

Feminist Jurisprudence, Women *Ulama* and *Iftā* in Indonesia: Dutiful Daughters or ‘*alMuftiyāt alMujadilāt*’?

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SHORT BIO

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ABSTRACT

Eight years ago a group of Indonesian women scholars who constituted themselves as ‘women ulama’ claimed the epistemic authority to pronounce on matters of Islamic law, and enacted it by issuing three collective fatwas. Six years later they repeated this process and issued four more fatwas. How should we read this development, in terms of the Muslim women’s movement, and the growth and development of Islamic law? Recognising the fatwa as the fundamental element of Islamic legal thought, the work of KUPI continues and expands modern processes of collective fatwa making. Significantly KUPI also add a framework derived from women’s experiences of the law; namely attention to ma’rūf (goodness), mubādalah (hermeneutics of reciprocity), and hakiki (substantive or true) justice. Even as Muslim women advance innovative readings of classical Islamic law and its legal processes, feminism remains entwined in a colonial history that is difficult to lose. And so the feminist associations of the work of the KUPI remain muted for now. Their achievements, however, must be announced and celebrated.

KEYWORDS

feminist jurisprudence, fatwa, muslim women Indonesia

Over the past eight years, a potentially feminist fatwa-making practice has emerged. The Congress of Indonesian Women Ulama (known by its Indonesian acronym of KUPI), emerged at the confluence of Indonesian and international women’s movements and anti-colonial struggles as well as state and treaty commitments to gender equality, to recognize women’s religious authority. Having brought together facilitative aspects of fatwa-making and social activism, the KUPI has combined mechanisms of consensus-building in Islamic law with Indonesian civic movements, drawing on a history of women’s movement-building, the religious authority of women-led *pesantrens*, and the analytics produced by gender studies at universities to enable a mechanism of law reform that addresses contemporary challenges faced by women in Indonesia.

What achievements are signaled by this development and how do we understand them in the broader contexts of Islamic law, the production of justice in Muslim societies, and transformative Muslim feminist praxis? Are the women ulama of the KUPI dutiful daughters or, rather, modern day *mujadilāt*, or even, potentially, *almuftiyāt almujadilāt* (the debating women muftis) of our time?¹

Among the milestone moments in historic gender struggles are the women of the Iranian Revolution, which took place almost 50 years ago, and the inspirational work subsequently published in *Zanan* magazine. The *Dossiers of Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)* in the UK, the numerous publications of *Sisters in Islam (SIS)* in Malaysia, workshop style outputs of *Karamah* in the US, and the publications, briefs, and global campaigns of *Musawah* are more recent outcomes of the progressive growth of the women's movement for change in the practice and understanding of Islamic law.² The result is a vibrant movement of gender-based legal reform effected through scholarship and activism.

In a lesser-known example, around 2008, *FeminIjtihad* was formed to facilitate law reform in Afghanistan. A knowledge building project, *FeminIjtihad* brought together scholars and researchers to identify and share literature and interpretive tools for feminist legal reform. Their aim was to develop a resource book "to push for law reform in Afghanistan".³ Knowledge previously unavailable to non-specialists would be presented in accessible language and made easily available. This focus on epistemic authority and access to knowledge resources points to a key element of Islamic law, namely the location of pietistic authority in a genealogy of legal scholarship. *FeminIjtihad* used a genealogy of scholarship, primarily progressive, but also located in a historical trajectory of legal thought, to guide the work of Afghan advocates as they reformed local legal practice. Most feminist, Afghan law reform projects have since ended and Afghanistan's laws now restrict women's access to both education and the public sphere more generally.

¹ The debating women muftis. See below for more on this terminology.

² See their websites for what work has been done. *Musawah*: <https://www.musawah.org/knowledge-building/>; *WLUML* <https://www.wluml.org/>; *Sisters in Islam* <https://sistersinislam.org/who-we-are/>; *Karamah* <https://karamah.org/about/>.

