




Rearticulating Islamic Feminism: Voices and Challenges of Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI)

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Abstrak. Artikel ini mengeksplorasi peran dan dampak Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI) dalam membentuk narasi feminisme Islam dan kebijakan publik terkait isu gender di Indonesia. Gerakan ini menghadapi tantangan baik dari pandangan budaya (budaya patriarki) maupun agama konservatif yang menolak narasi feminisme Islam. Meski demikian, dua penyelenggaraan KUPI pada tahun 2017 dan 2022 menunjukkan bahwa dampak gerakan ini cukup signifikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode analisis isi untuk menilai berbagai jenis materi publikasi, termasuk fatwa tentang keadilan gender dan publikasi resmi terkait KUPI. Pertanyaan utama penelitiannya adalah sejauh mana pendekatan teologis dan yuridis yang digunakan KUPI dalam merumuskan fatwa gender mempengaruhi persepsi dan kebijakan masyarakat di Indonesia. Artikel ini menemukan bahwa fatwa keadilan gender yang dikeluarkan KUPI tidak hanya berdampak pada aspek sosial dan budaya tetapi juga membentuk pengambilan kebijakan, khususnya di bidang anti kekerasan seksual, kawin paksa, lingkungan hidup, kesehatan, dan kekerasan atas nama agama. Artikel ini memperkaya pemahaman akademis tentang bagaimana feminisme Islam diartikulasikan dan diimplementasikan dalam konteks keragaman budaya dan agama yang luas serta memberikan wawasan baru mengenai dinamika feminisme Islam di tingkat global melalui studi kasus kontemporer di Indonesia.

Keywords: KUPI, perempuan, feminisme Islam, gender, fatwa

Abstrak: This article explores the role and impact of the Indonesian Women Ulama Congress—Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI) in shaping the narrative of Islamic feminism and public policy regarding gender issues in Indonesia. This movement faces challenges from both cultural (patriarchal culture) and conservative religious views that reject the narrative of Islamic feminism. Nevertheless, the two occurrences of KUPI in 2017 and 2022 demonstrate that the impact of this movement is significant. This research uses content analysis methods to assess various types of publication material, including justice gender fatwas and official publications related to KUPI. The main research question is to what extent the theological and juridical approaches KUPI used in formulating gender fatwas influence public perceptions and policies in Indonesia. This article finds that the gender justice fatwa by KUPI not only impacts the social and cultural aspects but also shapes policy decisions, particularly in areas of anti-sexual violence, forced marriage, environmental, health, and religious violence. This article enriches the academic understanding of how Islamic feminism is articulated and implemented in a context with broad cultural and religious diversity and provides new insights into the dynamics of Islamic feminism at the global level through a contemporary case study in Indonesia.

Key Words: KUPI, women Islamic feminism, gender, fatwa

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, Islamic feminism has become a topic of deep discussion in many countries with a majority Muslim population. Islamic feminism seeks to reconcile religious doctrine and women's rights and desires for a more inclusive and fair understanding of the interpretation of

Islamic texts.¹ In Indonesia, the Indonesian Women's Ulema Congress (*Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*, KUPI) emerged as one of the initiatives that seeks to give women a voice in religious discourse and gender-related policies. As an organization that places women at the forefront of theological interpretation, KUPI plays an essential role in the dialogue between tradition, modernity, and gender in Indonesia, especially in the Islamic feminism discourse.²

In the global discourse on feminism, Islamic feminism is not only often debated and criticized but also celebrated as a form of resistance to patriarchal narratives that dominate the interpretation of religious texts.³ It is an attempt to rearticulate women's rights and roles in social, cultural, and, specifically, religious life in many Muslim societies. This debate is gaining momentum in the Indonesian context, with religious, political, and cultural thought contributing to complex and often contradictory dynamics. However, amid this changing social and political landscape, there is courage from KUPI to rearticulate feminism within an Islamic framework. As a movement that reclaims women's authority at the forefront of religious dialogue, KUPI has become a symbol of resistance to patriarchal interpretations and provides an alternative narrative about Islamic values (such as substantive justice) with women's voices in several ways.⁴

¹ Fardan Mahmudatul Imamah, "Dinamika Feminisme Islam Dalam Mendefinisikan Perempuan," *Martabat Jurnal Perempuan dan Anak* 6, no. 2 (March 2023): 167–198.

² Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, *Metodologi Fatwa KUPI: Pokok-Pokok Pikiran Musyawarah Keagamaan Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*, ed. Marzuki Wahid (Cirebon: KUPI, 2022).

³ Rachel Rinaldo, "Muslim Women, Moral Visions: Globalization and Gender Controversies in Indonesia," *Qualitative Sociology* 34, no. 4 (2011): 539–560.

⁴ David Kloos and Nor Ismah, "Siting Islamic Feminism: The Indonesian Congress of Women Islamic Scholars and the Challenge of Challenging Patriarchal Authority," *History and Anthropology* (2023): 1–26.

With the emergence of digital technology and social media, KUPI's discourse on Islamic feminism is not only limited to physical spaces or academic seminars. As a movement in the digital era, KUPI faces challenges in conveying its message to a broader and more diverse audience. Rapid changes in the digital media landscape affect how organizations like KUPI communicate and interact with the public. Recent research shows that religious discourse in Indonesia's digital space is increasingly pluralistic but also dichotomous, with progressive and conservative groups equally active in disseminating their messages.⁵ For example, there are counter-discourses against Islamic feminism produced by the Family Love Alliance (*Aliansi Cinta Keluarga*), which can influence ideas and advocacy for women's rights and gender equality.⁶

In that situation, Islamic feminism in Indonesia, represented by movements like KUPI, plays a significant role in shaping the discourse on gender and Islam.⁷ KUPI aims to bring alternative perspectives from an Islamic standpoint that can transform and raise awareness about gender-based online violence.⁸ This movement provides a platform for women to speak out and oppose gender injustice and empower them (men and women) to appear in the public sphere. Through initiatives like the KUPI Congress,

⁵ Eva F. Nisa, "Muslim Women in Contemporary Indonesia: Online Conflicting Narratives behind the Women Ulama Congress," *Asian Studies Review* 43, no. 3 (2019): 434–454.

⁶ Afifur Rochman Sya'rani, "Muslim Women Against Feminism: The Family Love Alliance (*Aliansi Cinta Keluarga*) and Its Impact on Women's and Sexual Rights in Contemporary Indonesia," *TRANS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* (2023): 1–17.

⁷ Zalikho Su'ada, "Pandangan Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia Terhadap Kekerasan Berbasis Gender Online Di Media Sosial Twitter," *Az-Zabrah: Journal of Gender and Family Studies* 3, no. 2 (2023): 117–133.

⁸ Tim KUPI, "8 Rekomendasi Hasil KUPI II: Mewujudkan Peradaban Yang Berkeadilan," *KUPI*, last modified November 28, 2022, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://kupi.or.id/8-rekomendasi-hasil-kupi-ii-mewujudkan-peradaban-yang-berkeadilan/>.

women are encouraged to actively promote social transformation, develop a moderate understanding of Islam, and foster mutual relations between men and women.⁹

METHOD

This research applies a content analysis method¹⁰ with a qualitative approach to understand and assess the effects of the theological and juridical approaches adopted by KUPI in drafting fatwas with gender justice. Content analysis focuses on primary data from official KUPI publication platforms like websites, social media, and other publications. The article chose this method because of its effectiveness in examining the text of the material studied and in identifying and analyzing the framing, themes, and narratives of Islamic feminism presented. Secondary data includes academic literature, research reports, and related news articles. This research focuses on KUPI fatwas and publications that are explicitly related to gender issues. The data is present in thematic form. This thematic writing is to make it easier to understand the context, meaning, and implications of the findings. This process helps identify the direct and indirect impacts of the KUPI's fatwas and approach on public policy and perception. Triangulation enhanced the article's validity by comparing primary and secondary data.¹¹

⁹ Umma Farida and Abdurrohman Kasdi, "The 2017 KUPI Congress and Indonesian Female 'Ulama,'" *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 12, no. 2 (December 2018): 135–158.

