

THE QUR'AN, WOMAN, AND NATIONALISM IN INDONESIA

Ulama Perempuan's Moral Movement

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Abstracts

This paper discusses how 'ulama perempuan' (Female Muslim woman clerics) use religious sources particularly, Qur'an, in their expression of moral movement as seen in media. It also contends that they try to make identity and sense of belonging by inviting themselves and others to participate in improving the wellbeing and cohesion of Indonesia as the nation. Using a descriptive-analytic method, the study questions about the factors that have made it possible for some Indonesian ulama perempuan to propose a different view, and what do their movement represent in terms of nationalism? In answering them, the study relies its data on their recommendations both at KUPI (Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia), April 25-27, 2017, Cirebon, West Java, and press release presented at Istiqlal Mosque, Jakarta on March 1, 2018, as well as two other recommendations that follow. The study finds that 'ulama perempuan' have made an alternative voice using some of religious sources (the Qur'an) and secular ones through their moral movements in improving the status and role of women, the well beings of children, and environment sustainability. Their movement attracts other agents particularly that of media to magnify the voice and make the movement gear as strong alternative message of soft nationalism. [Artikel ini membahas tentang bagaimana ulama perempuan di Indonesia menggunakan sumber hukum, khususnya al Qur'an dalam aktifitas gerakan moral yang terlibat dalam media massa. Mereka juga mencoba menunjukkan identitas dan perasaan kepedulian dengan melibatkan diri dalam perbaikan

keadaan dan kesatuan bangsa. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif analitis, tulisan ini mencoba menjawab pertanyaan mengenai factor-faktor yang membuat gerakan mereka memungkinkan untuk mengajukan pandangan alternatif dan merepresentasikan diri dalam wacana nasionalisme. Untuk menjelaskan hal tersebut, studi ini mendasarkan pada hasil rekomendasi mereka pada Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI) pertama di Cirebon tahun 2017 dan press release mereka di Masjid Istiqlal pada tanggal 1 Maret 2018, termasuk dua rekomendasi lain berikutnya. Artikel ini memberikan kesimpulan bahwa ulama perempuan mampu membuat pandangan alternatif dengan menggunakan sumber hukum Islam (al Qur'an) dan sumber lain melalui gerakan moral dalam mengangkat status dan peran perempuan, kesejahteraan anak-anak dan isu lingkungan yang berkelanjutan. Gerakan mereka juga menarik perhatian media untuk menguatkan pendapat dan gerakan mereka sebagai pesan alternatif dalam nasionalisme moderat.]

Keywords: The Qur'an, Ulama Perempuan, Nationalism, moral movements

A. Introduction

Indonesia had a quite long history of woman's participation including Muslim woman's participation in social movement and in making this nation state. Though largely framed in the constructed norm of kodrat (nature) which placed women as supporting agents, women in this country had relatively found ways to engage in economic, social, and even political activities. They were commonly found in market, education institution, and health institution consecutively as vendors, teachers, and midwives. Even some women were ever inaugurated as queens such as Sri Sulthanah Safiatudin Tajul 'Alam Syah Johan (1641-1675), and her three successors in Aceh,¹ the Queen of Batara Hyang (16th century) and Sri Gading Anteg (17th Century) who ruled in the Kingdom of Galunngung in Tasikmalaya, West Java, of non-Muslim women.² Prior

¹ Zakiatuddin Inayat Syah (1678-1688), Ratu Nurul Alam Naqiatuddin Syah (1675-1678), and Sulthanat Sri Ratu Kamala Syah (1688-1699). Helmi Ali Yafie, "Prolog: Nasib (Ulama) Perempuan", in *Jejak Perjuangan Keulamaan Perempuan Indonesia*, ed. by Helmi Ali Yafie (Jakarta: KUPI, 2017), pp. 21–2.

