

*Integrating the Perspective of Hakiki Justice for Women in
Gender Research Methods: An Analysis of Nur Rofiah's
Interpretive Thinking*

**Integrasi Perspektif Keadilan Hakiki Perempuan dalam
Metode Penelitian Gender: Telaah atas Pemikiran Tafsir
Nur Rofiah**

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Abstract

This study explores the integration of the hakiki justice for women perspective into Islamic gender research methodology based on Nur Rofiah's Qur'anic interpretation. Using a qualitative library research approach, it examines the concept of hakiki justice emphasizing substantive equality, humanity, and welfare. Nur Rofiah asserts that Qur'anic interpretation must be grounded in universal moral values such as piety, justice, and compassion. In research methodology, hakiki justice serves as an epistemological foundation recognizing women's biological and social experiences as valid sources of knowledge. Through two main pillars, the Qur'an as a system of values and as a historical process toward justice, Rofiah develops a contextual, humanistic, and transformative approach. The findings reveal that integrating hakiki justice for women reconstructs Islamic research paradigms toward a more just, inclusive, and gender-equitable knowledge framework.

Keywords: *Hakiki Justice for Women, Nur Rofiah, Gender Interpretation.*

Abstrak

Tulisan ini mengkaji integrasi perspektif *keadilan hakiki perempuan* dalam metodologi penelitian gender Islam berdasarkan pemikiran tafsir Nur Rofiah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui studi pustaka untuk menelaah konsep keadilan hakiki yang menekankan kesetaraan substantif, kemanusiaan, dan kesejahteraan. Nur Rofiah menegaskan bahwa penafsiran Al-Qur'an harus berpijak pada nilai moral universal seperti takwa, keadilan, dan rahmah. Dalam metodologi penelitian, keadilan hakiki menjadi prinsip epistemologis yang mengakui pengalaman biologis dan sosial perempuan sebagai sumber pengetahuan. Melalui dua pilar utama, Al-Qur'an sebagai sistem nilai dan proses sejarah menuju keadilan, Nur Rofiah membangun pendekatan tafsir dan penelitian yang kontekstual, humanistik, serta transformatif. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi keadilan hakiki perempuan mampu merekonstruksi paradigma penelitian Islam menuju keilmuan yang adil, inklusif, dan berpihak pada kesetaraan gender.

Kata Kunci: *Keadilan hakiki perempuan, Nur Rofiah, tafsir gender.*

Introduction

Gender equality needs to be understood as a joint effort by all human beings to ensure that every individual receives fair treatment without discrimination based on their natural gender identity.¹ The issue of women and gender justice in Islam has become an important discourse that continues to evolve, in line with increasing public awareness of the importance of equality and respect for women's rights. For centuries, religious interpretations have often emerged from patriarchal social environments, resulting in views that tend to be biased against women. This inequality is evident in various dimensions, including religious texts, social structures, and cultures that still position women as subordinate. Therefore, there is an urgent

¹ Luq Yana Chaerunnisa, "Studi Kasus Pembelajaran Tematik Integratif Berbasis Gender Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah," *Journal Of Integrated Elementary Education* 2, No. 1 (2022): 22, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jieed.V2i1.10854>.

need for a new perspective that is more fair, balanced, and contextual to women's experiences and realities.

Islam, as a religion of *rahmatan lil-'alamin*, actually carries a mission of universal justice for all human beings regardless of gender, namely a religion that is universal, humanistic and dynamic.² However, interpretations of the texts of the Qur'an are often influenced by a masculine perspective rooted in patriarchal social structures, including classical Indonesian interpretations.³ As a result, the hakiki universal and just meaning of the verses of the Qur'an is often reduced by certain social, political, and cultural interests. This creates a gap between the normative values of Islam, which are just, and the social reality, which is discriminatory towards women.

In an academic context, research on women and gender justice requires a methodology that is not only descriptive but also transformative, i.e., a method that is capable of uncovering the roots of injustice while offering a new paradigm that favours human values. One figure who has played an important role in developing this approach in Indonesia is Nur Rofiah, a contemporary *mufassirah* who emphasises the importance of *a perspective of hakiki justice for women* in understanding the texts of the Qur'an and in designing gender-sensitive research.

According to Nur Rofiah, hakiki justice for women is not merely about formal equality between men and women, but emphasises substantive justice that favours the welfare and well-being of human beings as a whole. hakiki justice means seeing human beings according to their nature, taking into account the biological and social

² Robiatul Adawiyah, "Makna Islam Sebagai Agama Rahmatan Lil Alamin Perspektif Partai-Partai Islam Periode 2014-2019 (Studi Terhadap Pernyataan Petinggi Partai Islam Dalam Menanggapi Isu Sara)," *Imtiyaz: Jurnal Ilmu Keislaman* 3, No. 2 (2019): 132, <https://doi.org/10.46773/Imtiyaz.V3i2.53>.

³ Zul Erpan Qurniawan, *Dekonstruksi Tafsir Bias Gender: Kritik Feminisme Terhadap Poligami Dalam Kitab Tafsir Indonesia*, 18, No. 1 (2025): 56.

experiences of women,⁴ and eliminating all forms of structural injustice that oppress women. Thus, *hakiki* justice is an effort to understand the values of the Qur'an in context, so that the moral message of revelation can truly liberate women from various forms of injustice. It requires determination in fighting for justice in order to create a world order that respects and supports women.⁵

Within the framework of gender research methodology, Nur Rofiah's approach to women's substantive justice presents a new paradigm that combines thematic interpretation (*maudhu'i*), contextual approach, and *humanistic* reading of the Qur'an. She views the Qur'an as a system of values and a historical process that aims to lead humans towards a just life. This approach does not merely examine the text textually, but rather reads the social relations and historical context behind the revelation of the verses of the Qur'an. Thus, this method allows researchers to interpret the text by taking into account the concrete realities and experiences of women, rather than relying solely on normative assumptions that often arise from male domination, which can result in textual interpretations that disregard women's experiences.⁶

This context is particularly important in the modern era, where gender studies in Islam can no longer be conducted using a pseudo-neutral or positivistic approach, but must be based on the values of social justice and human morality. The integration of *women's hakiki justice* and *gender research methods* is a form of effort to liberate

⁴ Elsa Lailatul Fitriani And Rohmawati Rohmawati, "Penggunaan Kontrasepsi Darurat Bagi Korban Pemerkosaan Untuk Mencegah Kehamilan Tidak Diinginkan (Ktd) Perspektif Keadilan Hakiki Perempuan," *Legacy: Jurnal Hukum Dan Perundang-Undangan* 5, No. 2 (2025): 129.