¹⁰ Marilyn Domas White and Emily E. Marsh, "Content Analysis: A Flexible Methodology," *Library Trends* 55, no. 1 (2006): 22–45.

¹¹ Ibid.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History and The Revolution of KUPI

KUPI, held in 2017 and 2022, was initially just a congress. Then, this congress became a massive movement that significantly pushed for social transformation, especially related to women's issues, led by the Indonesian Female Ulema.¹² The congress contributed to the feminist movement in Islam and challenged androcentric interpretations of the Qur'an and hadith that have affected women's position and value in Islam throughout history.¹³ Historically, Islam in Indonesia has been dominated by men, as seen in knowledge production and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*).¹⁴ Originally, *pesantren*, in the late eighteenth century, was male space.¹⁵ KUPI is present in this context and laid the groundwork for shifting the paradigm in the discourse on Islam and gender. KUPI promotes the approaches of *mubadalah* (the principle of mutuality or reciprocity—to do a good thing for men and women), *ma'ruf* (realizing goodness while still seeing the uniqueness of society), and substantive justice, which recognizes the rights and empowerment of women within the framework of Islam, such as women ulema issue.¹⁶

¹² Tim Media KUPI, "Sejarah Dan Latar Belakang KUPI," *KUPI*, last modified August 10, 2022, accessed October 28, 2023, <https://kupi.or.id/sejarah-dan-latar-belakang-kupi/>.

¹³ Tim KUPI, "Tentang Kongres KUPI 2," *KUPI*, last modified 2022, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://kupi.or.id/latar-belakang/>.

¹⁴ Kloos and Ismah, "Siting Islamic Feminism: The Indonesian Congress of Women Islamic Scholars and the Challenge of Challenging Patriarchal Authority."

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Tim KUPI, "KUPI II Luncurkan Metodologi Fatwa Dengan Tiga Pendekatan," *KUPI*, last modified November 24, 2022, accessed October 28, 2023, <https://kupi.or.id/kupi-ii-luncurkan-metodologi-fatwa-dengan-tiga-pendekatan/>.

Reclaiming the position of women ulema became the basis and initial agenda for the first KUPI 2017.¹⁷ More than 500 people and representatives from 15 countries attended the congress held from 25 to 27 April 2017 at Kebun Jambu *Pesantren*, Cirebon, West Java. The Congress promoted the idea that women also can be ulema. Therefore, the position and existence of women's ulema must be recognized. Both men and women, ulema must provide benefits to bless all beings (*robmatan lil 'alamin*). Ideally, this ulema will create a peaceful, just, and equal life.¹⁸ The second KUPI conducted between 23 and 26 November 2022 at Hasyim Asy'ari *Pesantren*, Jepara Central Java, introduced more expansive thoughts. This assembly observed the ulema's ideology extending beyond religious authority and knowledge to encompass humanity.¹⁹ Being aware of this, besides adhering to Islamic theological standards in the Qur'an and Hadith, ulema also resides in a distinct social, cultural, and political backdrop. Hence, when devising its fatwa, KUPI takes into account Indonesia's constitutional rules.²⁰ Indeed, particular policy issues are also under scrutiny.

KUPI highlights several issues that fall into five main themes, namely 1) paradigm and methodology; 2) family theme; 3) women's leadership; 4) women's ulema movement; and 5) protection and environment maintenance.²¹ From these themes, several issues emerged, such as sources of knowledge and movements, as well as KUPI activism. Other discussions highlighted religious issues such as the politicization of religion, extremism,

¹⁷ Tim KUPI, *Diskursus Keulamaan Perempuan Indonesia*, KUPI (Cirebon: Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia, 2017).