² Kusmana, "Contemporary Interpretation of Kodrat Perempuan: Local Discourse of Muslim Women's Leadership in Indonesia", Ph.D. Dissertation (Rotterdam:

to the independence of Indonesian Republic 1945, Indonesian women were commonly got involved in social, educational as well as political movement. Cut Nyak Dien (1850-1908), and Cut Meutia (1870-1910) of Aceh, Rahma el-Yunusiah (1900-1969) and Rasuna Said (1910-1965) of West Sumatera, Dewi Sartika (1884-1947) of West Java, Nyai Ahmad Dahlan (1872-1946) and Nyi Hajar Dewantara known as Sutartinah (1890-1972) of Yogyakarta, and Kartini (1879-1904) of Central Java, etc., are instances of Indonesian in these movements.³ Women also got involved in national organizations' program activities in woman's wing organization such as in Muhammadiyah, NU, and Persis. They also participated in national movements through woman's organizations such as Indonesian Woman's Congress, Indonesian Woman's Confederation (PPPI and then PPI), Isteri Sedar (Aware Wife), etc. Cora Vreede-De Stuers, as quoted by Ruth Indiah Rahayu, interpreted woman's social and political movement prior to Indonesian independence from the vintage of kinship and knowledge system as the argument of woman's movement awakening and nationalism.⁴

Following Rahayu and Core's line of argument, it can be argued that Muslim woman's movement in Indonesia in the first half of the 20th century was influenced by the three systems of kinship-matrilineal, patrilineal, and bilinear. At the same time, the two mainstreams of Islamic thought -traditionalist and modernist (it consists of liberal and reformist) which have been always negotiating opportunity and space for society is a strong precedence. Although this precedence in terms of political participation was interrupted since 1966 as the New Order put aside woman political participation insistently by constructing complementary roles for them, Muslim women's movement actually did not discontinue, but took a rather dynamic way of engagement supporting

Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2017), p. 58.

³ Kusmana, "Modern Discourse of Woman's Ideal Role in Indonesia: Tafsir al-Qur'an of Ibu and Female Agency", *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2015), p. 33.

⁴ Ruth Indiah Rahayu, "Emansipasi Menuju Unilinear: Gerakan Feminist 'Indonesia' Paro Abad Ke-20", in *Sejarah Perempuan Indonesia: Gerakan & Pencapaian*, trans. by Elvira Rosa, Paramita Ayuningtyas, and Dwi Istiani (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2008), p. ix; Cora Vreede-de Stuers, *Sejarah Perempuan Indonesia: Gerakan & Pencapaian*, trans. by Elvira Rosa, Paramita Ayuningtyas, and Dwi Istiani (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2008), pp. 2-3.

the success of their gender counterparts. Woman's political participation restarted to increase dramatically since the Reformasi era (1998) where the political policy of the country through affirmative quota policy provides more rooms and opportunities for women to do so. However, positive development does not mean that woman's movement run without a challenge because one of the impacts of the implementation of decentralization policy is the emergence of sharia regulations. This policy actually places women to engage publicly in certain situations where they have always to tackle them in order to gain opportunities and roles.⁵

In the history of woman's social movement in this country, education sector has always played important role in the effort to improve woman's status and role. Regardless the poor and discriminate nature of the policy of education and its implementation for women, women, including Muslim women, gained positive impact from the colonial government's, Indonesian government's policy and people's education programs in augmenting their capacity, skill and networks. The two umbrellas of education institutions-Ministry of National Education and Culture,⁶ and Ministry of Religious Affairs provide the education for people from pre-elementary, elementary to higher education level. These national projects have been resulting in the increase of the number of well-educated women. In general, today Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) of Elementary level is 97,50%, Junior High School level 78,84 %, and Senior High School 60,67% in 2018.⁷ The number of elementary students in state and private school in the country is 25,486,506 (12,142,242 of them are female students), of junior high school is 10,125,724 (4,951,810 of them are female students), of senior high school is 4,783,645 (2,654,752 of them are female students), of vocational school is 4,904,031 (2,102,269 of them are female students). The number of Muslim students (in state

⁵ Ahmad Fuad Fanani, "The Implementation of Sharia Bylaws and Its Negative Social Outcome for Indonesian Women", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2017), p. 171.

⁶ In the first term of Joko Widodo as president, this national body of education is divided into two: Ministry of National Education, and Ministry of Research, Technology and National Higher Education, and now the two are integrated again.