³ "Welcome to *FeminIjtihad*" document, unpublished, my private library.

Characteristically, feminist scholarship in Islamic law engages critically and productively with the genealogies of Islamic law in the various branches of positive law, jurisprudence, judgement, legal history, and the making of *fatwas* which is known as *iftā*. Gendered and feminist interrogations of the history, products, and mechanisms of Islamic law include the works of Ziba Mir Hosseini, Riffat Hassan, and Asghar Ali Engineer, among others who have provided a foundation upon which the global Muslim women's movement has steadily been built over time and, eventually, localized.⁴ Examples of local movements include the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW), Strategic Initiative of the Horn of Africa in Ethiopia (SIHA), and The Women's Memory Forum in Egypt.⁵ Groups like the Muslim Personal Law Network in South Africa have been specifically oriented toward legal reform and have prioritized the practice of *khula* and Muslim marriage contracts. More impactful, and with a longer history, are the informal Women's Sharī'ah 'Adālat in India launched by Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) and the Muslim Women's Jama'at.⁶ The core conceptual thread that connects this work is a focus on solutions that emerge from women's experiences of the law.

In the BMMA's Sharī'ah 'Adālat, which launched in 2004, women claim the title *qazi*, or judge, and focus on the intersections of Qur'anic law and constitutional law. They have an established training program that offers them epistemic authority through a madrasah certificate at the *Dar-ul-'Uloom-i-Niswan*. The Sharī'ah 'Adālat use Islamic law practices of "arbitration (*taḥkīm*) and mediation (*waṣā'ah, ṣulḥ*)" and encourage the active use of a marriage contract, or *nikah-nama*, to manage the marital

⁴ For a detailed history of gender and legal reform, see Fatima Seedat and Justine Howe. "Gender and the Study of Islamic Law: From Polemics to Feminist Ethics," in *The Routledge Handbook of Islam and Gender*, 1st ed., ed. Justine Howe. (Routledge, 2021). 83-97.

⁵ Some of their work is available at the following: Women Memory Forum <https://wmf.org.eg/en/>; Muslim Personal Law Network <https://www.facebook.com/mplnetworkSA/>; Canadian Council of Muslim Women <https://www.ccmw.com/>; Strategic Initiative for women in the Horn of Africa <https://sihanet.org/>; Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) <https://www.facebook.com/BMMA2015/>.

⁶ Justin Jones, "Where Only Women May Judge": Developing Gender-Just Islamic Laws in India's All-Female 'Sharī'ah Courts," *Islamic Law and Society* 26, no. 4 (2019): 437-466

authority and legal options of both husbands and wives.⁷ Many of the women *qazis* have worked as advocates or social reform activists in local women's circles and dispute resolution forums.⁸ The Women's Sharī'ah 'Adālat is a milestone development in the continuing growth and evolution of Islamic law. Much like the KUPI, they represent a particular convergence of movements for law reform and social change specific to the Indian subcontinent and its unique history of colonial rule.

Changes in Muslim legal practice through various histories under colonialism have meant that Muslim polities have had to adapt differently to the colonial impositions on local law and legal practice. In some cases, such as in some areas of India, Islamic law was removed entirely except for within family law. In other cases, Islamic law continued to frame the national legal context and influenced various elements of everyday law and legality. Some nations such as Indonesia saw Islamic legal councils being established with state recognition. Indeed, it is apparent that Islamic law has responded in various ways to these changing geo-political and social configurations and their legal practices.

A major challenge in studying Islamic law is a combination of orientalist and Islamophobic narratives that seek to characterize the history of Islamic law as delayed, stagnant, and speculative.⁹ Contrary to this belief, Muslim scholarship and late Western academia posit instead the narrative of Islamic law as a dynamic system of legal and spiritual thought originating with the Prophet of God (peace be upon him), and continuing immediately thereafter with the *fatwa* being elemental to the origins and growth of the law.¹⁰ The *fatwa* is the fundamental element of Islamic legal thought and practice, tracing its origins from legal practice prescribed by the Qur'an, (namely Q4:176) and Prophetic practice, and continuing in the time of his successive followers. As the fundamental unit of legal thought that enables the

⁷ Jones, "Where Only Women May Judge," 457.