¹⁸ Tim Media KUPI, "Sejarah Dan Latar Belakang KUPI."

¹⁹ Tim KUPI, "Tentang Kongres KUPI 2."

²⁰ E S Rahmawati and M Aprilyanti, "Metodologi Fatwa Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI)," *Kupipedia.Id* (2017): 1–12.

²¹ Tim KUPI, "Tentang Kongres KUPI 2."

religious radicalism, and religious violence.²² KUPI also discusses environmental issues regarding waste management, religion/belief-based disaster management, and local wisdom. Other topics include sexual issues, domestic violence, female genital circumcision, forced marriage, and pregnancy due to rape.²³ Several other communities or NGOs have discussed most of these issues since before KUPI emerged.

Several institutions and NGOs working on the above issues, such as sexual diversity and LGBT rights, are GAYa Nusantara, Arus Pelangi, and the Ardhanary Institute.²⁴ Issues regarding the struggle for women's rights, gender, and feminism are more generally the focus of groups such as Kapal Perempuan, Indonesia Feminis, the Women's Journal Foundation, and the Indonesian Women's Coalition, to name a few.²⁵ The large number of groups fighting for women's rights shows that gender issues are not new in Indonesia. Democracy in Indonesia is a means for them to fight for gender justice constitutionally. For instance, they achieved the child protection law in 2002, criminalized human trafficking in 2007, set a 30% quota for women in legislative elections in 2008 and 2012, and ratified the UN Nation for migrant workers and families in 2012.²⁶

Although many groups have contributed significantly, KUPI has successfully promoted the issue of gender justice and Islamic feminism on a larger scale, receiving acceptance from various groups. The KUPI congress showcased participation from many individuals with diverse organizational

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Sya'rani, "Muslim Women Against Feminism: The Family Love Alliance (Aliansi Cinta Keluarga) and Its Impact on Women's and Sexual Rights in Contemporary Indonesia."

²⁵ Kathryn Robinson, "Islamic Influences on Indonesian Feminism," *Social Analysis* 50, no. 1 (2006): 171–177.

²⁶ Rachel Rinaldo, "The Women's Movement and Indonesia's Transition to Democracy," in *Activists in Transition*, 2019, 135–152.

backgrounds, religious figures from multiple regions, and the previously mentioned groups advocating for feminism and gender. It implies that the discourse on gender justice and feminism in Islam developed by KUPI has become more accepted by the wider community.

Rearticulating Islamic Feminism

Islamic feminism refers to a movement that seeks to reconcile Islamic teachings with the goals of gender equality and women's rights.²⁷ It is an approach that aims to challenge patriarchal interpretations of Islam and promote a more inclusive and egalitarian understanding of the religion. Islamic feminists argue that Islam introduced rights for women and that these rights should be upheld and expanded upon within the framework of Islamic teachings.²⁸ As rearticulated by KUPI, Islamic feminism in Indonesia encompasses the reexamination of Islamic scriptures, the active participation of women in the public sphere, and women's firsthand experiences with gender and women's rights matters.²⁹ Scholars within KUPI, such as K.H. Husein Muhammad, have significantly reinterpreted gendered verses and Islamic traditions to address gender issues and promote feminist perspectives within the Islamic framework.³⁰

Moreover, reformist Islamic theology influences KUPI's rearticulation of Islamic feminism. The organization recognizes the need to reconcile traditional Islamic teachings with the demands for gender equality and social

²⁷ Marziyeh Bakhshizadeh, "A Social Psychological Critique on Islamic Feminism," *Religions* 14, no. 2 (2023): 1–13.

²⁸ Syed Zamanat Abbas, "The Veil: A Silhouette of Autonomy and Empowerment," *Culture and Psychology* 29, no. 2 (2023): 247–259.

²⁹ Yusuf Rahman, "Feminist Kyai, K.H. Husein Muhammad The Feminist Interpretation on Gendered Verses and the Qur'an-Based Activism," *Al-Jami'ah* 55, no. 2 (2017): 293–326.

