

Tafsir Ekoteologis: Studi Fatwa Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia *State Capital*

Ecotheological Exegesis: A Study of Indonesian Women's Ulema Congress Opinion

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Abstrak

Kerusakan lingkungan menjadi problematika yang mendapat banyak perhatian, tidak terkecuali dari kalangan agamawan. Interpretasi ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an hadir untuk mengurai etika terhadap alam dan lingkungan. Salah satu barisan yang mencoba menafsirkan ayat-ayat ekologis dalam Al-Qur'an adalah Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI). Kongres ini pertama kali digelar pada tahun 2017, kedua kalinya pada 2022. Pada kongres pertama, KUPI membahas tiga hal krusial mulai dari kekerasan seksual, pernikahan anak, hingga kerusakan lingkungan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menelaah penafsiran KUPI terkait dengan kerusakan lingkungan. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan riset yang berjangkar pada kajian pustaka (library research). Data dikumpulkan dari literatur- literatur yang relevan dengan topik yang diangkat. Sumber primer diperoleh dari Dokumen Resmi Proses dan Hasil Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI) I pada tahun 2017. Sumber sekunder diperoleh dari literatur, jurnal, artikel, buku, yang selaras dengan topik lingkungan dan ekoteologi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif- analitis dengan melakukan analisis konten (content analysis) sebagaimana termaktub dalam sumber primer. Untuk menganalisis temuan penelitian, maka dipakai kerangka ekoteologi Seyyed Hossein Nasr dan Mary Evelyn Tucker. Terdapat beberapa tahap dalam melakukan penelitian ini, mulai dari tahap pengumpulan data, identifikasi data, analisis data yang diperoleh, hingga penarikan kesimpulan berdasarkan kerangka teori. Hasil yang dicapai bahwa penafsiran KUPI terkait ayat Al-Qur'an bernuansa ekoteologis sebagaimana dalam kerangka Nasr dan Tucker. Terdapat sembilan belas ayat yang dipakai untuk mendukung posisi kontra terhadap kerusakan lingkungan. Di antaranya bahkan lebih progresif dibanding penafsiran dalam khazanah eksegesis klasik.

Kata kunci: *Ekologi, ekoteologi, Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia, tafsir.*

Abstract

Environmental damage is a problem which gets attention even religionist regards about it. The interpretation of Koran verses presents to elaborate the ethical principle for nature and environment. One of the groups which attempts to interpret ecological verses within Koran is Indonesian Women's Ulema Congress (KUPI). This congress held firstly in 2017 and then 2022. In first congress, KUPI discussed three crucial issues from sexual abuse, child marriage until damage of nature. This research

aims to analyze KUPI interpretation regarding environmental damage. The type of research is qualitative based on library research (kajian pustaka). The data are gathered from literatures which are relevant with the topic. Primary source is earned from Result and Process Document of Indonesian Women's Ulema Congress (KUPI) I in 2017. Secondary sources are earned from literature, journal, article, book, which relate with topic of environment and ecotheology. This research uses analytical descriptive which analyzes the content such as in primary source. To analyze the finding of research uses ecotheology concept initiated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mary Evelyn Tucker. There are phases in this research from collecting, identifying, analyzing and concluding the data based on the theoretical framework. The conclusion that KUPI interpretation on Koran verse is ecotheological such as Nasr and Tucker perception. There are nineteen verses which are elaborated to support contrary position toward environmental damage. Some of KUPI interpretations are more progressive than interpretation in classical exegesis.

Keywords: *Ecology, Ecotheology, Indonesian Women's Ulema Congres, Interpretat*

Introduction

One of the issues that is gaining serious attention from religious communities is the matter of environmental issues. Ecological problems and their ramifications have become significant challenges to confront. Various approaches and measures are required to address these issues. There are numerous factors contributing to the occurrence of environmental disasters and degradation. At this juncture, the central role of religion cannot be disregarded. There are several reasons why religion is indispensable in this regard, particularly in rediscovering the values enshrined in sacred texts as an endeavor in environmental conservation. One rationale is that religion is closely intertwined with humanity. Religion serves as a guide for how humans should navigate life on Earth. In other words, religion provides guidance for humans as they traverse the ups and downs of existence.

Many scholars have extensively elucidated the essential role of religion in the lives of its adherents. Mulyadi contends that religion serves as motivation for its followers to take action. It acts as a fuel for its adherents to engage in acts of goodness. This motivation becomes the driving force for individuals to effect change. Furthermore, religion also serves as an ethical framework, regulating what is deemed good and bad. Quoting Mc. Guire, religion shapes the value system within its adherents. Religious symbols play a crucial role in the formation of an individual's value system.¹ That is why religion is capable of

¹ Mulyadi, "Agama Dan Pengaruhnya Dalam Kehidupan," *Jurnal Tarbiyah Al-Awlad* VI, No. 02 (2016), 557.

touching the deepest parts of its adherents' consciousness. Based on this, it is evident that religion is bound and always resides in the innermost sanctum of its followers' hearts. Meanwhile, the crucial source of these religious values emanates from the Quran. This holy book serves as the key source within Islam, along with the complexities of discussions contained within it.

