematic and transformative hermeneutical methodology (Rofiah, 2020).

The transformation of Muslim feminist discourse in the 2000s was marked by the strengthening of a reformist-transformative typology, in which reinterpretation of the Qur'anic text went hand in hand with the institutionalization of the gender equality agenda. Siti Ruhaini Dzuhayatin and Etin Anwar utilized the academic arena and international institutions to articulate equality within an Islamic framework, while Nasaruddin Umar in his *Argument for Gender Equality from the Perspective of the Qur'an* and Syafiq Hasyim through the discourse of women's *fiqh* emphasized the textual reformist path. Meanwhile, Husein Muhammad demonstrated a transformative character by developing women's perspective interpretations and disseminating them through *Rahima*. Indications of transformative are also reflected in Farha Ciciek Asegaf who fostered the education of female ulama, and Alimatul Qibtiyah and Neng Dara Affiah who institutionalized gender studies within the National Commission on Violence Against Women.

Entering the 2010s, transformative tendencies grew stronger through the formulation of systematic feminist hermeneutic methodologies. Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, with his *Qira'ah Mubadalah*, introduced the paradigm of mutuality in gender relations, while Badriyah Fayumi articulated the theory of *ma'ruf* as a universal ethical principle of the Quran. Nur Rofiah developed the epistemological framework of Women's Essential Justice, which is oriented towards women's experiences as theological subjects, and Nur Arfiyah Febriani developed *Qur'anic Gender Writing*. These transformative indications are marked by the development of new methodologies that do not merely reinterpret but rather build a feminist paradigm in the study of the holy book.

In the contemporary period (2010s to present), Indonesian Muslim feminism has demonstrated a more pluralistic and interdisciplinary character, combining theological approaches, social sciences, and empirical studies. Eva F. Nisa, Dina Afrianty, Siti Syamsiyatun, Sri Suhandjati Sukri, and Eka Srimulyani enrich the discourse through field-based research that connects the experiences of Muslim women, the dynamics of Islamic organizations, and local contexts such as Aceh. Their typology is indicative of their ability to integrate reformist-transformative principles with social science methodology, thereby expanding the academic legitimacy of Islamic feminism. Thus, the development of Indonesian Muslim feminism demonstrates a historical trajectory from the reformist phase (1980–1990s), to reformist-transformative (2000s), followed by transformative and rationalist (2010s), and finally to the more pluralistic and interdisciplinary contemporary phase.

No	Period	Indonesian Muslim Feminist Current
1	1980-1990-an	Reformist
2	2000-an	Reformist-Rationalist
3	2010-an	Rationalist-Transformative

Table 4. Timeline of Indonesian Muslim Feminist Typology

Based on this mapping, the new form of Muslim feminism in Indonesia, categorized as transformational Muslim feminism, exhibits several distinctive characteristics compared to other Indonesian Muslim feminists. First, these figures depart from a strong Muslim identity, so that their

entire framework of thought and practice is rooted in Islamic tradition. Second, Islam serves as an epistemological foundation in the fight for gender justice, not merely a cultural backdrop. Third, their Indonesia-based approach emphasizes that Islamic feminist ideas developed within Indonesia's pluralistic social, political, and religious context. Fourth, they offer a hermeneutical methodology in reading religious texts, particularly verses related to gender relations, thus enabling the emergence of new, more equitable and contextual interpretations.

Broadly speaking, the distinctive interpretation of Indonesian transformational Muslim feminists such as Faqihuddin Abdul Qadir, Husein Muhammad, Badriyah Fayumi, Nur Rofiah, and Nur Arfiyah Febriani lies in their transformative orientation, which makes the Qur'an an instrument of justice and gender equality. Their style always starts from a critique of patriarchal interpretations, then offers an alternative reading approach based on universal Islamic values such as tauhid, 'adl (justice), ma'ruf (propriety), rahmatan li al-'ālamīn, and the principle of mutual benefit (mubādalah). Another distinctive feature is their contextuality and emancipation, where the text is not read literally, but through semantic, historical, and maqā analysis. Yesid, and critical hermeneutics that always consider women's experiences.