³⁰ K.H. Husein Muhammad, *Fiqih Perempuan: Refleksi Kiai Atas Tafsir Wacana Agama Dan Gender*, ed. Yudi and Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2020).

justice within the Muslim community.³¹ This reformist approach empowers Muslim women to claim their rights in religious knowledge production and actively participate in the struggle for gender and social justice.³² Through this perspective, KUPI not only rearticulates Islamic feminism but also redefines the position of women in Islam and knowledge production.

KUPI redefines 'female ulema' (*ulama' perempuan*) and differentiates from 'ulema female' (*perempuan ulama*). The former are people with deep knowledge, both women and men, who have a fear of Allah (integrity), have a sincere personality (*akhlāq kariimah*), uphold justice, and provide benefits to bless all beings (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*). Fear and piety to Allah are for humanitarian matters in general and women's affairs, not only in public but also in family matters. Likewise, having a noble character upholds justice. It provides benefits not only for men but also for women so that harmonious relations between men and women are created without violence to realize the ideals of just and civilized humanity.³³ The latter means someone who is biologically female and has the capacity for Islamic knowledge but does not side with women.

All KUPI's thought plays a role in enlightening the discourse on gender and feminism in Islam, especially in the context of gender mainstreaming in Indonesia.³⁴ In the digital age, KUPI uses social media and online platforms to spread their thoughts and views about religion and justice gender, especially in the Indonesian context. What's truly innovative is

³¹ Nur Hidayah, "How Reformist Islamic Theology Influences Muslim Women's Movement: The Case of Liberal-Progressive Muslims in Indonesia," *Journal of Asian Social Science Research* 2, no. 1 (2020): 53–72.

³² Ibid.

³³ Tim KUPI, *Dokumen Resmi Proses Dan Hasil Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia* (Cirebon: KUPI, 2017).

³⁴ Rahman, "Feminist Kyai, K.H. Husein Muhammad The Feminist Interpretation on Gendered Verses and the Qur'ān-Based Activism."

KUPI's creation of "*Kupipedia*"—a digital encyclopedia offering a comprehensive collection of information, publications, news, galleries, and other KUPI-related contents. To make gender justice issues in Islam more accessible to the public on a massive scale, mainstream Indonesian media online, such as NU Online Alif.id, Islami.co, Bincangsyariah, Rahma.id, Republika, Iqra.id, and Mubadalah.id also broadcast them.³⁵

The Impact of KUPI's Fatwa

The KUPI's fatwas have influenced public discourse, policy-making processes, and the feminist movement within Islam.³⁶ KUPI's fatwas have contributed to developing Islamic feminist perspectives in Indonesia.³⁷ Scholars within KUPI have engaged in feminist interpretations of Islamic texts, challenging patriarchal norms, and advocating for gender equality.³⁸ They create a space to claim women's rights and actively participate in the struggle for gender and social justice.³⁹ The organization's status as a religious authority and its involvement in political processes have given its fatwas significant weight in shaping public policy related to gender justice and women.

³⁵ Tim KUPI, "KUPI: Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia Perjuangkan Narasi Fatwa Perempuan Progresif," *KUPI*, last modified November 18, 2022, accessed October 28, 2023, <https://kupi.or.id/kupi-kongres-ulama-perempuan-indonesia-perjuangkan-narasi-fatwa-perempuan-progresif/>.

³⁶ Hidayah, "How Reformist Islamic Theology Influences Muslim Women's Movement: The Case of Liberal-Progressive Muslims in Indonesia."

³⁷ Amrin Ma'ruf, Wilodati Wilodati, and Tutin Aryanti, "Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia Dalam Wacana Merebut Tafsir Gender Pasca Reformasi: Sebuah Tinjauan Genealogi," *Musawa: Jurnal Studi Gender dan Islam* 20, no. 2 (2021): 127–146.