⁷ Badan Pusat Statistik, "Angka Partisipasi Murni (APM) menurut Provinsi 2011-2019", <https://www.bps.go.id/dynamictable/2015/12/22/1052/angka-partisipasi-murni-apm-menurut-provinsi-2011-2018.html>, accessed 3 Dec 2019.

and private schools) in elementary level is 21,527,896, of junior high school is 8,360,201, of senior high school is 3,796,733, and of vocational program is 2,102,268.⁸ Up to the senior high school, female Indonesian citizens are significantly trained in education institutions. In 2018, there were 8,043,480 registered students, and 1,247,116 graduates from undergraduate programs in all higher education institutions.⁹ There were 204,991 students graduated from Diploma Programs, 1,114,729 students graduated from Under Graduate Programs, 93,780 students graduated from Master Programs, and 7,313 students graduated from Doctorate Programs. The total number of female graduates in all level is 753,455, of male ones is 667,358. It means the total number of female graduates is higher than the total number of male ones (86,097 graduates).¹⁰

In Ministry of Religious Affairs alone, female students have plentiful opportunity to gain good education including the opportunity to learn Islamic teachings and sciences in which they are pre-requisite for usually male Muslims to be *ulama* (religious clerics). Since its establishment in early 1960s, Islamic higher education institutions offered higher education for everybody who were and are eligible to participate. With the large number of Islamic higher education institutions today (17 UINs, 17 IAINs, and 24 STAINs. 105 faculties of Islamic Religion at [general] universities, 68 private IAI [Institut Agama Islam/Institute for Islamic Studies], 622 private STAI [Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam/Higher Colleges for Islamic studies], and a number of Ma'had 'Ali/College for Islamic Studies) actually Muslim Indonesian women have a great opportunity to improve their capacity, knowledge and skills. In addition, the emergence of public piety among Indonesian Muslims as the result of Tarbiyah movement carried out by some students of general universities to promote ideal Islam which had been taking place since 1990s, contributed to provide more opportunities for Muslim women

⁸ "Pusat Data dan Statistik Pendidikan", <http://statistik.data.kemdikbud.go.id/index.php/page/sd>, accessed 4 Dec 2019; "Pusat Data dan Statistik Pendidikan", <http://statistik.data.kemdikbud.go.id/index.php/page/smp>, accessed 4 Dec 2019; "Pusat Data dan Statistik Pendidikan", <http://statistik.data.kemdikbud.go.id/index.php/page/sma>, accessed 4 Dec 2019.

⁹ Pusdatin Kemenristekdikti, *Statistik Pendidikan Tinggi 2018* (Jakarta: Pusdatin Iptek Dikti, Setjen, Kemenristekdikti, 2018), p. 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 66–7.

to engage publicly. To illustrate, Pieterella Van Doorn Harder, in her book *Women Shaping Islam: Reading the Qur'an in Indonesia*¹¹ discusses the active role of educated female Muslim women in their affiliated mass organization - Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama/NU, in dealing with a number of the themes of discussion, ranging from religious radicalism, authoritarianism, woman education and employment, family planning, etc.

The increase of woman's capacity, skill, and networks over the last five decades as explained above is also marked by the use of communication and information technology which accelerates of their doing things. Muslim women in their social movement use information technology as a strategy to gain their objectives. In spite of the existing differences in their attitude and thought, Muslim woman's movement in the last of 20th and early 21st century extends their area of engagement one step ahead to the area of making more structured movement. One of their movement is moral movement of what so called 'ulama perempuan' (Muslim women clerics). This paper discusses their moral movement with special reference to the use of the Qur'an as their spiritual inspiration.

Before discussing further, four key terms, framework, and method of analysis need to be explained to frame the discussion in certain narration. The term 'ulama perempuan' may refer to Muslim scholar either male or female who has concern in offering an alternative knowledge construction which pays attention and supports all effort to make equal relation among gender.¹² However, the use of the term in this discussion is restricted to designate female Muslim clerics only. Male Muslim clerics, such as Husein Muhammad, who have the same ideological perspective about gender equality and justice will only be consulted when their opinion is considered necessary.¹³ The term Qur'an refers to the Holy

¹¹ Pieterella Van Doorn-Harder, *Women Shaping Islam: Indonesian Women Reading the Qur'an* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

¹² Helmi Ali Yafie (ed.), *Jejak Perjuangan Keulamaan Perempuan Indonesia* (Jakarta; Cirebon: KUPI, 2017), pp. xxviii–xxx.