With awareness of this, many researchers endeavor to explore ecological elements within the Quran. Ahmad Saddad, for instance, attempts to formulate a paradigm in ecological exegesis. In his writings, he employs the concept of ecocentrism to construct a paradigm for interpreting ecological verses.² Within this ecocentric framework, humans not only possess full awareness of the environment but also acknowledge that they will be held accountable before God. Saddad concludes that ecological exegesis has practical and thematic characteristics, employing an interdisciplinary approach. In line with this, Junaidi Abdillah traces the origins of ecosystem imbalances.³ M According to him, one of the fundamental factors influencing this is the concept of anthropocentrism, which positions humans as the center of the universe. Based on this concept, automatically, nature and the environment become objects subservient to humans. Furthermore, Abdillah refutes the notion that Islam—along with the Quran—is the source of this anthropocentric concept.

Mamluatun Nafisah employs the framework of maqāshid al-sharī'ah to examine ecological issues.⁴ Specifically, she focuses on the term ḥifz al-bī'ah (environmental conservation). According to her, achieving the pinnacle of environmental conservation entails the preservation of five fundamental necessities (al-dharūriyyah al-khamsah), as often reiterated in the discourse of maqāshid. Dede Rodin, on the other hand, delves into a more detailed examination of how terms related to the environment are mentioned in the Quran.⁵ She also delves deeper into how the principles of the Quran relate to nature

² Ahmad Saddad, "Paradigma Tafsir Ekologi," *Kontemplasi: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 5, no. 1 (2017): 50–74, <https://doi.org/10.21274/kontem.2017.5.1.49-78>.

³ Junaidi Abdillah, "Dekonstruksi Tafsir Antroposentrisme:," *Jurnal Studi Agama Dan Pemikiran Islam* 8, no. 1 (2014): 65–86.

⁴ Mamluatun Nafisah, "Tafsir Ekologi: Menimbang Hifz Al-Bī'ah Sebagai Uṣul Ash-Sharī'ah Dalam Al-Qur'an," *Al-Fanar: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir*, 2019, 93–111.

⁵ Dede Rodin, "Alquran Dan Konservasi Lingkungan: Telaah Ayat-Ayat Ekologis," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 17, no. 2 (2017): 391–410, <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v17i2.1035>.

and the environment. There are 750 verses in the Quran that address ecological issues, 14 chapters named after animals and specific natural phenomena, and numerous mentions of various entities, both biotic and abiotic. There are several Quranic principles related to the environment, ranging from the principle of monotheism (tauhid) to the balance and harmony of ecosystems.

Another researcher who approaches this issue from a religious perspective is Abdul Mustaqim. More specifically, he examines environmental issues from the viewpoint of the Quran. When natural disasters occur frequently, he attempts to understand these events through the lens of the Quran.⁶ He refers to this approach as "theology of disaster," a perspective on disasters derived from the sacred scripture of Islam. The Quran explicitly mentions themes related to disasters in every chapter. Many verses in the Quran, when further examined, converge on this topic. Ontologically, the sacred scripture explicitly states that disasters are the will of God. However, this does not imply that humans do not have a role in disasters. There are numerous human contributions to the occurrence of these disaster.

Another research conducted by Mustaqim relates to the utilization of biodiversity on Earth.⁷ Not much different from the previous research, this study also examines the issue of biodiversity from the perspective of the Quran. The results reveal several fundamental principles derived from the Quran regarding the utilization of biodiversity. Among them are principles of justice, balance, utilization without causing harm or exploitation. Another important environmental research by Mustaqim is titled "*Al-Muāmalah ma'a al-Bī'ah fi Manzūri al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*,"⁸ which translates to "Interactions with Nature in the Perspective of the Noble Quran." It is a thematic-contextual exegesis study related to environmental issues. This research attempts to discuss how ethical relations with the environment should be. Extensively, the researcher examines the concept of "bī'ah" (environment) in the Quran and Hadith, as well as the viewpoints of Muslim scholars. He concludes that having a good

⁶ Abdul Mustaqim, "Teologi Bencana Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Nun: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Tafsir Di Nusantara* 1, no. 1 (2015): 91–109, <https://doi.org/10.32495/nun.v1i1.9>.

⁷ Abdul Mustaqim, "Etika Pemanfaatan Keakekaragaman Hayati Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Hermeneutik* 7, no. 2 (2013): 389–406.

⁸ Abdul Mustaqim, "*Al-Mu'amalah Ma'a Al-Bī'ah Fi Manzur Al-Qur'an Karim: Dirasat Al-Tafsir Al-Mawdu'i Al-Siyaqi*," *Esensia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 19, no. 1 (2018): 25–48.

relationship with the environment is one form of religious practice. Meanwhile, the principles outlined are consistent with those mentioned in the previous research.