⁵ "Audy Nauristmaeda Naftalena Salsabila_201104010008, *Tafsir Relasi Gender Q.S. Al-Hujurat: 13 Perspektif Keadilan Hakiki Nur Rofiah* (Skripsi, Universitas Islam Negeri Kiai Haji Achmad Shiddiq Jember, Fakultas Ushuluddin Adab Dan Humaniora, Juni 2024): 13.

⁶ Nur Rofiah, *Nalar Kritis Muslimah* (Bandung, Indonesia, 2020): 3.

knowledge from patriarchal bias. Thus, research with a perspective of hakiki justice not only produces knowledge but also becomes an epistemological movement that liberates women from various forms of discrimination legalised by biased religious interpretations.

Several previous studies have examined gender-sensitive Qur'anic exegesis, such as the works of Amina Wadud (1999),⁷ Riffat Hassan (1987),⁸ and Musdah Mulia (2004). However, these studies tend to emphasize normative critiques of patriarchal structures or the reconstruction of family law, rather than the formulation of a research methodology on gender grounded in Qur'anic values. Meanwhile, studies on the thought of Nur Rofiah—such as those by Hamidah & Muhibbin (2024)⁹ or Qurrata Aini (2023)—focus more on theological and conceptual aspects without linking them applicatively to research methodology. This is precisely where the research gap addressed in the present study emerges.

Given these conditions, this research aims to explore how the intellectual background and social context shape Nur Rofiah's concept of essential justice for women; how this notion of justice is understood through the lens of Qur'anic exegesis; how its principles and methodological steps can be applied in gender research; and how the integration of the essential-justice approach contributes to the

⁷ Suci Cahyani Et Al., "Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Al- Qur'an: Telaah Pemikiran Aminah Wadud Terhadap Surat At- Taubah Ayat 71," *Almustofa: Journal Of Islamic Studies And Research* 2, No. 01 (2025), <https://ejournal.bamala.org/index.php/Almustofa/Article/View/457-467>.

⁸ Maftukhatusolikhah Maftukhatusolikhah, "Akar Teologis Ketimpangan Gender: Pemikiran Feminisme Riffat Hassan," *Millah: Journal Of Religious Studies*, 2002, 111–27, <https://doi.org/10.20885/Millah.Vol2.Iss1.Art8>.

⁹ Najlah Hamidah And Muhibbin, "Reconstructing Gender Justice In Hadith: A Theological Reading Through Nur Rofiah's Women's Hakiki Justice Approach," *Journal Of Ushuluddin And Islamic Thought* 2, No. 1 (2024): 67–85, <https://doi.org/10.15642/Juit.2024.2.1.67-85>.

development of gender-research methodology in contemporary Islamic studies.

Accordingly, this study holds a significant distinction by integrating three components that have not been explicitly combined in previous research: first, the concept of essential justice for women as an epistemological foundation; second, Nur Rofiah's two exegetical pillars—the Qur'an as a System and the Qur'an as a Process; and third, Miles & Huberman's framework as a qualitative data-analysis model (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This integration is expected to provide a meaningful methodological contribution to the advancement of gender studies within Islam.

Methodology

This research methodology will use a qualitative approach with *library research* to deeply examine Nur Rofiah's interpretation of hakiki justice for women and its integration into gender research methods. The research data, which mainly comes from the texts of the Qur'an, the works of Nur Rofiah, and literature on gender studies in Islam, will be analysed using the Hermeneutic-Thematic Analysis Method filtered through Nur Rofiah's Perspective of hakiki Justice for Women. The qualitative data analysis framework adopts the Miles and Huberman model, which includes the stages of data reduction (sorting data based on *Qath'i* and *Zhanni* categories), data presentation (mapping the Qur'an as a System and Process), and drawing conclusions/verification that are critically based on the integration of women's biological and social experiences as a benchmark for substantive and transformative justice.

Theoretical Foundation And Conceptual Framework

A. Theoretical Foundation

The study of women and justice in Islam cannot be separated from gender theory, which highlights the inequality of social relations between men and women. Gender is understood as a social construct

that distinguishes roles and responsibilities not based on biological nature, but rather on cultural and societal interpretations.¹⁰ In Islam, justice is not understood as absolute equality, but rather as proportional treatment in accordance with human dignity. The Qur'an emphasises that human dignity is determined by piety and good deeds, not by faith, culture, ethnicity, nationality, or even gender (QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]:13).¹¹ The concept of hakiki justice for women proposed by Nur Rofiah places women's experiences as an important source in understanding sacred texts. She emphasises the importance of interpreting the Qur'an contextually and morally, so that the message of revelation can respond to social realities and bring substantive justice for women and men in religious and social life.

B. Conceptual Framework

This research is based on three main pillars: 1. The concept of hakiki justice for women, 2. Gender research methods in Islam, 3. Nur Rofiah's interpretive thinking. hakiki justice emphasises welfare, humanity, and substantive equality by considering the biological, social, and cultural aspects of women so that they can live according to their nature without discrimination.¹² Gender research methods serve to dismantle unjust social structures based on the values of monotheism, piety, and public interest, thereby producing transformative knowledge. Nur Rofiah's interpretive thinking emphasises that the Qur'an must be understood as a system of values and a process towards justice, through a systemic and process-oriented

¹⁰ Fatmawati Fatmawati, "Konsep Gender Perspektif Hukum Islam," *Islamic Law: Jurnal Siyasah* 9, No. 2 (2024): 89, <https://doi.org/10.53429/Iljs.V9i2.984>.