¹³ See Yusuf Rahman, "Feminist Kyai, K.H. Husein Muhammad: The Feminist Interpretation on Gendered Verses and the Qur'ān-Based Activism", *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 55, no. 2 (2017), pp. 293–326; Kusmana, "The Qur'an and Woman's Leadership Discourse in Indonesia: Modern Interpretation of QS. 4: 34", *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2016), pp. 225–58. A feminist 'ālim or kyai of Dar al-Tauhid Islamic boarding school in Arjawinangun Cirebon, West Java,

Book of Muslims which is believed to have been revealed from Allah to His messenger Muhammad in about 23 years in 7th century in Mecca and Medinah. The Qur'an used here is *Muṣḥaf al-Madinah an-Nabawiyah* entitled *The Holy Qur'an English translation of the meanings and Commentary*.¹⁴ Similar publication published by the Religious Affairs will also be consulted as far as it is relevant with the discussion.

Nationalism is one of social forces which cannot be defined completely once for all. In contrast, it is always influenced by the perspectives, and passions of authors in which they are driven by political and cultural factors where they lived. This modern thought has various expressions -as central component of modernization, related to modern religious movement, as linguistic construction, as discourse of gender and ethnicity, and as expression of modern national state.¹⁵ As the main object of research deals with female Muslim clerics in Indonesian contemporary context, the discussion is confined to ideas about nationalism which are dispersed in modern social system, ranging from the dimension of sense of belonging or loving, to the dimension of sense of obligation, and responsibility.¹⁶

Moral Movement is a movement in which its undertakings focuses on upholding certain values and norms which are considered ideal. In this case, values and norms which nurture the modernization of Indonesian nation state is discussed from the perspective of Female Muslim clerics. This study deploys new social movement theory, paying attention to discuss how these Muslim women intelligentsias make rational choices¹⁷

Indonesia, has written various articles and books on women issues and gender problem. Growing up in a conservative family, and graduating from Al-Azhar University, *Kyai* Husein becomes one of the main proponents of Islamic feminism in Indonesia. Apart from leading a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school).

¹⁴ Abdullah Yusuf Ali (ed.), *The Holy Qur-ān: English Translation of the Meanings, and Commentary* (Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur'an Print. Complex, 1989).

¹⁵ Lloyd Kramer, "Historical Narratives and the Meaning of Nationalism", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 58, no. 3 (1997), pp. 525–7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 528.

¹⁷ Hank Johnston, Enrique Laraña, and Joseph R. Gusfield, "Identities, Grievances, and New Social Movements", in *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity*, ed. by Joseph R. Gusfield, Enrique Laraña, and Hank Johnston (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), pp. 4–5.

by doing collectively in mobilizing resources to promote new imagined nationalism in Indonesia, a nationalism in which their voice is measured as part of the existing nation state builders.

This study uses a descriptive-analytic method, questioning factors that have made it possible for some Indonesian Muslim scholars known as *ulama perempuan* to propose an alternative voice, and representations of their moral movement in terms of nationalism? In the midst of the rapid development of internet use in the disruption era now, the virtual world provides rich information and is widely used in many studies.¹⁸ It is therefore, in answering them, the study relies its data on documented virtual data, female Muslim clerics' recommendations both at KUPI (*Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*), April 25-27, 2017, Cirebon, West Java, and press release presented at Istiqlal Mosque, Jakarta on March 1, 2018. In addition, two other recommendations that followed are also consulted. In analyzing these main sources of data, other relevant references are also discussed. These data will be analyzed in the lens of form and expression of nationalism.