Mohammad Hatami examines the thoughts of Thantawi Jauhari regarding the verses about "making the earth prosper" in the Quran.⁹ It is understandable why Thantawi Jauhari is being studied through his commentary, "Tafsīr al-Jawāhir fi Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm." This is prompted by the highly scientific approach adopted in his exegesis. Nani also conducts a similar study by focusing on Thantawi Jauhari, alongside another figure named Zaghlul al-Najjar.¹⁰ The researcher conducts a comparative study of these two figures in examining verses related to nature. Both of these figures are grounded in a scientific approach to interpretation. However, in interpreting certain verses in the Quran, they exhibit noticeable differences. Siti Fatimatuzzahrok uses Ibn Asyur's "Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr" commentary as the subject of her study.¹¹ The researcher's findings suggest that Ibn Asyur's interpretation aligns with the framework of maqāshid al-syarīah. In other words, Ibn Asyur's interpretation is in accordance with and has prioritized the welfare of the environment. Alif Jabal Kurdi examines Yusuf al-Qardhawi's interpretation in his book "*Ri'āyah al-Bi'ah fi Syari'ah al-Islām*".¹² The researcher categorizes al-Qardhawi's interpretation as a typology of moderate hermeneutics. The researcher believes that al-Qardhawi's interpretation contributes by negating anthropocentric biases within ecological verses.

Muwafiqatul Isma conducts research on two commentaries authored by Indonesian scholars.¹³ Both Hamka's "Tafsir al-Azhar" and Quraish Shihab's "Tafsir al-Misbah" are recognized commentaries. These two native scholars perceive that environmental damage is

⁹ Mohammad Hatami, "Penafsiran Thāntāwī Jāuhārī Tentang Ayat-Ayat Memakmurkan Bumi dalam Al-Qur'an (Studi Analisis Tafsir Al-Jawahir Fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Karim)" (Universitas Islam negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2021).

¹⁰ Nani, "Ayat-Ayat Kauniyah Tentang Menjaga Keseimbangan Ekologi (Studi Komparatif Penafsiran Thantāwī Jauhārī Dan Zaghlul Al-Najjar)" (Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2017).

¹¹ Siti Fathimatuzzahrok, "Pemeliharaan Lingkungan Dalam Tinjauan Tafsir Maqasidi (Ayat-Ayat Ekologi Dalam Kitab Tafsir Tahrir Wa Al-Tanwir)" (Institut Agama Islam Negeri Salatiga, 2020).

¹² Alif Jabal Kurdi, "Tafsir Ekologi: Telaah Atas Penafsiran Yusuf Al-Qardhawi Dalam Kitab Ri'ayah Al-Bi'ah Fi Syari'ah Al-Islam" (Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2019).

¹³ Muwafiqotul Isma, "Ayat-Ayat Ekologis Dalam Tafsir Al-Azhar Dan Tafsir Al-Mishbah" (Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, 2008).

largely influenced by human actions. The difference between these two scholars lies only in the methodology used to compile their exegeses. However, these methodological differences do not affect the final conclusions. Both Indonesian scholars, with full awareness, recognize that environmental damage and degradation are not solely caused by God. Humans, as stewards on Earth, also play a central role in environmental degradation. With a similar topic, Taufiqur Rahman examines the thoughts of Ibrahim Abdul Matin.¹⁴ Ibrahim Abdul Matin, a Muslim thinker of American descent, has introduced a concept called Greendeen (Green Deen or Green Religion). One crucial point of this concept is that worshiping God can also involve caring for and preserving His creation, particularly the Earth. One practical step in implementing this Green Religion according to Ibrahim Abdul Matin is to reduce reliance on non-renewable energy sources.

From the research conducted, many scholars have attempted to uncover the relationship between the Quran and environmental issues. There are also many who examine how prominent figures interpret ecologically nuanced verses in the Quran. However, there is little research on how the interpretations of the Indonesian Women Ulama Congress (KUPI) relate to environmental damage. Therefore, it is important to address this in the research, considering that KUPI is the highest forum for women ulama in addressing recent central issues. The terms "women ulama" and "ulama women" are two different terms and need to be briefly clarified. Nur Hasan quotes Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir in addressing this terminological issue. According to Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, "women ulama" are all women who have scholarly capacity. Meanwhile, "ulama women" are scholars (both men and women) who have a gender justice perspective.¹⁵

KUPI is a form of movement and manifestation of the ideas and perspectives of scholars regarding gender justice in Islam. Therefore, the central issues discussed and advocated by KUPI generally revolve around women. Interestingly, the first KUPI held in 2017 extensively addressed environmental damage as well. This research aims to examine the interpretations used by the first KUPI in addressing environmental damage. This is intriguing because KUPI's

¹⁴ Taufiqur Rahman, "Konsep Greendeen (Agama Hijau) Perspektif Ibrahim Abdul Matin (Studi Tafsir Ekologi Ayat-Ayat Alquran)" (Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan ampel Surabaya, 2020).