⁸ Jones, "Where Only Women May Judge," 441.

⁹ One example is in Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979). For the alternative, see Wael B Hallaq, "From Fatwās to Furū: Growth and Change in Islamic Substantive Law." *Islamic Law and Society* 1, no.1 (1994): 29-65.; Omer Awass, *Fatwa and the Making and Renewal of Islamic Law*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023) 284.

¹⁰ Hallaq, 1994; Awass, 284.

production of norms for social and individual life, the fatwa is crucial to the movement of the law through time.¹¹

Umar Awass (2023) traces the movement of *fatwa*-making or *iftā* from the production of communal norms for the nascent communities surrounding the Prophet, to international fatwa bodies with elaborate *iftā* practices to illustrate that the *iftā* is a scholarly legal practice that responds to extant social specifics. *Fatwas* form the foundation for the development of complex systems of legal practice, coalescing around prominent jurists and their distinctive legal practices, and culminating over time in schools of legal thought.¹²

Dialogic inquiries characterized by a question and response, each *fatwa* generally begins with a question from a petitioner, presented in a manner that allows the jurist to understand their primary concern. In response, the scholar proceeds methodically before presenting the *fatwa*. The first task is to locate the matter within the broader realm of existing law (whether religious or transactional, etc.), while making connections or adaptations to corresponding areas of the law. Next, the scholar must identify the legal ruling before presenting the *fatwa* to the petitioner. In this final phase the scholar must ensure compliance with the definitive texts of Islamic law, specifically the Qur'an and hadith, as well as the intellectual practices of analogous reasoning (*qiyas*) and the established legal opinion in the form of existing juristic consensus (*ijma*), all while maintaining the objectives of the law (*maqāṣid al-shariah*). Change is prompted by differences in circumstances, whether it be individual, geographic, and temporal. The *fatwa*, however, must nevertheless adhere to the objectives of the law. This is the established process for *iftā*.¹³

Responding to political change, Awass observes that in post-colonial contexts there appears to be a change in the practice of *iftā*, namely the emergence of “a sort of hybrid jurisprudence in that it is not merely an extension of those historically established legal norms and rulings, but it is a

¹¹ Hallaq, 1994; Awass 2023.

¹² Awass, 284.

¹³ Egypt's Dar Al-*Iftā* offers a quick reading on the process of *iftā*: <https://www.dar-alfata.org/en/fatwa/what-is-fatwa>

product of a new legal rationale that is addressing novel sociohistorical conditions”.¹⁴ Furthermore, the processes of *fatwa* making continues to evolve, specifically toward collective *iftā*.

To illustrate this, Taqwa Zabidi describes *fatwas* as a bridge linking the past and the future and explores how national and international *iftā* bodies adjudicate biomedical issues in gender ambiguity. Their processes “bridge the gap between Islamic and biomedical perspectives, put Islamic scholars and medical practitioners together and connect Muslims around the world”.¹⁵ Closing the gap between the past and the present, between the jurisprudential heritage and novel circumstance and science, Zabidi’s analysis points to contemporary *fatwa*-making that has grown beyond the function of individual scholars into institutional and collective practices that also includes various non-legal expertise, such that collective *iftā* practices now effect global Muslim practice. As Awass observes, international *iftā* bodies take a collective approach to *iftā*, gathering scholars from a variety of legal schools as well as a host of subject matter experts to collectively produce *fatwas* relevant to contemporary Muslim concerns.¹⁶

For Muslim feminist, legal scholarship, the emergence of the KUPI’s collective *fatwa*-making is a significant milestone. The KUPI has laid claim to a fundamental element of Islamic law, asserting the epistemic authority of women *ulama* and their capacity for *iftā*, relying on the principles of consensus building in women’s movement-building and global sisterhood. Furthermore, the movement has expanded on international trends in collective *fatwa*-making to harness the historical dynamism of the *fatwa* as a mechanism for legal responsiveness to evolving demands for justice.