¹¹ Muhammad Raihan Syahid And Sholahuddin Al Ayubi, "Persektif Qur'ani Tentang Kemanusiaan Dan Kesetaraan Gender: Studi Teks Terhadap Nilai-Nilai Hak Asasi," *Mushaf Journal: Jurnal Ilmu Al Quran Dan Hadis* 5, No. 2 (2025): 398.

¹² Mela Rusnika, "Hal-Hal Yang Kutemukan Saat Belajar Islam Di Kajian Keadilan Gender Islam (Kgi)," *Islami[Dot]Co*, September 8, 2020, <https://islami.co/hal-hal-yang-kutemukan-saat-belajar-islam-di-kajian-keadilan-gender-islam-kgi/>.

approach. This framework integrates gender theory and interpretations of hakiki justice, forming a humanistic and inclusive research paradigm that supports substantive justice for women and society at large.

Nur Rofiah's Thoughts On Gender Justice

A. Nur Rofiah's Intellectual Background

Nur Rofiah is one of Indonesia's Muslim feminists who has made a significant contribution to the development of gender justice interpretation. Her thoughts and work are deeply rooted in her educational experience, intellectual reflection, and sensitivity to the social realities of women in society. She is widely known as an academic, female scholar, and founder of the *Ngaji Keadilan Gender Islam (KGI)* movement, which focuses on preaching equality without neglecting Islamic values.¹³

Nur Rofiah's intellectual journey began during her studies at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta (now UIN),¹⁴ an institution known for its critical and progressive intellectual tradition in Islamic studies. It was at this campus that her awareness of women's issues began to take shape. Through interactions with lecturers and open Islamic discourse, she began to question the patriarchal bias that was still strong in classical Islamic interpretation and law. One reading that greatly influenced her awareness was the novel *The Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi, which describes the suffering of women due to an oppressive social system. This book became a turning point for Nur Rofiah in seeing the connection between social oppression and gender-biased religious interpretation.

¹³ "Ngaji Kgi Nyai Nur Rofiah," Kupipedia, Accessed October 18, 2025, https://Kupipedia.Id/Index.Php/Ngaji_Kgi_Nyai_Nur_Rofiah.

¹⁴ "Profil Ustadz Dr. Nur Rofiah, Bil. Uzm.," Accessed October 18, 2025, <https://Cariustadz.Id/Ustadz/Detail/Dr-Nur-Rofiah-Bil-Uzm>.

Her intellectual awareness matured further when she continued her doctoral studies in Turkey, where she interacted with modern Islamic academic traditions and contemporary hermeneutics. There, she discovered that Islam is actually very rich in values of justice and humanity, but is often reduced by patriarchal culture that influences interpretation and jurisprudence. Her life experiences in two social contexts, Indonesia and Turkey, enriched her view that women's struggles are not only about social rights, but also about the liberation of knowledge and interpretation from male bias.¹⁵

In addition to formal education, social experience also played a major role in shaping Nur Rofiah's thinking. She witnessed first-hand how women often become victims of structural injustice in families, religious institutions and society. Highly educated women are often considered to be going against nature, while those who choose to pursue a career in the public sphere are often stigmatised. This situation strengthened her determination to present an interpretation of Islam that supports justice and universal humanity.

As a form of actualising this idea, Nur Rofiah founded "Ngaji Keadilan Gender Islam (KGI)" (Islamic Gender Justice Study Circle), a knowledge-based da'wah movement that aims to instil awareness of gender equality in society. Through the KGI forum, she seeks to bridge the gap between religious texts and social reality, emphasising that women's struggles are not a form of resistance against men, but rather a joint struggle for hakiki justice, both offline and online.¹⁶ KGI serves as an educational platform for the community to understand that Islamic teachings actually carry a message of mercy for all human beings without discrimination.

¹⁵ Siti Nur Maela, "Nur Rofiah: Pegiat Dakwah Keadilan Gender Islam," *Nisa.Co.Id*, February 28, 2023, <https://Nisa.Co.Id/Nur-Rofiah-Pegiat-Dakwah-Keadilan-Gender-Islam/>.

¹⁶ Yuliana Jamaluddin, *Nur Rofiah's Method Of Critical Interpretation In Lingkar Ngaji Kgi*, No. 2 (2022).

KGI not only functions as a forum for religious study, but also as a space for social advocacy. In various activities, Rofiah invites congregations, both men and women, to reread verses from the Qur'an from the perspective of moral values and benefit. Her preaching is empathetic and dialogical, with a spirit of "loving without hating." Through this movement, Nur Rofiah integrates preaching, education, and gender empowerment into a single transformational intellectual movement.¹⁷

B. Figures and Ideas that Influenced Nur Rofiah

Nur Rofiah's ideas did not arise instantly, but rather through a long process of intellectual encounters with various modern and contemporary Islamic thinkers. Among the most influential figures are Masdar Farid Mas'udi, Amina Wadud, Fazlur Rahman, Hasan Hanafi, and Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid.¹⁸

First, Masdar F. Mas'udi had a profound influence through his concepts of *ayat qath'i* and *ayat zhanni*. According to Masdar, *ayat qath'i* are verses that contain universal moral values such as justice and benefit,¹⁹ while *ayat zhanni* are contextual verses that explain the means or procedures for achieving these values.²⁰ This concept was adopted by Nur Rofiah as a methodological basis for distinguishing between moral messages and social rules. For Rofiah, a fair interpretation must

¹⁷ Nur Rofiah, "Berproses Melalui Ngaji Kgi," *Pernak-Pernik, Keadilan Dan Kesetaraan Gender - Mubadalah*, January 28, 2021, <https://mubadalah.id/berproses-melalui-ngaji-kgi/>.

¹⁸ Dosen Pascasarjana Ptiq Jakarta Et Al., "Nur Rofiah," *Kupipedia*, Accessed October 18, 2025, https://kupipedia.id/index.php/Nur_Rofiah.

¹⁹ Kholidah Kholidah, "Qathi' Dan Zhanni Menurut Masdar Farid Mas'udi," *Fitrah: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 2, No. 1 (2016): 23.