¹⁵ Nur Hasan, *Khazanah Ulama Perempuan* (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2023), 27.

concentration is generally on women's issues. This discussion will explore how KUPI interprets Quranic verses with environmental themes.

This research examines the interpretations of the Indonesian Women Ulama Congress (KUPI) regarding environmental damage. The research method employed is qualitative, utilizing a literature review (library research) approach. Data is collected from relevant literature sources related to the topic at hand. The gathered data is then categorized into two types: primary and secondary. Primary data is obtained from the official documents of the Process and Results of the Indonesian Women Ulama Congress (KUPI) I in 2017. Secondary data is gathered from literature, journals, articles, and books that are relevant to the topics of environmental damage and ecotheology. This research adopts a descriptive-analytical method. The analysis utilized is content analysis, as outlined in the primary sources. Several stages are involved in conducting this research, including data collection, data identification, analysis of the obtained data, and drawing conclusions based on the theoretical framework.

Theoretical Framework

Ecoteology from a grammatical aspect is a combination of two words, ecology and theology. Each term needs to be briefly discussed to facilitate a precise concept of ecoteology. Ecology originates from the Greek language, *oikos* and *logos*. The first word is interpreted as home or habitat, while the latter is interpreted as knowledge. When combined, they give birth to a comprehensive meaning as a branch of science that studies habitats. Clearly, ecology is the science that studies organisms in their habitats. In general, ecology refers to the mutual relationship between organisms or groups of organisms and their environment.¹⁶ Meanwhile, theology also originates from the Greek words "theos" and "logia." The first word means God, while the latter means discourse or study. Theology can be understood as the field of study that explores faith, actions, and religious practices, specifically focusing on the relationship between God and the world.¹⁷

Nelson Bock plainly states the relationship between ecology and theology. Intrinsically, both are interconnected. In Bock's view, both

¹⁶ Dyah Widodo et al., *Ekologi Dan Ilmu Lingkungan*, 1st ed. (Medan: Yayasan Kita Menulis, 2021), 2

¹⁷ Muhaemin Latif, *Teologi Pembebasan Dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Orbit Publishing, 2017), 3.

ecology and theology are expressions of humanity's desire to understand truth, particularly to comprehend the source and meaning of existence. These two entities attempt to comprehend reality from different starting points. Ecology begins with an understanding of nature, while theology is anchored in ideas surrounding God. Bock suggests that it is possible to arrive at thoughts about God by observing nature. Similarly, it is possible to form views about nature by starting from the idea of God.¹⁸

In classical theology, discussions were exclusively focused on matters of faith and divinity. Both in traditional and classical rational theological perspectives, theology revolved around topics such as the power of God, free will, the role of reason, and major sins. However, over time, contemporary Islamic theology has undergone a re-creation of these concepts. Contemporary theology addresses issues faced by humans, such as the challenges of modernity. This is what is referred to as creative and productive theology in Islamic studies. From this creative space emerges a new discourse in theological studies regarding the environment or ecology (ecothology). This field of study can be defined as a religious belief concept closely intertwined with environmental issues, based on the teachings of Islam.¹⁹

In general, ecotheology is defined as the religious perspective regarding the relationship between God and nature, as well as the demands of belief systems on how nature should be treated. This term began to gain prominence in the late 1960s. In other words, it can be defined as the religious view concerning nature and the environment. Ecotheology can also be interpreted as a perspective on nature based on religious values. In line with this, what Al Gore conveyed that the environmental crisis is more caused by a spiritual crisis is relevant. This means that environmental damage is the most concrete manifestation of a spiritual crisis.²⁰ Sayyed Hossein Nasr echoes the sentiments expressed by Al Gore. According to Nasr, the environmental crisis occurs because modern humans have abandoned their spiritual dimensions

¹⁸ Nelson Bock, "An Eco-Theology: Toward A Spirituality of Creation and Eco-Justice," *CrossCurrents* 63, no. 4 (2013), 434.

¹⁹ Nur Arfiyah Febriani, "Ekoteologi Berwawasan Gender Dalam Al-Quran Al-Quran," *PALASTREN Jurnal Studi Gender* 10, no. 1 (2017): 67, <https://doi.org/10.21043/palastren.v10i1.2463>, 69.

²⁰ Wardani, *Islam Ramah Lingkungan*, 1st ed. (Banjarasin: IAIN Antasari Press, 2015), 4-5.