³⁸ Akhmad Arif Junaidi, "Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI) and Mubādalāh Approach in Interpreting the Gender Biased-Qur'anic Verses," *Sawwa: Jurnal Studi Gender* 18, no. 1 (2023): 1–24.

³⁹ Sya'rani, "Muslim Women Against Feminism: The Family Love Alliance (Aliansi Cinta Keluarga) and Its Impact on Women's and Sexual Rights in Contemporary Indonesia."

The first KUPI in 2017 produced three recommendations covering the issue of preventing child marriage, eliminating sexual violence, and preventing natural damage in the context of social inequality.⁴⁰ KUPI's religious views on preventing child marriage were used as a reference for increasing the marriage age from 16 years to 19 years, which is formalized in Law No. 16 of 2019 Amendments to Law No. 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage. Meanwhile, the fatwa regarding the elimination of sexual violence succeeded in convincing parliament in terms of Islamic views, especially Islamic political parties, to approve the Draft of the Law on the Crime of Sexual Violence (*Rancangan Undang-Undang Tindak Pidana Kekerasan Seksual*, RUU TPKS).⁴¹ This draft bill has been officially ratified as law at the Plenary Session of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia on Tuesday, 12 April 2022, in Jakarta.

Furthermore, KUPI's fatwas have influenced public discourse on gender and women's issues in Indonesia. They have shaped the understanding of gender justice within the Islamic context and challenged traditional gender norms.⁴² KUPI has used the *mubādalāh* approach in interpreting Qur'anic verses.⁴³ This approach has allowed KUPI to provide alternative perspectives on gender and women's issues within the Islamic framework. Through the *mubādalāh* approach, KUPI has critically engaged with fatwas and discourses, restricting women's choices and agency,

⁴⁰ Farida and Kasdi, "The 2017 KUPI Congress and Indonesian Female Ulama."

⁴¹ Tim KUPI, "KUPI Dan Gerakan Ulama Perempuan Di Indonesia," *KUPI*, last modified November 23, 2022, accessed October 28, 2023, <https://kupi.or.id/kupi-dan-gerakan-ulama-perempuan-di-indonesia/>.

⁴² Yanuardi Syukur, "The Rise of Female Ulama in Indonesia: A Gender Perspective," *Risea: Review of Islam in Southeast Asia* 1, no. 1 (2018): 17–28.

⁴³ Junaidi, "Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI) and Mubādalāh Approach in Interpreting the Gender Biased-Qur'anic Verses."

challenging oppressive practices, and promoting gender equality.⁴⁴ KUPI has also concentrated on addressing sexual violence and conducting a methodological analysis of how to interpret verses related to sexual violence.⁴⁵

The influence of KUPI's fatwas and interpretations extends beyond Indonesia. Scholars have recognized and studied their work, contributing to the discourse on gender and feminism in Islam globally.⁴⁶ It contributes to the ongoing discussion on classic feminism, which distinguishes between Western feminism and Islamic feminism. For instance, Western feminism views the veil as a symbol of oppression and masculinity, while Islamic feminism considers it a source of empowerment and a symbol of dignity.⁴⁷ Going beyond this debate, KUPI also illustrates that women's issues are not solely rooted in the veil but rather in complex circumstances such as patriarchal culture, unjust gender dynamics, and policies detrimental to women. To contribute to solving that problem, KUPI involves communities' initiatives and institutions working on women's empowerment, such as academics, Islamic education practitioners, especially Islamic boarding schools, Islamic organization activists, grassroots empowerment practitioners, and even gender activists.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Su'ada, "Pandangan Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia Terhadap Kekerasan Berbasis Gender Online Di Media Sosial Twitter."

⁴⁵ Anisa Muflihah and Ali Mursyid, "Tafsir Ayat-Ayat Kekerasan Seksual: Analisis Metodologis Terhadap Penafsiran Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI)," *MISYKAT Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Al-Quran Hadist Syari'ah dan Tarbiyah* 6, no. 2 (2021): 1–40.