²⁰ Umniyatis Sholihah Hastriana, "Analisis Penafsiran Fazlurrahman Dan Masdar F. Mas'udi Tentang Zakat Dan Pajak," *Iltizam Journal Of Shariah Economics Research* 2, No. 1 (2018): 96, <https://doi.org/10.30631/iltizam.V2i1.111>.

be oriented towards moral values (ayat *qath'i*), rather than stopping at procedural texts (ayat *zhanni*).²¹

Second, Amina Wadud provides inspiration in terms of feminist interpretation and spiritual equality. Amina Wadud asserts that men and women are both subjects in their relationship with God, not hierarchical. Nur Rofiah develops this idea by emphasising the unique experiences of women as an epistemological dimension in understanding the Qur'an. This spiritual equality forms the basis for her view that women should not be placed as objects in Islamic interpretation or law.

Third, Fazlur Rahman influenced Nur Rofiah through the *double movement* approach, which is a dual movement between the contexts of the past and the present. Fazlur Rahman emphasised the importance of understanding the purpose of a verse before applying it in a new social context.²² Rofiah adapted this approach to develop a contextual interpretation that is gender-equitable.

Fourth, Hasan Hanafi and Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid introduced the hermeneutic dimension into Rofiah's thinking. Hasan Hanafi emphasised reading texts that favour the reality of the people and rejects rigid normative approaches,²³ while Abu Zaid highlighted the importance of understanding the Qur'an as a historical text that

²¹ Inda Qurrata Aini, "Keadilan Relasi Gender Dalam Tekstualitas Al-Qur`An Perspektif Nur Rofiah" (2023), 112.

²² Padil Akbar Et Al., "Ayat-Ayat Tentang Kisas Dalam Perspektif Ibnu Katsir Dan Fazlur Rahman," *Jurnal Global Ilmiah* 2, No. 9 (2025): 653–64, <https://doi.org/10.55324/Jgi.V2i9.235>.

²³ Muhammad Aji Nugroho, "Hermeneutika Al-Qur'an Hasan Hanafi; Merefleksikan Teks Pada Realitas Sosial Dalam Konteks Kekinian," *Millati: Journal Of Islamic Studies And Humanities* 1, No. 2 (2016): 197, <https://doi.org/10.18326/Mlt.V1i2.187-208>.

interacts with human culture.²⁴ From these two figures, Rofiah learned that interpretation must be *transformative*, changing social reality towards human values, not merely reinforcing patriarchal structures.

The combination of these figures' thoughts formed Nur Rofiah's distinctive interpretation methodology: based on the Qur'an as a value system, oriented towards justice, and opening space for women's experiences as a source of religious knowledge. She does not reject the classical interpretation tradition, but revises and expands it to be more contextual with the universal humanitarian principles of Islam.

C. The Problem of Gender Inequality According to Nur Rofiah

For Nur Rofiah, the root of gender inequality in Muslim society lies not only in patriarchal social structures, but also in religious interpretations that are biased against women's experiences. She identifies several forms of gender inequality experienced by women, including stigmatisation, marginalisation, subordination, violence, and double burdens.²⁵

First, the stigmatisation of women, which is the negative labelling of women who play an active role in the public sphere. A woman's life should not go too far; it is enough to carry out her role as a wife who is responsible for taking care of her husband.²⁶ Women who are highly educated or work outside the home are often considered to be violating their nature. This view stems from a narrow understanding of religion and makes domestic roles the measure of women's morality.

²⁴ Achmad Dafid Imron Sadali, "Reinterpretasi Wahyu : Komparasi Pemikiran Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd Dan Muhammad Arkoun," *Manarul Qur'an: Jurnal Ilmiah Studi Islam* 25, No. 1 (2025): 3, <https://doi.org/10.32699/Mq.V25i1.8825>.

²⁵ Elma Adisya, "Nur Rofiah Dorong Kajian Gender Dalam Islam Yang Lebih Inklusif," *Magdalene.Co*, January 29, 2020, <https://magdalene.co/story/nur-rofiah-dorong-kajian-gender-dan-islam-yang-lebih-inklusif/>.

²⁶ Yuanita Aprilandini Siregar And Ratu Nurul Afini, "Stigmatisasi Terhadap Janda Muda: Studi Kasus Lima Perempuan Korban Perceraian Usia Muda Di Desa Kadubungbang Kecamatan Cimanuk Pandeglang Banten," *Prosiding Sensosio (Seminar Nasional Prodi Sosiologi)* 4, No. 1 (2023): 481.

Second, marginalisation, which is the exclusion of women from access to economic resources,²⁷ education, and decision-making. In many social and religious policies, women are often not given the space to determine their own life choices. For example, family planning programmes that place the responsibility of reproduction solely on women. *Thirdly*, subordination, which is the belief that women are inferior to men in terms of intellectual and spiritual matters.²⁸ This view means that women are rarely trusted to become leaders, religious scholars, or decision-makers. In fact, the Qur'an emphasises that human dignity is measured by piety, not gender.

Fourth, violence against women in various forms, including physical, psychological, sexual, and economic. Violence is often hidden in the name of family shame, so that women lose legal and social protection. *Fifth*, double burden, where women must bear both domestic and public responsibilities without a fair division of roles.²⁹ This condition reflects structural inequalities that have long been legitimised by patriarchal culture.

Nur Rofiah argues that the main source of these various forms of injustice is patriarchal bias in classical interpretations, which often interpret verses from the Qur'an based solely on male experience. This kind of interpretation makes women the object of interpretation, not subjects who have a voice and experience. Therefore, she emphasises the importance of presenting interpretations from a female perspective that integrate women's biological and social experiences in the

²⁷ Daratullaila Nasri, "Ketidakadilan Gender Terhadap Perempuan Dalam Novel *Padusi Karya Ka'ambati*," *Madah: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra* 7, No. 2 (2016): 225–36, <https://doi.org/10.31503/Madah.V7i2.63>.