The construction of ecotheological frameworks, specifically as viewed by Nasr, begins with the acknowledgment of God as the highest reality. God serves as the key entity in the spirituality developed by Islam. Acceptance of this highest reality in a Muslim's faith is not merely a theological viewpoint but a metaphysical truth. Environmental degradation, as elaborated by numerous studies before, is closely related to anthropocentric patterns. When humans become the center of the ecosystem, nature is simultaneously relegated one degree below humanity. Everything, apart from humans, only holds significance if it serves human needs. Consequently, humans seem to have the prerogative to exploit nature. According to Nasr, ecological damage is also influenced by a materialistic lifestyle that reduces reality to the purely physical and ignores the existence of non-material realities.²¹

One effort to restore the true position of nature is to consider it as theophany. God, humans, and nature are interconnected. Viewing nature through the lens of theophany is essential to achieve harmony among them. This means that God remains the central existence, while nature serves as a manifestation of His presence, and humans are an integral part of nature. Harmony among humans can only be achieved when harmony with nature has been established first. To realize this, harmonizing with God is also crucial.²² Finally, to complement the two constructions above (God as the supreme reality and nature as theophany), Nasr completes by positioning humans as the stewards of the Earth. Stewardship, in this context, is understood as representing God on Earth. As representatives of God, it is only fitting for humans to act according to divine frameworks.²³

Lawrence Troster quotes Mary Evelyn Tucker regarding how ecotheology utilizes several methods to transform classical theology. Tucker presents three aspects in the construction of ecotheology. 1). Retrieval involves finding forgotten and often overlooked materials in traditional sources (such as the Qur'an). These materials are then

²¹ Maftukhin, "Teologi Lingkungan Perspektif Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *Dinamika Penelitian* 16, no. 2 (2016), p. 342.

²² Maftukhin, 350.

²³ Muizudin, "Ekoteologi Dalam Perspektif Hindu Dan Islam (Telaah Pemikiran Seyyed Hossein Nasr Dan Vandana Shiva)" (Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, n.d.), 54.

intended to provide new perspectives. 2). Reinterpretation, where ecotheology seeks to reinterpret theological texts. These two aspects then lead to the final entity. 3). Reconstruction, where ecotheology can radically reconstruct theology. Troster also interestingly notes that ecotheology is heavily influenced by ecofeminism. This discourse clearly states that the environmental crisis cannot be separated from the history of the exploitation of women.²⁴ Therefore, it is interesting to use an ecotheological lens to examine how female scholars interpret ecological verses. Considering that KUPI focuses entirely on women's issues while also paying attention to environmental issues.

Result and Discussion

An Overview of the Congress of Indonesian Women Scholars.

The inaugural Congress of Indonesian Women Ulama (KUPI) in 2017 did not emerge instantly. The congress had its roots and embryo from previous movements. The network of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) served as the root of the women's congress. These NGOs formed the crucial foundation for the congress's establishment in the future. The Association for the Development of Islamic Boarding Schools and Society (P3M), the Forum for the Study of Classical Islamic Texts (FK3), Rahima, Fahmina, and Alimat are a series of NGOs that laid the initial foundation. P3M, led by Mashdar Farid Mas'udi, had the main goal of empowering the pesantren community. The institution was established in 1983 through training programs aimed at fostering critical awareness. The baton of P3M was then passed on to the Forum for the Study of Classical Islamic Texts (FK3), initiated by Husein Muhammad. Husein constructed an epistemological basis for gender-oriented interpretation anchored in the Islamic heritage, both classical and contemporary. Besides these two NGOs, there was also Rahima, composed of middle-class intellectuals who received education in Islamic boarding schools. Additionally, Fahmina focused on issues ranging from democracy to pluralism from a gender perspective. Lastly, Alimat, initiated by the National Commission on Violence Against Women, was officially

²⁴ Lawrence Troster, "What Is Eco-Theology?," *CrossCurrents* 63, no. 4 (2013), 383.

formed on May 12, 2009, under the leadership of gender activist in the capital city.²⁵

The last three names—Rahima, Fahmina, Alimat—were institutions that had been working towards the realization of the congress for years prior. This further clarifies that KUPI was not a completely new movement. On the contrary, the congress was a continuation effort or even a culmination point of previous movements. Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir mentioned two institutions that consistently addressed women's issues. These two institutions originated from non-academic social institutions, P3M, and also from an academic institution, the Center for Women's Studies (PSW) at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga. Faqih stated that many institutions actually contributed to disseminating ideas of gender justice. In the future, the work of P3M was continued more systematically by Rahima. What Rahima did was also replicated by Fahmina in Cirebon, which was initiated in the same year. Only a decade later, Alimat was established with a specific focus on congregational members and female heads of household.²⁶

Therefore, Faqih traced the roots of the KUPI religious consultation to the movements initiated by Rahima and Fahmina. These two institutions indeed engaged in the training of female scholars in various forms. Starting from regularly scheduled training sessions to continuous and periodic activities, including the publication of books and reading materials. Rahima has published 24 books, while Fahmina has published 29 books. These books clearly outline the methodologies of both institutions, which were later adopted by the KUPI religious consultation.²⁷ Before organizing the religious consultation, KUPI first conducts halakahs. These halakahs are pre-congress activities held in various regions. The issues intended to be brought to the congress are discussed beforehand in these halakahs.