Methodologically, the KUPI has both remained within the classical law systems of *fatwa*-making but also enriching them as the authors of the articles in this issue will illustrate. Kamala Chandrakirana and Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir (2025) offer a detailed analysis of the history and politics around the KUPI, noting amongst its collective “male and female ulama, as well as secular women’s rights and social justice activists”. Uniquely KUPI uses a tripartite epistemic framework, authored by Badriya Fayumi, Faqihuddin

¹⁴ Awass, 251

¹⁵ Taqwa Zabidi, “Analytical Review of Contemporary Fatwas in Resolving Biomedical Issues Over Gender Ambiguity,” *Journal of Religion and Health* 58, no. 1 (2019): 153-167. doi: 10.1007/s10943-018-0616-0.

¹⁶ Awass. 251.

Abdul Kodir (featured in this issue) and Nur Rofiah. In producing *fatwas*, the KUPI is directed by three concerns: “what is “*ma’rūf*, that which is religiously, reasonably, and socially acceptable; *keadilan hakiki*, a substantive understanding of justice; and *mubādalāh*, the principle of reciprocity” (Nurmila 2025). Nina Nurmila’s work offers an insightful exploration of each aspect of the three principles that guide the KUPI’s thinking. Importantly, these also function alongside the traditional sources of the law, namely Qur’an, *the Hadith*, analogical reasoning and the juristic consensus of historical and contemporary scholars. Furthermore, the KUPI draws on the national constitution and, significantly, the lived realities of women (Nurmila 2025).

As Nor Ismah observes, the KUPI has both used and innovated the traditional *fatwa* format. Indeed, the KUPI *fatwas* are structured differently from others such as the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). The KUPI *fatwas* feature seven sections concluding with references and detailed appendices. According to Nor Ismah, the KUPI “places particular emphasis in the sections *taṣawwur*, *adillah*, and *istidlāl*” (Ismah 2025). These opening sections of the *fatwa* offer a detailed description of the issue, the analysis, and the interpretive reasoning. The former aspect is especially important for the KUPI’s approach as it presents women’s lived experiences, that subsequently becomes the primary concern that must be addressed when providing a remedy to the problem raised by the petitioner (Ismah 2025). This detailed attention in the opening foregrounds women’s experiences so that the final *fatwa* produces “substantive or true justice (*keadilan hakiki*)” for both men and women (Ismah 2025).

To illustrate this further, Nor Ismah shows that, unlike the MUI’s brief issue summary, the structure of the KUPI’s *fatwa* on sexual violence, the conception or the *taṣawwur*, provides detailed context for the issue including data reflecting women’s real-life experiences. This enables the KUPI to highlight the gendered nature of the issue and the lived experiences of women that is then incorporated into its legal reasoning. Ismah argues that “These are not merely background elements, but integral to the analytical and interpretative process. This substantial part of KUPI’s methodology is a prerequisite for the process of *fatwa*” (Ismah 2025). A further unique aspect is that the KUPI’s *fatwas* allow for specificity by distilling each *fatwa* concern into three separate questions focusing on distinct aspects of the main concern. Thereafter, the *fatwas* include “nine essential values, with the

Qur'anic and Prophetic principle of compassion (*kerahmatan*), the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'a* (objectives of shari'a), and the approaches of *ma'rūf* (goodness), *mubāḍalah* (hermeneutic of reciprocity), and *keadilan hakiki* (substantive or true justice)" (Ismah 2025). Finally, the *fatwas* also refer to Indonesian law and international human rights law, expanding the scope of juristic thought to include specificities of historical time, national location, and socio-political circumstance. This echoes developments elsewhere whereby *fatwas* are now marked by hybridity, in that they are "not entirely new, nor are they a rehash of legal doctrines of the past",¹⁷