²⁸ Ratna Dewi, "Kedudukan Perempuan Dalam Islam Dan Problem Ketidakadilan Gender," *Noura: Jurnal Kajian Gender Dan Anak* 4, No. 1 (2020): 23, <https://jurnal.lp2msasbabel.ac.id/Nou/Article/View/1430>.

²⁹ Khoirul Huda And Linda Ayu Renggani, "Perempuan Kapuk Dalam Ekspektasi Budaya Patriarki (Sebuah Analisis Beban Ganda Gender)," *Kafa'Ah: Journal Of Gender Studies* 11, No. 2 (2021): 189, <https://doi.org/10.15548/Jk.V11i2.395>.

interpretation process. Through the concept of "hakiki justice for women", Rofiah offers a way out of this inequality. hakiki justice is not merely formal equality, but substantive equality that respects the differences and needs of each party. This justice requires empathy, appreciation for women's unique experiences, and a re-reading of religious texts based on the universal moral values of Islam: rahmah, justice, and maslahah.

Nur Rofiah's Interpretation Methodology

A. Basic Principles of Interpretation

Nur Rofiah's methodology of interpretation stems from the theological belief that the Qur'an is the word of Allah, who is just, loving, and committed to the welfare of all human beings. Therefore, every attempt to interpret the Qur'an must reflect justice and benefit, which are at the core of the message of revelation. In her view, sacred texts are never oppressive; what is oppressive is the way humans understand these texts through the lens of patriarchal culture and unequal social systems.

Nur Rofiah emphasises that the main purpose of interpretation is to uphold justice (*al-'adl*), both for men and women. The Qur'an was not revealed to legitimise social inequality, but to free humans from injustice. Therefore, any interpretation that gives rise to gender discrimination has deviated from the moral purpose of revelation. This basic principle is based on verses such as QS. al-Māidah [5]: 8, "*Be just, for justice is closer to piety.*" Thus, justice and benefit are not only social goals, but also manifestations of piety to Allah.

In the interpretation process, Rofiah emphasises the importance of recognising women's unique experiences as part of the source of knowledge. According to her, women's biological and social experiences, such as menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and domestic responsibilities, are realities that shape a

unique and valuable moral perspective.³⁰ When these experiences are ignored in interpretation, the results will be biased and potentially lead to injustice. Therefore, including women's experiences is not a form of excessive subjectivity, but rather an epistemological step to ensure that interpretations truly favour the welfare of all human beings.

Rofiah rejects the view that separates revelation from social context. She emphasises that revelation exists to guide humans in the dynamic reality of life. Therefore, interpretation must always consider historical, social, and cultural contexts so that the moral message of the Qur'an remains relevant across time. A fair interpretation is not a rigid and textual interpretation, but rather an interpretation that lives with humanity and drives social change towards mutual prosperity.

B. Two Pillars of Interpretation Methodology

Nur Rofiah's methodology is built on two main pillars: the Qur'an as a System and the Qur'an as a Process. These two pillars form a complementary hermeneutical framework in an effort to understand the *divine* message in a holistic and contextual manner.

1. The Qur'an as a System

Viewing the Qur'an as a system means understanding that each verse is interconnected and forms a complete network of moral values. This system consists of three main categories:

- a. Mission Verses, which are verses that indicate the broad direction of Islamic teachings, such as mercy, justice, and benefit. For example, QS. *al-Anbiyā'* [21]: 107, "*And We have not sent you (Muhammad) except as a mercy to all creation.*"³¹ This verse

³⁰ Najlah Hamidah And Muhibbin, "Reconstructing Gender Justice In Hadith: A Theological Reading Through Nur Rofiah's Women's Hakiki Justice Approach," *Journal Of Ushuluddin And Islamic Thought* 2, No. 1 (2024): 75, <https://doi.org/10.15642/juit.2024.2.1.67-85>.

³¹ Muhammad Rafi, "Muhammad Saw Adalah Rahmat Bagi Alam: Tafsir Al-Anbiya' Ayat 107," *Tafsir Al Quran | Referensi Tafsir Di Indonesia*, October 11, 2020,

serves as a moral compass that every interpretation must be oriented towards universal benefit.

- b. Moral Foundation Verses are verses that contain universal ethical values such as equality, humanity, and social responsibility. For example, QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 13 emphasises that human dignity is determined by piety, not gender or social status. Moral foundation verses serve as the ethical basis for legal verses.

Practical verses are verses that regulate practical actions according to the socio-cultural context of a particular community. Verses such as those concerning inheritance, polygamy, and male leadership fall into this category. However, practical verses are contextual, not final, so they can be reinterpreted in accordance with the principles of justice and benefit.³²

By understanding the Qur'an as a system, interpreters must not separate a verse from its overall moral context. For example, the verse on polygamy (QS. an-Nisā' [4]: 3) cannot be interpreted separately from verses that emphasise justice and compassion (QS. ar-Rūm [30]: 21, QS. al-Māidah [5]: 8). This value system ensures that every interpretation leads to the main objectives of Islam: *mercy*, *justice*, and *benefit*.

2. The Qur'an as a Process

In addition to the system, Rofiah views the Qur'an as a gradual process of revelation (*tadarruj al-wahy*) that guides humans from an unjust social condition towards a just social order. This approach shows that the messages of the Qur'an develop progressively, adjusting to the moral readiness of the people.

<https://Tafsiralquran.Id/Tafsir-Al-Anbiya-Ayat-107-Nabi-Muhammad-Saw-Adalah-Rahmat-Bagi-Seluruh-Alam/>.

³² Inda Qurrata Aini, "Keadilan Relasi Gender Dalam Tekstualitas Al-Qur`An Perspektif Nur Rofiah" (2023): 117.