There are four figures who played important roles in the organization of KUPI. They are Badriyah Fayumi, Faqihuddin Abdul Qodir, Husein Muhammad, and Nur Rofi'ah. The first name is a scholar who graduated from IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and continued

²⁵ Amrin Ma'ruf, Wilodati, and Tutin Aryanti, "Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia Dalam Wacana Merebut Tafsir Gender Pasca Reformasi: Sebuah Tinjauan Genealogi," *Musawa* 20, no. 2 (2021), 134.

²⁶ Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *Metodologi Fatwa KUPI*, 2nd ed. (Cirebon: KUPI, 2022), 52

²⁷ Kodir, 55.

her studies at Al-Azhar University, focusing on exegesis. In 2005, she founded the Mahasina Foundation for Preaching and Education. She has translated many Western feminist ideas, which were then further elaborated to be compatible with the Indonesian society.²⁸ Meanwhile, Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir is a prolific writer who focuses on gender issues. He has produced numerous works on this topic.²⁹ Similarly, Husein Muhammad, also known affectionately as Buya Husein, is a prolific scholar who grew up in a pesantren environment. After graduating from PTIQ in 1979, Buya Husein continued his studies at Al-Azhar University in Egypt.³⁰ Lastly, there is Nur Rofi'ah, who completed her studies at Ankara University in Turkey, with a concentration in tafsir.³¹ These are a series of names that played important roles in the Indonesian Congress of Women Ulama (KUPI). This does not automatically negate the contributions of other individuals who also participated in making the KUPI possible

Methodology of Interpretation and Fatwa of KUPI

The basic methodology of KUPI emphasizes interpretation of the Quran with a gender-friendly approach. This can be understood as KUPI's main focus revolves around women's issues. One study that delved deeper into KUPI's interpretation methodology was conducted by Annisa Mufliha. Using the science of interpretation approach, she mapped out how KUPI interprets Quranic verses. It begins with the sources, paradigms and principles, interpretation methods used, and the predominant style. Based on observations of the KUPI 2017 Document, KUPI's interpretation sources are classified into two categories. First, interpretations based on ma'tsûr sources, interpreting verses with other verses, verses with the Prophet's traditions, and interpreting verses based on the views of the Prophet's companions/tabiiin. Second, interpretations based on ra'yî sources, interpretations based on the results of ijtihad or reasoning. It is also

²⁸ Muhammad Taufik, "Tafsir Mubadalah (Kajian Tafsir Tematik Ayat-Ayat Kekerasan Seksual Menurut Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia)" (UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, 2023), 24.

²⁹ Taufik, 28.

³⁰ Taufik, 30.

³¹ Taufik, 32.

worth noting that KUPI's interpretations often continue the traditions of previous scholars.³²

A significant paradigm in KUPI's interpretation is the concept of tauhid (oneness of God). With this pillar of tauhid, it ensures complete devotion to Allah SWT. The culmination of this tauhid principle will give rise to equality among humans. Other principles advocated by KUPI include universal values such as justice, equality, reciprocity (mubādalāh), benefit, and true justice.³³ Such a paradigm will remain significant when discussing environmental degradation issues later on. The relationship between humans and nature will no longer be hierarchical but rather equal. In addition to these principles, KUPI's interpretation method uses the *mauḍū'i* method. It is a method that collects verses based on similar themes and discussions. Regarding the style of interpretation, it leans more towards the jurisprudential style. In other words, the interpretation of verses in KUPI's religious deliberations is primarily used to establish laws.³⁴

In addition to its interpretation model, KUPI also has an approach and paradigm in issuing fatwas. The methodologies of KUPI's fatwa and its interpretation are inherently closely related. They are closely related because KUPI's interpretation methodology is essentially derived from its fatwa method, which often involves interpreting verses of the Qur'an. The vision of mercy through the dictum *rahmatan li al-'ālamīn* plays a crucial role in the fatwas issued by KUPI. This foundation is based on the fundamental concept of tawhid, which makes Allah the highest entity. With this foundation, Allah then elevates humans as His representatives (*khalīfah*) on earth. Based on this principle, humans must ensure that this vision of mercy is realized.³⁵ Furthermore, this paradigm is elaborated in more detail through nine fundamental values of KUPI. Monotheism, mercy, benefits, equality, reciprocity (mubādalāh), genuine justice, nationalism, humanity, and universality are the nine basic values.³⁶

³² Anisa Muflihah and Ali Mursyid, "Tafsir Ayat-Ayat Kekerasan Seksual: Analisis Metodologis Terhadap Penafsiran Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia," *Misykat* 06, no. 02 (2021), 34-35.

³³ Muflihah and Mursyid, 36.

³⁴ Muflihah and Mursyid, 37.

³⁵ Kodir, *Metodologi Fatwa KUPI*, 75-76.