The impact of the approach developed by transformational Indonesian Muslim feminists gave birth to a new configuration in the discipline of exegesis, which can be understood as the embryo of a new school of thought in interpreting verses on gender. Transformational Muslim feminism contributed to the expansion of the map of *ittijāhāt al-tafsīr* by adding a gender-based interpretation orientation as a distinct stream alongside linguistic, fiqh, theological, philosophical, and social orientations. The presence of this approach marked a significant shift in contemporary Qur'anic studies in Indonesia, from androcentric interpretations to interpretations that place gender relations as an analytical category in understanding the message of the Qur'an (Zulaiha, 2022). The further tangible impact of transformational Muslim feminist approaches in Indonesia did not stop at the realm of religious discourse, but also spread significantly into the realm of fatwas and public policy. At the normative-religious level, these approaches became the methodological foundation for fatwas and contributed to the birth of progressive fatwas that marked a shift in the fiqh paradigm from a legal-formal orientation to the protection of human dignity (*ḥifz al-karāmah al-insāniyyah*), such as fatwas prohibiting sexual violence, limiting the age of child marriage, and prohibiting environmental destruction. These fatwas were issued through the first Indonesian Women Ulama Congress (KUPI), held on April 25–27, 2017, in Cirebon.

Furthermore, the Indonesian Women's Ulama Congress (KUPI) II was held on November 23–26, 2022 in Jepara and Semarang, continuing to affirm the obligation to manage waste in a healthy, fair, and sustainable manner as a reinforcement of the fatwa prohibiting environmental destruction, as well as the formulation of a fatwa regarding the protection of women from the practice of female genital mutilation and injury (FGM/C) which is dangerous and has no medical basis, which was then formalized as a religious position in November 2024. In addition, the approaches of Indonesian transformational Muslim feminists through KUPI II generally expressed religious views that unravel the problem of marginalization of women in protecting the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia from the dangers of violence in the name of religion, protection of women from the practice of forced marriage, the risk of pregnancy due to rape, and various forms of marginalization and violence against women that are often legitimized in the name of religious teachings.

The transformational Muslim feminist approach has also contributed to changes in national legal policy. This is evident, firstly, in the enactment of Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence (UU TPKS). This law is the result of a long advocacy journey that began with a critique of the colonial-era Criminal Code (KUHP), which positions sexual violence solely as a moral offense, with narrow definitions such as "molestation" and "rape," focusing on public morality rather than the experiences and protection of victims. The Bill on the Elimination of Sexual Violence (RUU PKS), which began to be advocated in the mid-2010s and later changed its name to RUU TPKS, reflects the inclusion of gender justice perspectives, an ethics of care, and a victim-centered approach, also developed within Indonesian Muslim feminist discourse.

Second, the influence of this approach is also evident in changes to the minimum age for marriage policy. Law No. 1 of 1974 previously set an unequal marriage age (19 for men and 16 for women), which implicitly reproduced patriarchal gender constructs and created legal space for child marriage. Following sustained criticism from women's activists, academics, and progressive clerics, including Muslim feminists, the state finally revised this provision through Law No. 16 of 2019, equalizing the minimum age for marriage for men and women at 19. This change reflects a commitment to protecting children's rights and demonstrates how the values of substantive justice championed in transformative Islamic interpretation and thought resonate in national legislation.

4. Conclusion

The hermeneutical approach developed by Indonesian Transformationist Muslim Feminists is contextual, placing religious texts in active dialogue with socio-historical realities. This approach is also critical of the patriarchal structures and ideologies internalized in the tradition of Islamic interpretation. Epistemologically, all approaches are based on the principle of justice, with the aim of liberating women from subordinate constructs and affirming them as autonomous subjects with full capacity in social, spiritual, and civilizational life. Thus, Qur'anic interpretation is not only understood as an intellectual activity but also as an instrument of social transformation oriented towards women's liberation and empowerment. This study also found similarities and differences among the approaches of Indonesian Transformationist Muslim Feminists. Similarities are evident in their responses to social challenges, ideological drives, normative foundations in religious texts, and hermeneutic orientations that emphasize gender justice as a manifestation of God's justice. These similarities indicate a relatively similar epistemological pattern in understanding gender relations in Islam. However, each figure differs in hermeneutic strategies, academic and sociological orientations, scope of study, and conceptual frameworks. Differences are also evident in the interpretation methodology, text analysis procedures, and the character of the resulting interpretations. The similarities in these approaches are influenced by a collective awareness of gender inequality legitimized by religious interpretations, as well as by the socio-political context of post-Reformation Indonesia, which is more democratic and open to gender justice discourse. The differences are influenced by the life experiences, academic backgrounds, social contexts, and institutional positions of each figure, which shape their epistemic horizons. Overall, this study confirms that Indonesian Transformational Muslim Feminist hermeneutics can be understood as a new, independent, contextual, and transformative school of interpretation in constructing gender-just interpretations of the Quran.

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