Within this framework, Rofiah divides the verses into three stages:

- a. Starting Point Verses, which reflect the patriarchal social conditions of pre-Islamic Arab society. For example, QS. Āli 'Imrān [3]: 14 *"Made beautiful for men is the love of various pleasures in the form of women, children, endless treasures of gold, silver, choice horses, livestock, and fields. That is the enjoyment of worldly life, and with Allah is the best return."*³³ which describes women as part of worldly pleasures. This verse is not an ideal norm, but a reflection of the culture at that time.
- b. The Target Verse, which indicates the transition towards justice. For example, QS. an-Nisā' [4]: 3 *"If you fear that you will not be able to treat orphan girls fairly (if you marry them), then marry women of your choice, two or three or four. However, if you fear that you will not be able to treat them fairly, then marry only one or the female slaves you possess"*³⁴ and QS. an-Nisā' [4]: 34, *"Men (husbands) are responsible[154] of the women (wives) because Allah has made some of them (men) superior to others (women) and because they (men) spend (of their wealth) from their means. The righteous women are those who are obedient (to Allah) and guard their chastity when (their husbands) are absent because Allah has guarded (them). As for those women from whom you fear disobedience,[155] admonish them, leave them alone in bed, and (if necessary) beat them (in a way that does not cause pain). However, if they obey you, do not seek ways to harm them"*³⁵ which still accommodates patriarchal culture but begins to introduce the principles of justice and social responsibility.

³³ "Surat Ali 'Imran Ayat 14: Arab, Latin, Terjemah Dan Tafsir Lengkap | Quran Nu Online," Accessed October 21, 2025, <https://Quran.Nu.Or.Id/Ali%20'imran/14>.

³⁴ "Qur'an Kemenag," Accessed October 21, 2025, <https://Quran.Kemenag.Go.Id/Quran/Per-Ayat/Surah/4?From=3&To=176>.

³⁵ "An-Nisa 4: 34," Accessed October 21, 2025, <https://Www.Rumahfiqih.Com/Quran/4/34>.

- c. The Final Purpose verse, which displays the highest values of equality and humanity, such as QS. at-Taubah [9]: 71 "*And the believers, men and women, are allies of one another.*"³⁶ which emphasises that men and women are *auliya'*, helpers of one another in goodness.³⁷ This process-oriented approach shows the progressive direction of revelation: from patriarchy to equality, from inequality to hakiki justice. Therefore, interpretation should not stop at the starting point or intermediate target, but must be directed towards the final goal, which is the moral ideal of Islam.

C. Steps in Nur Rofiah's Method of Interpretation

The interpretation method developed by Nur Rofiah includes five main steps that are hermeneutic and transformative in nature:

1. Understanding the Historical Context (*Asbābun Nuzūl* and Socio-Cultural).

Each verse must be read with consideration of the historical background of the revelation and the social conditions of Arab society at that time. The aim is for the interpreter to be able to distinguish between universal moral messages and contextual responses to patriarchal culture. For example, the verse on polygamy was revealed not to encourage polygamy, but to protect orphaned women after the war.

2. Distinguishing between *Qath'i* (purpose) and *Zhanni* (method) verses.

- d. This step is adapted from Masdar F. Mas'udi's concept. *Qath'i* verses contain eternal values such as justice, humanity, and compassion, while *zhanni* verses explain how to achieve these

³⁶ "Surat At-Taubah Ayat 71," Tafsir Alquran Online, Accessed October 21, 2025, <https://Tafsirq.Com/Permalink/Ayat/1306>.

³⁷ Aini, "Keadilan Relasi Gender Dalam Tekstualitas Al-Qur`An Perspektif Nur Rofiah.": 119

values, which are contextual in nature. In practice, *qath'i* verses are the main guidelines, while *zhanni* verses must be interpreted in accordance with the modern context.³⁸

3. Reading the Qur'an as a Complete Value System.

Interpretation should not be partial. Each verse must be placed within the context of other verses that carry the same moral values. In this way, interpreters will discover the consistent grand direction of Islam: to free humanity from injustice.

4. Interpreting Revelation as a Gradual Process Towards Justice.

This step emphasises the dynamic aspect of revelation. Interpreters must be able to see the development of the Qur'an's message from its initial patriarchal conditions towards a fair and equal social system. Therefore, interpretations that stop at transitional verses (such as those on polygamy or male leadership) will be stuck in a textual understanding and lose their moral direction.

5. Integrating Women's Biological and Social Experiences.

The final step is the most distinctive in Rofiah's method. She asserts that women's experiences are not merely additional, but an important part of the epistemology of interpretation. Biological experiences such as pregnancy and childbirth demand social empathy, while social experiences such as stigmatisation, violence, and double burdens must be eliminated in order for interpretation to truly bring about justice. If interpretation causes suffering for women, then that interpretation is contrary to divine values.

D. The Method of hakiki Justice for Women

The concept of the method of hakiki justice for women is at the core of Nur Rofiah's entire interpretive thinking. This method

³⁸ Rahmad Setyawan And Muslih Muslih, "Implementasi Konsep Qath'i Dan Dzanni Dalam Jarimah Pencurian: Relevansi Hukuman Potong Tangan Di Era Modern," *Abdurrauf Law And Sharia* 1, No. 2 (2024): 182, <https://doi.org/10.70742/Ar lash.V1i2.82>.

combines rational (*ra'yu*), contextual, and thematic (*maudhu'i*) approaches with the benchmarks of piety and humanity. According to her, hakiki interpretation is not merely translating the text, but also presenting divine values in real life. In the *ra'yu* approach, human reason plays an active role in interpreting revelation without deviating from the basic values of the Qur'an. Reason is used to understand context, weigh benefits, and ensure that interpretation does not contradict the principle of justice. This approach is in line with the spirit of *ijtihad*, which places humans (men and women) as caliphs responsible for using reason to uphold the common good.³⁹

The *thematic* method (*maudhu'i*) is used to compile all verses that discuss a particular theme in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding. For example, when interpreting the theme of women, Rofiah does not only focus on QS. an-Nisā' [4]: 3, but also relates it to QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 13, QS. al-Māidah [5]: 8, and QS. ar-Rūm [30]: 21. Thus, her interpretation is not limited to legal verses, but reflects the overall value system of the Qur'an. The main benchmarks of this method are the values of piety and humanity. Piety is not interpreted in a ritualistic sense, but as a moral awareness to uphold social justice. Within this framework, any interpretation that results in inequality, oppression, or suffering for women is considered inconsistent with the spirit of piety. hakiki justice demands that differences between men and women be recognised without hierarchy, and that women's unique experiences be valued as part of a whole humanity.