³⁶ Erik Sabti Rahmawati and Melinda Apriliyanti, "Metodologi Fatwa Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI)," *Kupipedia.Id*, n.d., 6.

Repeatedly emphasized is that monotheism holds a central position in the paradigm of KUPI. This monotheism becomes the spirit of every paradigmatic element formulated by KUPI. The foundation of monotheism is then concretized into noble morality and mercy. The vision of mercy then generates the mission of benefits. This mission is every effort to strive for tangible goodness for oneself, family, all humanity, and the surrounding natural environment.³⁷ This benefit is implemented into three substantial values: equality, reciprocity, and justice. In the contemporary context, this benefit also needs to be nurtured under the umbrella of nationality, humanity, and universality.³⁸ The nine fundamental values of KUPI are further distilled into three basic approach values, ranging from enjoining good, reciprocity, to genuine justice.³⁹

KUPI also utilizes the *maqāshid al-sharī'ah* framework as an approach. The *maqāshid* framework can be seen as a shortcut to achieving the purposes of Islamic law. This framework aims to preserve five essential entities, from safeguarding religion, life, intellect, wealth, to family. These five principles (*al-kulliyat al-khams*) are integrally used by KUPI in formulating its fatwas, including issues related to environmental damage.⁴⁰ To strengthen this framework, KUPI considers it important to introduce three approaches as previously mentioned. First, the concept of *maqāshid al-sharī'ah*, which can serve as a dialectical approach between text and context. While the text is based on revelation, the context represents the real facts on the ground.⁴¹ Secondly, the concept of *mubādalah* emphasizes reciprocity between men and women. In this regard, just as men, women also become equal subjects.⁴² This concept is effective in addressing environmental degradation issues, as it can ensure the necessity of reciprocity and equality between humans and nature. Thirdly, this *mubādalah* approach will give rise to the concept of genuine justice as the ultimate approach.⁴³

³⁷ Kodir, *Metodologi Fatwa KUPI*, 76.

³⁸ Kodir, 79-80.

³⁹ Rahmawati and Apriliyanti, "Metodologi Fatwa Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI)," 7.

⁴⁰ Kodir, *Metodologi Fatwa KUPI*, hlm. 98.

⁴¹ Kodir, 104.

⁴² Kodir, 106.

⁴³ Kodir, 110.

In formulating fatwas, KUPI has its own standards and structure for formulation. There are seven interconnected structures involved in formulating fatwas. Starting from *tasawwur* (description), *adillah* (references), *istidlāl* (analysis), religious stance and viewpoint, *tazkiyyah* (recommendations), *marāji'* (references), to *marāfiq* (attachments).⁴⁴ To examine the interpretation of KUPI, we will refer to the Official Document of the Process and Results of the Congress of Indonesian Women Ulama, specifically to the sections on *adillah* and *istidlāl*. These two elements are crucial to understanding how KUPI's interpretation relates to verses with environmental themes. There are nineteen verses discussed and used as references (*adillah*) in this document. They include Al-Baqarah [2]: 11-12, 21-22, and 30; Al-Anbiyā' [21]:107; Al-Ahzāb [33]: 72; Ar-Rahmān [55]: 7-9; Adz-Dzāriyāt [51]: 56; An-Nisā' [4]: 9; Al-Māi'dah [5]: 32 and 33; Al-A'rāf [7]: 56 and 96; Ar-Rūm [30]: 41; As-Syu'arā' [26]:151-152; Al-Qashash [28]: 4.⁴⁵

The Ecological Interpretation of KUPI Fatwas

In the section on *istidlāl*, KUPI explains from the outset that the prophetic mission of Prophet Muhammad is to realize compassion for the entire universe. This reading is related to Surah al-Anbiyā' [21]:107. This mission is claimed to be the fundamental foundation of Islamic law. This welfare is not only limited to humans, but to all elements on the earth, including the environment. Therefore, Islamic law must provide protection for the environment. KUPI explains that the universe was created in perfect calculation, as mentioned in al-Hijr [15]: 19 and ar-Rahmān [55]: 5; not in vain, as mentioned in al-Anbiyā' [21]: 16; not futile, as mentioned in Shaad [38]: 27; and for good and righteous purposes, as in al-Hijr [15]: 85. The universe thus becomes an integral part of human life and Allah created it for the benefit of humanity. Therefore, the environment becomes an entity that must be preserved and the balance of its ecosystem maintained. Disrupting this balance is an act that exceeds the limits set by Allah, as mentioned in ar-Rahmaan [55]: 7-9.

The Qur'an explicitly prohibits the destruction of the earth, which has been balanced by Allah, as stated in al-Baqarah [2]: 11 and

⁴⁴ Rahmawati and Apriliyanti, "Metodologi Fatwa Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI)," 8.