To return to our opening concern, how should we understand the achievements of the KUPI? What the KUPI offers should be celebrated as an additive development to modern trends in collective *fatwa*-making. Representing a unique convergence of historical legal practice with contemporary knowledge and experience, the KUPI *fatwas* continue a strong legal tradition that maintains the functional links of *iftā* to social change. Awass has shown that, similar to legal responses that originate in the specific social and religious concerns, there is a "reciprocal relationship between fatwas and social change in Muslim society".¹⁸ So, while the KUPI has expanded some aspects of *iftā*, they have also remained faithful to the history and function of *iftā* as a responsive mechanism of social change.

In the broader contexts of Islamic law, we may review the KUPI's achievements alongside similarly groundbreaking work elsewhere. Characteristically the women *qazi*'s of the Sharī'ah 'Adālats and the women *ulama* of the KUPI share an important strategy in the inclusion of male allies who they rely upon at times to facilitate their work and at other times to authorize it. Where communities would accept a male scholar's verdict more easily, the Women's Sharī'ah 'Adālats refer to trusted male scholars to complete the work they began. Among the woman *ulama*, Nelly van-Doorn Harder shows that the KUPI has also found "that a shift in the patriarchal mindset can only happen when they include male religious authorities" (van-Doorn Harder 2025).

And in this matter, there may also be room for feminist critique. In using the mechanisms of *iftā* remaining within the parameters of Islamic law, we may

¹⁷ Awass, 2023, p. 252

¹⁸ Awass, 2023 p. 3.

question whether the KUPI risks becoming a dutiful daughter of a historically complicit father or patriarchal law. Similar critique has been levelled against the BMMA that was accused of maintaining the distance between women and the legal protection of the state. Replicating parochial turf struggles amongst religious and state authorities, secular feminist critique accuses Muslim feminists of perpetuating and, thus, insulating Muslim family law from state reform. Ahmad Nuril Huda highlights the “counterpublics discourse” created by the KUPI’s digital footprint and online fora, where the community surrounding the KUPI have resisted feminist labelling because of the many ways in which feminism shares in a colonial past (Huda 2025).

Rose Braidotti once complained that feminist philosophers practiced philosophy as “dutiful daughters” performing a “mimetic repetition of established academic and intellectual conventions based on the phallogocentric codes”.¹⁹ It stood to reason for Braidotti that rather than replicating “an institution that has theorized and practiced the oppression, exclusion, and symbolic disqualification of women”, legitimate feminist philosophy required “reinventing a new kind of philosophical style, based on sexual difference”, namely a new theoretical style focused on embodied subjectivity.²⁰ The sexually differentiated subject is significant not only for the material differences in the body of the speaking subject, but for the different experiences that differently sexed individuals encounter: the “female feminist subject is the site of intersection of subjective desire with wilful social transformation”.²¹

To extrapolate from Braidotti’s critique, feminist *iftā* should not be merely a dutiful daughter’s re-creation of a patriarchal system shaped only by inherited legal norms and practices. Moreover, it should not replicate the phallogocentric logics of its inheritance but, rather, be informed by the experiences of differently sexed individuals. Finally, it must be transformative. The KUPI illustrates all three of these aspects, primarily as a group advocating for social change at the intersections of women’s movements for justice and *iftā*, and an Islamic legal mechanism for social responsiveness. The KUPI both inherits and transforms historical legal tools,

¹⁹ Rosi Braidotti, “Embodiment, Sexual Difference, and the Nomadic Subject” *Hypatia* 8, No. 1. (Winter, 1993): 2

²⁰ Braidotti, 5

²¹ Braidotti, 3

and, in response to phallogocentric logics, prioritizes the experiences of women.

Neither of the above two innovative movements in Islamic law at present can be accused of merely wanting to be dutiful daughters. While they remain within the systems of Islamic law, the simultaneous work to prioritize women's lived experiences in legal thought, generally monopolized by phallogocentric logics and praxis, locates them instead in a trajectory of historical dispute that is not so dutiful to the patriarchs as it is to the Qur'an and early Muslim practice.