³⁹ "Nyai Nur Rofiah Tegaskan Perempuan Bukan Sumber Fitnah Dan Objek Seksual," Nu Online, Accessed October 18, 2025, <https://www.nu.or.id/jateng/nyai-nur-rofiah-tegaskan-perempuan-bukan-sumber-fitnah-dan-objek-seksual-2efj1>.

Application of The Method of hakiki Justice for Women in Interpretation

A. Interpretation of QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 13 – The Identity of a Muslim and Muslimah

1. Historical Context (Elimination of Social Discrimination)

This verse was revealed in the social context of Arab society, which was still rife with discrimination based on race, tribe, and social status. Historically, this verse is related to two important events. *First*, when Bilal bin Rabah, a former black slave, called the adhan on top of the Ka'bah, some of the Quraish belittled him because of his status and skin colour.⁴⁰ *Second*, when Abu Hindun, a former slave, was about to be married to a woman from the Bayadhah tribe, some people refused because they considered him socially unworthy.⁴¹ In such a situation, Allah revealed QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 13 as an affirmation that human dignity is not determined by race, tribe, gender, or social status, but by piety. This verse became a moral revolution that abolished hierarchical social structures and paved the way for spiritual equality between men and women.

The verse reads:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another.

⁴⁰ Moh Ali Wafi And Masyithah Mardhatillah, “Interpretasi Ma’na Cum Maghza Analisis Konsep Kebangsaan Dalam Qs. Al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 13,” *Al-Tadabbur: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur’an Dan Tafsir* 10, No. 01 (2025): 66, <https://doi.org/10.30868/At.V10i01.8315>.

⁴¹ Yudi Wildan Rasyid Et Al., “Al-Qur’an Sebagai Manifesto Kesetaraan: Keadilan Dalam Resolusi Konflik Dalam Tafsir At-Tahrīr Wa At-Tanwīr Karya Ibnu ‘āsyūr,” *Qur’anuna: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Al Qur’an & Tafsir* 1, No. 01 (2025): 6.

Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is All-Knowing and All-Aware."⁴²

This verse emphasises that human differences are part of God's plan for mutual understanding and cooperation in goodness (*li ta'ārafū*), not a basis for discrimination or domination.

2. *Qath'i* Verse (The Value of Piety and Spiritual Equality)

According to Nur Rofiah's method of interpretation, QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 13 is classified as a *qath'i* verse, which is a verse that contains eternal and universal moral values. This verse does not talk about practical rules (*methods*), but rather the highest moral goal (*ghāyah*) of Islamic teachings, namely piety, spiritual equality, and hakiki humanity. For Rofiah, piety in the context of this verse does not merely mean ritual obedience, but ethical awareness to uphold justice towards others. Piety becomes a moral measure that transcends all social and biological differences. Therefore, both men and women have the same opportunity to achieve glory in the sight of Allah. Within the framework of *hakiki justice for women*, this verse eliminates the view that women must be socially subordinate to men. The relationship between the two is not hierarchical, but a horizontal relationship between servants of Allah who have equal spiritual dignity. This view affirms the principle that hakiki servitude is only to Allah, not to fellow human beings.

3. System and Process Analysis: Final Purpose Verse

In Nur Rofiah's interpretation system, this verse belongs to the category of final goal verses in *the Qur'an as a Process*. It describes the peak of Islamic human consciousness, the stage at which society achieves spiritual and social equality. Previously, Arab society was still at the stage of *the starting point verse* (patriarchal and discriminatory),

⁴² "Surat Al-Hujurat Ayat 13 Arab, Latin, Terjemah Dan Tafsir | Baca Di Tafsirweb," Accessed October 19, 2025, <https://Tafsirweb.Com/9783-Surat-Al-Hujurat-Ayat-13.Html>.

then through *the intermediate target verse* (stages of social reform towards justice), until finally reaching this verse as the Islamic moral ideal. Systemically (*the Qur'an as a System*), QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 13 also functions as a verse of moral foundation and mission, which must be the basis for interpreting social verses such as inheritance, leadership, and polygamy. Thus, any interpretation that causes gender inequality or demeans women is contrary to the Qur'anic value system of justice.

4. Integration of Women's Experiences

The method of hakiki justice requires the integration of women's biological and social experiences into interpretation. In the context of this verse, women's experiences show that discrimination often occurs because of social views that consider women inferior. For example, women who choose to work, pursue higher education, or express their opinions in public spaces are often considered to be acting against their nature.

Nur Rofiah rejects this view by referring to the principle of this verse: human dignity is not determined by gender, but by piety.⁴³ Thus, women's experiences actually enrich the understanding of interpretation, because they reveal the human side that is often overlooked by masculine interpretations. This integration also shows that the Qur'an does not only speak to men, but to all of humanity (*yā ayyuhannās*). Therefore, women have the same right to interpret, understand, and implement Islamic teachings in real life.

5. Piety as the Measure of hakiki Human Value

QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 13 in Nur Rofiah's interpretation becomes the theological basis for the concept of hakiki justice for women. This verse teaches that the measure of nobility is not gender, social status, or race, but piety that gives rise to fair and empathetic behaviour towards others. Thus, the hakiki identity of a Muslim man and woman is as

⁴³ Nur Rofiah, *Nalar Kritis Muslimah* (Bandung, Indonesia, 2020): 32.

servants of Allah who are faithful, pious, and uphold justice. Spiritual equality between men and women is part of human nature and the ultimate goal of the Qur'an's mission.