Previous studies related to the role of female Muslim clerics with reference to the issue of nationalism in broader sense have actually been circulated, in direct way or vice versa. In these studies, female Muslim clerics are reported to have discussed or engaged in one or more dimensions of nationalism as they were examined within the frame of modern state nation system. I refer to these studies as long as they are relevant with the present study. Jan Jindy Pettman discusses the problem, prospect, and future of the discourse of nationalism in international relation discipline. His article advises readers to be aware of the massive coverage the discourse of nationalism can be.¹⁹ This alarming message has been repeated several times later: by Shahnaz Khan²⁰ in Canadian

¹⁸ Nurdin, "To Research Online or Not to Research Online: Using Internet-Based Research in Islamic Studies Context", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2017), p. 33.

¹⁹ Jan Jindy Pettman, "Nationalism and After", *Review of International Studies*, vol. 24, no. 5 (1998), pp. 149–64.

²⁰ Shahnaz Khan, "Muslim Women: Negotiations in the Third Space", *Signs*, vol. 23, no. 2 (1998), pp. 463–94.

Context, Sunaina Maira²¹ in the relation between religion and nationalism, Ahmad Fuad Fanani²² in the possibility of the emergence of shari'ah in influencing Muslim women's public engagements or exercising their nationalism, Amartya Sen,²³ in taking advantage the concept of nationalism wisely. Ahmad Mukri Aji, and Nur Rohim Yunus²⁴ in informing that treating Muslim expressions and engagements in public could violate the shared identity of nation, and Nelly Martin-Anatias²⁵ in negotiating her nationalism by dealing with values and systems implicated from Islamic teachings, cultural and structural patriarchal norms of Indonesian societies, etc.

Another important aspect that is important to be mentioned here is the discussion of Ummah in modern time. Hasnan Bachtiar²⁶ explains that previously the concept of ummah has been interpreted exclusively, and in inward-looking way. As many modern and traditional values and systems in practice interact one another, borrowing and even taking advantage between dimensions of modern and traditional values. It is therefore he believes that we can interpret Ummah," based the "values of liberalism, pluralism, democracy, human rights and sustainable development." This inclusive proposal can be used as a reference for many other expressions and engagements including female Muslim clerics' public engagement in exercising nationalism.

B. The 1st KUPI: Participating in Nationalism Discourse

The Indonesian Women Ulama Congress (KUPI) was finally taken place on April 25-27, 2017 after conducting a number of tiring

²¹ Sunaina Maira, "'Good' and 'Bad' Muslim Citizens: Feminists, Terrorists, and U. S. Orientalisms", *Feminist Studies*, vol. 35, no. 3 (2009), pp. 631–56.

²² Fanani, "The Implementation of Sharia Bylaws and Its Negative Social Outcome for Indonesian Women".

²³ Amartya Sen, "Is Nationalism a Boon or a Curse?", *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 43, no. 7 (2008), pp. 39–44.

²⁴ Ahmad Mukri Aji and Nur Rohim Yunus, "Identity Politics in Cultural and Structural Islam in Indonesia", *Abkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2019).

²⁵ Nelly Martin-Anatias, "On Being a 'Good' Indonesian Muslim Woman: An Autoethnography", *Humanity & Society*, vol. 43, no. 4 (2019), pp. 351–74.

²⁶ Hasnan Bachtiar, "Towards a Progressive Interpretation of Ummah", *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2018), pp. 87–116.

preparations initiated since early 2016, chiefly done by the three main organizations-Rahima, Alimaat, and Fahmina. This national congress of female Muslim clerics becomes possible due to supporting political as well as cultural changes. The political shift from an authoritarian New Order into a more democratic political system of the *Reformasi* era provides rooms and opportunities for Indonesians including female Muslim clerics to exercise their agency more freely. Culturally, Muslims which occupy the majority in this country have been the dominant recipients of modernization through both general education institutions and religious ones from elementary to higher education level.