⁴⁵ Tim KUPI, "Dokumen Resmi Proses Dan Hasil Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia" (Cirebon, 2017), 127-131.

al-A'rāf [7]: 56 and 85. KUPI provides further explanation that the verses concerning the prohibition of environmental destruction use the wording of *nahy* (prohibition). In the discourse of *usul al-fiqh*, the term *nahy* implies prohibition, as the basic rule of prohibition is that it is forbidden. Furthermore, the repetition of the verses more than three times in different surahs indicates the Quran's immense concern for the preservation of the environment. Al-Maidah [5]: 33 is mentioned in this context to declare that those who engage in earth's destruction face severe consequences, such as being killed, crucified, having their hands and feet cut off from opposite sides, or being banished from their homes. Not only that, but the perpetrators of destruction will also face severe punishment in the Hereafter.⁴⁶

Following this, KUPI quotes Quraish Shihab and Hamka regarding the interpretation of *as-Syu'arā'* [26]:151-152. In *Al-Misbah*, Quraish Shihab's commentary explains that these verses constitute a prohibition to obey the *al-musrifīn*. Lexically, the term is derived from the root word *sarafa*, meaning to exceed limits. Thus, the verses prohibit obedience to those who exceed limits in causing destruction on earth. Meanwhile, the word *yufsidūna* in verse 151 serves as an explanation of the term *al-musrifīn*. The word *yufsidūna* is in the present tense form, indicating that the corruption occurs continuously. Similarly, in *Al-Azhar*, Hamka explains that these two verses are related to those who cause corruption as enemies of society. The culmination of this corruption is injustice and tyranny, which is seen in advanced nations in terms of scientific advancements but not in terms of humanity and life. Consequently, the environment becomes a commodity to be exploited without regard for its preservation.⁴⁷

KUPI provides an interesting interpretation while also making a leap to *al-Mā'idah* [5]: 33 as discussed earlier. To understand the leap made by KUPI, we can first refer to existing commentaries. In several commentaries and jurisprudential texts, this verse is related to the act of *hirābah*. Although scholars differ in opinion regarding who deserves the title *muhārib*, Ibn Rusyd emphasizes that they are those who wield weapons and attack people on the road.⁴⁸ Ibn Asyur further elaborates

⁴⁶ Tim KUPI, 137.

⁴⁷ Tim KUPI, 138.

⁴⁸ Ibn Rusyd, *Bidayah Al-Mujtahid Wa Nihayah Al-Muqatashid* (Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), 340.

on the differences regarding the term *muhārib*. In *Tafsīr al-Tahrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, the statement of Imam Malik is quoted, indicating that the term is attributed to those who carry weapons to seize the property of others..⁴⁹ That is consistent with what is contained in *Tafsir al-Qurthubi*.⁵⁰ The point is that the verse was previously more inclined to be used in the context of *hirabah* and did not address the issue of damage to the earth, but rather to humans. However, KUPI provides an explanation of the verse related to destruction on the earth more extensively and not only limited to perpetrators of *hirabah* as commonly understood. This means that the interpretation provided by KUPI in this matter is ecological in nature.

KUPI utilizes the legitimacy of Quranic verses to emphasize how humans should behave towards the environment. Humans are positioned as stewards on Earth, representing the divine spirit. Therefore, humans must act kindly towards the Earth in accordance with the framework of God's commandments. KUPI attempts to uncover forgotten materials within Islamic heritage related to environmental degradation. Subsequently, reinterpretation of Quranic verses is conducted, as in the case of *Al-Ma'idah* [5]:33. These steps align with the three reconstructive methods of ecotheology according to Mary Evelyn Tucker's perspective, starting from retrieval and reinterpretation, leading to reconstruction.

Conclusion

The Indonesian Women Ulama Congress (KUPI), in addition to its focus on women's issues, also pays attention to environmental issues. The catalyst for this attention is the significant impact of environmental damage on the position of women. KUPI employs several religious texts (*dalil*) to reach conclusions regarding environmental damage. However, here we will only discuss KUPI's position in interpreting Quranic verses to legitimize the prevention of environmental damage. Discussions at this congress traced Quranic verses that are relevant and affirm the prevention of environmental damage. At least nineteen verses were used by KUPI in the *adillah*

⁴⁹ Muhammad Tahir bin Asyur, *Tafsir Al-Tahrir Wa Al-Tanwir* (Tunisia: Dar al-Tunisiyyah li al-Nasr, 1984), 182.

⁵⁰ Abi Abdillah Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Abi Bakar Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jami Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an* (Lebanon: Al-Risalah, 2006), 150.

section. These verses were then interpreted in the *istidlāl* section. One striking example is the interpretation of *Al-Ma'idah* [5]:33. KUPI implicitly states that *muhārib* includes those who cause harm to the environment, exploit natural resources, and so on. Previously, KUPI positioned God as the highest entity and humans as stewards on Earth. With this foundation, humans should not cause harm to the Earth; instead, they should manifest divine values. Such steps represent ecotheological efforts, utilizing theology in preventive measures against environmental damage.

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