B. Interpretation of QS. an-Nisā' [4]: 3, Polygamy in the Qur'an

1. Historical Context (Protection of Orphans and Widows)

QS. an-Nisā' [4]: 3 was revealed after the Battle of Uhud, when many Muslim men were killed, leaving widows and orphans without protection.⁴⁴ In pre-Islamic times, the practice of polygamy was carried out freely without limits and often harmed women. This verse was revealed to limit the practice of polygamy and uphold justice for women and orphans, as Allah says:

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ ۚ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ
أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً

*"And if you fear that you will not be able to deal justly with orphan girls, then marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if you fear that you will not be able to deal justly, then marry only one..."*⁴⁵

In this context, this verse is not a command to practise polygamy, but rather a warning against the potential for injustice in the practice of polygamy and a limitation on polygamy to only four wives,⁴⁶ whereas previously there was no limit. In fact, the end of the verse contains a moral preference for monogamy: *"that is more likely to prevent you from doing wrong."* This means that monogamy is better.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Isqi Dzurriyyatus Sa'adah And Mohamad Sar'an, "Implementasi Praktik Poligami Dalam Hukum Keluarga Islam: Analisis Terhadap Tafsir An-Nisā Ayat 3," *Al-Mawarid Jurnal Syariah Dan Hukum (Jsyh)* 6, No. 1 (2024): 52, <https://doi.org/10.20885/Mawarid.Vol.6.Iss1.Art5>.

⁴⁵ "Surat An-Nisa Ayat 3 Arab, Latin, Terjemah Dan Tafsir | Baca Di Tafsirweb," Accessed October 19, 2025, <https://Tafsirweb.Com/1535-Surat-An-Nisa-Ayat-3.Html>.

⁴⁶ Rofiah, *Nalar Kritis Muslimah*: 18.

⁴⁷ Mem Adienda Nabyla Al-Gifani, *Wacana Kesetaraan Gender Dalam Al-Qur'an Menurut Pandangan Nur Rofiah* (Skripsi, Jurusan Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir, Fakultas

2. *Zhanni* Verse (Transitional Method, Not the Final Goal)

According to Nur Rofiah's classification, QS. an-Nisā' [4]: 3 is a *zhanni* verse, which is a contextual and transitional verse. This verse is not the ultimate goal of Islam, but a temporary step towards a more just social order. This verse provides a practical solution in the post-war social context, when many women and orphans needed economic protection. However, within the framework of the universal values of the Qur'an, the ultimate goal is not to maintain polygamy, but to achieve justice, compassion, and family welfare.

Therefore, polygamy is not an ideal norm, but a form of social compromise limited by the principle of justice. If justice cannot be upheld, and the Qur'an emphasises that humans are incapable of perfect justice (QS. an-Nisā' [4]: 129), then monogamy is the choice most in line with the values of piety and benefit.

3. System and Process Analysis: Monogamy as the Ideal of Justice

Within the framework of *the Qur'an as a system*, this verse must be read in conjunction with other verses that emphasise the values of compassion and justice, such as QS. ar-Rūm [30]: 21 and QS. al-Māidah [5]: 8. When understood systemically, the main message of this verse is not "it is permissible to have many wives," but the necessity of upholding justice and humanity in marital relationships. Within the framework of *the Qur'an as a Process*, QS. an-Nisā' [4]: 3 is classified as an intermediate target verse, which is a stage towards the final goal of Islamic teachings.

Previously, pre-Islamic society (the starting point) practised unlimited polygamy; Islam then narrowed its scope, eventually affirming monogamy as the ideal form because it is closer to justice and piety (the final goal). Thus, monogamy is the moral direction of

revelation, while polygamy is only a temporary path in certain social conditions.

4. Integration of Women's Experiences

The method of hakiki justice requires that interpretation take into account the real experiences of women who are often victims of polygamy. From a biological perspective, polygamy causes emotional, psychological, and physical stress on wives. From a social perspective, polygamy often causes household instability, jealousy, and injustice in the distribution of economic rights and affection.

Rofiah emphasises that a correct interpretation must reject all forms of practice that cause suffering, because the suffering of women constitutes a violation of the values of rahmah and 'adl, which are at the heart of the Qur'an. Thus, interpreting this verse from the perspective of women's experiences helps to emphasise that Islam is not present to perpetuate polygamy, but to protect the dignity of women and uphold family justice.

5. Monogamy is Closer to hakiki Justice and Piety

From the perspective of hakiki justice for women, QS. an-Nisā' [4]: 3 is not a legitimisation of polygamy, but a moral warning for humans to be cautious of the potential for injustice. Justice is an absolute requirement, and because humans are incapable of achieving perfect justice, monogamy becomes the form of marriage that is most in line with the value of piety.⁴⁸

Thus, this verse contains the message that justice in gender relations is a manifestation of faith and piety. Upholding justice for women means upholding the spiritual values of Islam itself.

⁴⁸ "2024-Inda Qurrata Aini-2021 (1)," 156-157.

C. Comparison of the Two Verses

Aspect	QS. al-Ḥujurāt [49]: 13	QS. an-Nisā' [4]: 3
Type of Verse	<i>Qath'i</i> (universal moral purpose)	<i>Zhanni</i> (transitional and contextual approach)
Theme	Spiritual and social equality of humanity	Social restrictions on the practice of polygamy
Direction of Interpretation	Final goal (hakiki equality)	Intermediate goal (towards justice and welfare)
Core Values	Piety and universal humanity	Justice, protection, and compassion
Social Relevance	The foundation of the identity of modern Muslim men and women	Social reform towards hakiki justice

Conclusion

This study shows that: *First*, Nur Rofiah's thinking on *hakiki justice for women* was born as a response to patriarchal bias in Islamic interpretation and research, which has long placed women in a subordinate position. It stems from her intellectual awareness and social experience to liberate religious understanding from gender inequality. *Second*, *hakiki justice* is understood not merely as formal equality, but as substantive justice that emphasises benefit, welfare, and appreciation of women's biological and social experiences as part of universal human values. *Third*, through her two methodological pillars, *the Qur'an as a System* and *the Qur'an as a Process*, Nur Rofiah emphasises the importance of reading the Qur'an contextually,

distinguishing between *qath'i* (universal moral values) and *zhanni* (contextual rules) verses, and integrating women's experiences into the process of interpretation and research. *Fourth*, the integration of the perspective of women's hakiki justice not only reformulates the methodology of interpretation but also reconstructs the paradigm of Islamic gender research to be more just, inclusive, and aligned with universal human values.

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