For women reading from within the tradition, the KUPI's practice resonates Qur'anically, particularly with '*alMujadila*', differently translated as the debating, pleading, or disputing woman, Khawlah bint Tha'labah. Sura 58 of the Qu'ran is named after the disputing woman who demands the Prophet provide a better legal solution to her marital problem. Khawlah explains how her husband has practiced an abusive form of marital separation, for which she requires relief. The Prophet looked to local tradition and received a revelation to offer Khawlah a solution, but Khawlah is unhappy, and finds the solution unjust. In her complaint to the Prophet and her plea to God for an alternative remedy, we see the concerns of a woman who determined that the legal practices of her time did not meet the parameters of her belief in God's justice. And so, she asks the Prophet to return to God for a better solution that provides her family with real justice. Modern day '*mujadilat*' (plural of *mujadila*), the KUPI offers diligent and experience-based intellectual dispute with the history and the present of Muslim legal thought, demanding solutions that address the concerns of contemporary Muslim societies in their specific contexts to produce *haqiqi*, that is, real justice.

The KUPI has evidently taken valuable counsel from Kawlah's example. Not the dutiful daughters of a patriarchal tradition, perhaps the daughters of Khawlah: women ulama engaged in legal discourse responsive to women's real concerns. Women producing *fatwas*! Those who practice *iftā* are otherwise known as *mufti* (m) or *muftiya* (f), and many women are *muftiyāt*. Would the KUPI allow us, or even find it useful, to think of them as women muftis engaging the historical legal tradition? Following the tradition of Khawlah, may we speak of '*almuftiyāt almujadilat*', or the debating women muftis, pursuing just solutions for Muslim women?

The KUPI engages with the phallogocentric logics and praxis of the Indonesian State, local custom, and the historical systems of Islamic law. Attentive to *ma'ruf* and *mubādalāh*, guided by a demand for *haqiqi*, or real justice, the KUPI represent the best aspects of Islamic law, religious and intellectual effort, and local and international women's rights mechanisms for solidarity and consensus-building, shaping a potentially feminist *fiqh*. However, until feminism finds less resistance in Indonesia, or is more effectively redeemed from its colonial legacies, that announcement may, for now at least, need to remain muted.

The celebration of the KUPI's achievement, however, should not be. To that end, this volume offers a deep-dive into the history, philosophy, processes, and strategies of the KUPI, as the abstracts below illustrate:

Chronicles of a Collective Claim to Religious Authority: KUPI's Women Ulama by Kamala Chandrakirani and Faqihuddin Abdul Kodirii

This paper chronicles KUPI's collective claim to religious authority for women ulama in Indonesia, from the perspective of the initiators of this movement. It reveals some of the thought process behind key actions taken by KUPI during its first decade in making this collective claim, particularly on how KUPI locates itself in Indonesia's multiple histories of struggle towards social justice, how it constructs its broad-based and inclusive movement in order to make its bold claim, and how recognition of religious authority takes form at the community level and in the personal lives of KUPI's women ulama. This chronicle draws on the authors' engagements, analysis, and reflections as part of the initiators and leadership of KUPI.

KUPI Approach to Qur'an and Hadith Re-interpretation by Nina Nurmila

Critical theory argues that knowledge is not value free. It is influenced by the interest, context, and background of the knowledge producers. Many books of *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis) have been written, primarily by men based on their experiences. These *tafsirs* are not free from male interest. As Farid

Esack argues, classical *tafsirs*, mostly written by men, tend to be male-biased and discriminatory against women. Since the late 1990s, with the growing influence of global Muslim feminism, there have been increasing number of books in Indonesia that criticize the male-biased interpretations of the Qur'an and produce alternative readings from an equal gender perspective, such as those written by Nasaruddin Umar, Zaitunah Subhan, Nurjannah Ismail, Husein Muhammad, and many others. Recent works have been produced by Badriyah Fayumi, Nur Rofiah and Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir, the leading founders and organizers of the Congress of Indonesian Women Ulama (KUPI). This article explores three new methodologies of *tafsir* developed in the current Indonesian context by three scholars: Badriyah Fayumi's reading of *ma'rūf* (religiously, reasonably, and socially acceptable), Nur Rofiah's concept of women's *haqiqi* (real) justice, and Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir hermeneutical approach of *qirā'ah mubādalah* (reciprocal reading). These new approaches to understanding Islamic sources were launched during KUPI II in 2022 to be KUPI's methodology.