Beside the three main organizations, the 1st KUPI was also supported by other organizations consist of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, AMAN Indonesia, Pekka, Migrant Care, STID al-Biruni, Forum Pengada Layanan, Komnas Perempuan, Rumah Kitab, and LBH APIK, and by individuals consist of Vice President of Indonesia, H. Jusuf Kalla, General Dudung Abdurrahman, GKR Hemas, Ibu Netty Heryawan, and Ibu Nihayatul Wafiroh.²⁷ The committee collaborated with AMAN Indonesia launched a dynamic and creative power point presentation and uploaded in Youtube on April 26, 2018.²⁸

The committee had to select more than 1280 registrants into only 649 selected attendants, consisting of 519 participants, and 131 observers, coming from 14 countries: the host country Indonesia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Kenya, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Australia, United States America, and the Netherlands.²⁹

The 1st KUPI harvested at least two important products: Kebon Jambu's Declaration on Female Clerics, and Recommendation. Kebon Jambu's Declaration on Woman is the basic principle of intellectualism of the Indonesian female Muslim Clerics. It consists of 5 paragraphs.

²⁷ Tim KUPI (ed.), *Dokumen Resmi Proses & Hasil Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia* (Cirebon: KUPI, 2017), pp. vi–vii.

²⁸ AMAN Indonesia, “1 Tahun Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia (KUPI): Rising Women Ulama” (2018), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hky6aDhUg_4.

²⁹ Tim KUPI (ed.), *Dokumen Resmi Proses & Hasil Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*, p. iv.

The first paragraph states that woman is the creature who has the same potency of human being as man does. This potency is grace from God. The second paragraph asserts that the existence of female clerics returned back to the time of Prophet Muhammad contributing to the history of Islam and Muslims. Their contributions reflect actually their faith and the historical necessity. The third paragraph emphasizes that just like male clerics, female clerics were and are also inherited the task of the Prophet in nurturing *tauhid* (Oneness of God), liberating people from *syirk* (belief in more than one God), and in humanizing human to express Islam as the religion of *rahmah* (grace). The fourth statuses that just like male clerics, female clerics can also be responsible in carrying out the Prophet mission in eliminating all forms of injustice and discrimination. In so doing, they are also considered to be responsible in reinterpreting religious texts to express alternative voices. The last one, the fifth, as citizens of Indonesia, female Muslim clerics have also rights and obligation to nurture and defend the country.³⁰

The draft of the declaration was formulated by a task force and was discussed by 49 participants of the congress before it was read in the closing ceremony. The Congress requested to every participant of the congress to disseminate it in their home town and country.³¹ The declaration was read loudly by Nyai Hj. Umdatul Choirat, Tambakberas Pesantren, Jombang, Nyai Hj. Mariatul Asiah from Banjarmasin, and Nyai Hj. Raudhatul Miftah from Madura in the closing ceremony on April 27, 2018.³²

The 1st KUPI also released recommendation. There are two kinds of recommendation: general and thematic. The general recommendation deals with Islamism, nationhood, and humanity. The process of formulating the general recommendation was just like the process of formulating the declaration in that the draft of it was formulated by another task force, and was refined by considering suggestions, questions and answers raised during the congress. It was also read loudly by Nyai Hj. Fatmawati Hilal from Makassar, in the closing ceremony on April

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

27, 2017.³³ The general recommendations were addressed to 7 different agencies: female Muslim clerics themselves, mass organizations, society in general, law enforcers, representative bodies, and the state apparatus.³⁴

There were actually nine themes of recommendation: 1. Education of female clerics, 2. *Pesantren* (Islamic Boarding School) response towards female clerics, 3. Sexual harassment, 4. Under age marriage, 5. Migrant workers, 6. Religious radicalism, 7. Development in country sides, 8. Human conflict and crisis, and 9. Natural destruction.³⁵ The nine themes were discussed a day before they were announced in the closing ceremony, April 26, 2017 in different classes at Kebon Jambu Pesantren. Of the nine themes, only three themes-sexual harassment, early age marriage, and destruction of nature were read in the closing ceremony on April 27, 2017.³⁶ Participants of various backgrounds, *majlis taklim* teachers, gender activists, observers, lecturers, researchers, etc., attended these commission sessions.