⁴⁶ Kloos and Ismah, "Siting Islamic Feminism: The Indonesian Congress of Women Islamic Scholars and the Challenge of Challenging Patriarchal Authority."

⁴⁷ Abbas, "The Veil: A Silhouette of Autonomy and Empowerment."

⁴⁸ Tim KUPI, "Tentang Kongres KUPI 2."

The Challenge of KUPI's Movement

The challenges of KUPI and Islamic feminism in Indonesia are complex problems and have many aspects. One of the challenges is the different interpretations and understandings of feminism within the Islamic context.⁴⁹ Islamic feminism seeks to reconcile Islamic teachings with gender equality and women's rights. These diverse interpretations can lead to debates and disagreements within the Islamic feminist movement, including tensions with more conservative interpretations of Islam, such as the Family Love Alliance.⁵⁰ Additionally, the patriarchal notion in traditional Islamic interpretations and structures can pose challenges to the advancement of Islamic feminism.⁵¹

Furthermore, the intersectionality of gender with other identities, such as social, class, ethnicity, and sexuality, presents additional challenges for Islamic feminism in Indonesia. As an illustration, transgender women have not yet been a subject of discussion within KUPI.⁵² It's worth mentioning that transgender women constitute a marginalized group frequently subjected to discrimination. Thus, the question arises as to whether KUPI will broaden the scope of their understanding of women and transgender sexuality as they expand the concept of female ulema.

To sum up, the challenge of KUPI and Islamic feminism in Indonesia involves navigating different interpretations of feminism within the Islamic

⁴⁹ Dina Afrianty, "Rising Public Piety and the Status of Women in Indonesia Two Decades after Reformasi," *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 8, no. 1 (2020): 65–80.

⁵⁰ Sya'rani, "Muslim Women Against Feminism: The Family Love Alliance (Aliansi Cinta Keluarga) and Its Impact on Women's and Sexual Rights in Contemporary Indonesia."

⁵¹ Mahmudat O. Muhibbu-Din, "Feminism and Modern Islamic Politics: The Fact and the Fallacy," *International Journal of Islamic Thought* 15 (2019): 44–59.

⁵² Masthuriyah Sa'dan, "Seksualitas 'Transgender' Di Kongres Ulama' Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI): Narasi Pengalaman," *MAARIF* 16, no. 2 (2021): 256–277.

context, facing resistance and opposition from conservative groups, addressing patriarchal structures within religious institutions, and recognizing the intersectionality of gender with other sexual identities.

CONCLUSION

KUPI, through its scholars and activists, plays a significant role in rearticulating Islamic feminism in Indonesia. The movement reinterpreted Islamic texts with *mubadalah* approach, challenged patriarchal interpretations, and promoted a more inclusive and egalitarian understanding of Islam. The movement recognizes the importance of reconciling traditional Islamic teachings with the demands for gender equality and social justice within the Muslim community. This reformist approach empowers Muslim women to claim their rights and actively participate in the struggle for gender and social justice.

KUPI's rearticulation of Islamic feminism faces challenges and tensions, such as different interpretations of feminism within the Islamic context and resistance from conservative groups. Additionally, patriarchal structures within religious institutions may hinder the full inclusion and participation of women in decision-making processes and the interpretation of religious texts. A more comprehensive exploration of the interplay between ideas surrounding women, gender, and sexuality is essential to ensure greater inclusivity for marginalized groups, including transgender individuals.

Nevertheless, it should still be noted that KUPI can promote a more inclusive understanding of religion and support women's rights in society. They not only become defenders of women's rights but also provide a more tolerant and empathetic view of Islam towards social, cultural, and political issues related to women. Through this forum, the congress offers a space for

Muslim women to speak, discuss, and actively participate in changing social views and norms that may limit their societal role. They made the advancement of women in Indonesia. They advocated for improved gender equality while upholding the harmony between men and women, humans and nature, and humans and God within Islamic principles. Through their social media and mainstream online media connected to them, KUPI's thoughts and fatwas can be spread more widely in Indonesia.

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