Issuing Justice: Women Ulama, Fatwas, and the Ratification of Indonesia's Sexual Violence Crime Bill by Nor Ismah

The ratification of the Sexual Violence Crime Bill in May 2022 reflects the collective efforts of diverse actors advocating for gender justice in Indonesia, including women ulama from the Congress of Indonesian Women Ulama (Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia/KUPI). Central to this achievement is the KUPI's pioneering 2017 fatwa condemning sexual violence, which empowered women ulama to mobilize support for the bill. This article explores how KUPI's fatwa galvanized support for the Bill, helped to overcome resistance, and built lasting coalitions, thereby drawing attention to the overlooked role of women in issuing fatwas and in navigating and reshaping traditional religious frameworks to address gender-based violence. Using qualitative methods—including online observation, textual analysis, and interviews—I examine how women ulama challenge patriarchal interpretations of Islamic law and assert their authority in public religious discourse. I argue that, in social movements, fatwas can serve as internal innovations that offer shared moral guidance, unite actors, and act as mobilizing tools to drive policy change. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of female religious authority in Islamic jurisprudence and

highlights shifting gender dynamics in contemporary Muslim societies, with a specific focus on Indonesia.

KUPI's Gender Campaigns, Digital Activism, and a Counterpublic in the Making by Ahmad Nuril Huda

The expansion of the Internet and social media platforms over the past decades has empowered many progressive Muslim women's groups associated with the Congress of Indonesian Women Ulama (KUPI) to leverage digital realms for their Islamic feminist campaigns. However, their digital initiatives often remain undervalued due to the marginalization of their gender discourses compared to the dominant conservative narratives surrounding women's issues in the country. The aim of this article is to examine the last four years of the KUPI's online feminist campaigns, especially those from after its second congress in November 2022. I focus on the KUPI's creative endeavors to expand their feminist ideas through activities in online spaces and the potential of these endeavors to create an environment where they can articulate and increase their voices against the patriarchal discourses on women prevalent in Indonesian society. I draw my data from a combination of online observation from the KUPI's media networks, interviews with individuals involved in the KUPI's digital initiatives, and desk research on KUPI-related topics. I frame the data with a theoretical approach that examines the intersection of women's digital activism and the creation of counterpublics in contemporary society. This framework acknowledges the capacity of these Islamic feminist activists to publicly discuss women-related issues, raise awareness about gender justice, and foster collective action aimed at improving women's health and well-being.

Observations From The Outside: The KUPI Factor by Nelly van Doorn-Harder

The second convening of the KUPI in November 2022 was attended by international participants who had firsthand opportunity to gauge its relevance beyond Indonesia. Many non-Indonesian scholars and religious activists who observed the developments related to the KUPI conferences in 2017 and 2022 agree that they represent a significant movement within the Muslim world, particularly in Indonesia, where female scholars are actively shaping the discourse on Islam and gender, promoting

interpretations that support women's rights and social justice. The central questions in this article are: What makes the KUPI a distinct and promising movement? How can it establish a lasting presence in Indonesia? Not every Muslim community is ready to accept the ideas and methods of the KUPI. Issues that play out at the grassroots level or within women's circles escape the interest or attention of the mostly male interpreters. The KUPI questions and challenges the dominant patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'an. This is bound to find resonance among Muslim women across the Muslim world and makes translating the KUPI materials into other languages more urgent than ever.

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