Following the general recommendation, the recommendation targets important social issues dear to them themselves. The first two themes pay attention to the educational institutions which have direct influence over the trajectory of female Muslim clerics themselves. Three other following themes deal with the protection and wellbeing of women ranging from the anticipation from sexual violence, negative impact of early age marriage, and wellbeing and protection of female migrant workers. The sixth theme urges female Muslim clerics to actively engage in the efforts of making counter responses against religious radicalism movement. Theme 7 to 9 pays attention consecutively to the participation of female Muslim clerics in the development of country side areas, to the effort of making situation in peace from social conflicts, and to the efforts of sustaining the nature.³⁷

The steering committee of KUPI had a pre-congress methodological discussion held in Jakarta on April 4-6, 2017 and came up with 7 steps of the structure of discussion: *tashawwur* (problem description), *adillah*

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 151–3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 154–9.

(Islamic law references), *istidlal* (analysis of the bases of conclusion), religious attitude and view, *taẓkiya* (recommendation), *marajii'* (references), and *marafiq* (enclosures). In the first step, the participants of discussion (female clerics including some male ones) formulate the nature of problem based on facts and normative stands.³⁸ In the second step, they use four sources: the Qur'an, Hadith, view of clerics, and Indonesian constitutions.³⁹ In the next step, they analyze the discussed problem based on universal Islamic principles such as humanity, justice, equality, reciprocity, goodness, positiveness, nationhood, and solvable view which considers the natural justice between man and woman.⁴⁰ In the fourth step, they relate the nature of problem to its norms, and facts and then formulate answers which considers the benefit for the present societies. This process constitutes the religious view of KUPI.⁴¹ They targeted seven audiences as the recipients of the recommendations ranging from individual, family, institution, religious and social figures, society, company, and the state.⁴² This constitutes the fifth step. The last two steps the sixth and the seventh are references and enclosures where they consecutively mention references used and quotes from different sources.⁴³

In all processes of this problem-solving thought, the Qur'an is not only used as foundational reference, but also framed it as their basic stand. To illustrate this process, one theme, sexual harassment is firstly discussed below.

C. The Primacy of the Qur'an and the Issue of Sexual Harassment

Having claimed the danger of sexual harassment⁴⁴ and considered inputs from the participants of the commission,⁴⁵ the task force uses

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 52–3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 53–4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁴⁴ That sexual harassment can be harmful for one's health, discontinue one's education, jobless, stigmatized, and criminalized. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁴⁵ They pose questions, confirmation, refusion and information regarding the issue and cases of sexual harassment.

the Qur'an as theological basis by selecting a number of verses which are relevant with discussed matter. They discussed the issue within three important aspects: law, difference between rape and adultery, and the absence of and poor law enforcement and management of the state apparatus in dealing with the victims of sexual violence. In the matter of the law of sexual harassment, the team quoted Qur'an 17: 70, Qur'an 4: 19, Qur'an 9: 71, Qur'an 24: 4-5, Qur'an 33: 58, Qur'an 85: 10, and Qur'an 24: 33 to lay down consecutively the norm of nobility of human being, respect over woman, order to protect each other, ban of accusation without evidence, ban of harming innocent people, ban of suffering others, and ban of ordering woman to be prostituted.⁴⁶ Other sources-Hadith, opinion of clerics, and Indonesian constitution-were also consulted in order to deepen, illustrate, as well as to extend the dimensions of the necessity of respect and protection over women. Similar steps were also implemented in discussing the difference between rape and adultery and how both affects woman, and the poor law enforcement and management of the state apparatus in dealing with the victims of sexual violence.

The two other sources-Hadith and opinion of clerics-are commonly used in Islamic religious discourse, as they function commonly what so called as rhetorical construction of religious view. It seems that female Muslim clerics also take advantage of these two sources in their own construction. What is interesting is their use of Indonesian constitution as a source in religious discourse. This means a lot in the context of the relation between Islam and modernity. The use of it can be seen as a recognition of the modern concept of nation state, dismissing the theological barrier which for some this concept is considered alien to Islam. Another point, its use can be treated as embracing as well as expressing the spirit of nationalism by contextualizing religious and state constitution sources in discussing this matter. Furthermore, its use ascertains that the message is delivered strongly. Finally, its use can also be seen as an effective strategy to be accepted as one of the main players in this discourse. By doing so, their movement is expected to attract more audiences.

⁴⁶ Tim KUPI (ed.), *Dokumen Resmi Proses & Hasil Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*, pp. 61-4.

In deploying verses of the Qur'an, they effectively capture only the main message of them identifying how the Qur'an confers about the relevant information with the discussed matter. The application of this method is reasonable because they then have flexibility to relate them with the similar points taken from Hadith, opinion of clerics and from Indonesian constitution. For example, *Shahiih Bukhari* No. 2277 is quoted to condemn the practice of abusing the body of women for prostitution.⁴⁷ Another, the view of Faisal bin Abdul Aziz, Zainuddin al-Malibari, and Wahbah al-Zuhaili is also consulted to support the importance of respect and protection over woman.⁴⁸

From Indonesian constitution, they refer to UUD 1945, Chapter 28 G verse 2 which says "every body has rights to be free from torture or treatment degrading the dignity of human beings and deserving political asylum from another country," Chapter 28 B Verse 2, "every child has rights to live, grow up and develop, and has rights to protection over violence and discrimination, and Chapter 28 I Verse 1, "Rights to live, rights not to be tortured, rights of freedom of thought and conscience, rights to adhere a religion, rights not to be slaved, rights to be recognized as an individual before the law, rights for not being prosecuted based on the existing retroactive law are basic human rights which cannot be reduced in any circumstances."⁴⁹

Another important result of the 1st KUPI is the establishment of Jaringan Ulama Perempuan Indonesia/JUPI (Indonesia Female Muslim Cleric Network). The Network aimed to be used as means for female and male Muslim clerics to express their movements and aspirations. The following two sub chapters discuss their press releases responding the coming important political events: election of head of district in 2018, and members of parliament and president of Republic of Indonesia in 2019.

D. Istiqlal Mosque Press Release

Some important exponents of Jaringan Ulama Perempuan Indonesia/JUPI (Indonesian Female Muslim Cleric Network) held a press release at Istiqlal Mosque Press Release which was read on March 1, 2018.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 78–9.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

The press release entitled its message as “Seruan Moral, Jaringan Ulama Perempuan Indonesia, Untuk Menjaga Keutuhan Bangsa Indonesia” (Moral Call, the Indonesian Female Cleric Network, in Order to Maintain the Unity of Indonesian Nation). Badriyah Fayumi, leader of Pesantren Mahasina in Bekasi, West Java, explained that this moral call represented anxieties of female clerics who worked in *pesantren* (Islamic Boarding School), *majelis taklim* (Religious Studies Group) and other religious education institutions.⁵⁰

The Press Release was framed within the spirit of female dakwah which is characterized by four core values: Islam-ness, nationhood, humanity, and universality.⁵¹ They related Islam with open and universal values as theological basis for their aspiration. With this inclusive stand they began their recommendation by quoting Qur’an 3: 103 which says:

“And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah (i.e. this Qur’an), be not divided among yourselves, and remember Allah’s favors on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islamic Faith), and you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus, Allah makes His Ayāt (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) clear to you, that you may be guided.”⁵²

The Press Release does not mention the circumstance of the verse,⁵³ but contextualizes the meaning of the verse which says “And hold fast,

⁵⁰ Ati Nurbaiti, “Female Islamic Clerics Call for Unity Ahead of Elections”, *The Jakarta Post* (1 Mar 2018), <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2018/03/01/female-islamic-clerics-call-for-unity-ahead-of-elections.html>, accessed 12 Jun 2018.

⁵¹ Hayati Nupus, “Ulama Perempuan Ajak Lawan Hoaks, Ujaran Kebencian”, *Nasional* (1 Mar 2018), <https://www.aa.com.tr/id/nasional/ulama-perempuan-ajak-lawan-hoaks-ujaran-kebencian/1077126>, accessed 12 Jun 2018.

⁵² Taqī al-Dīn Hilālī and Muhammad Muhsin Khan (eds.), *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur’an in the English Language: A Summarized Version of At-Tabarī, Al-Qurtubī, and Ibn Kathīr with Comments from Sahīh-Al-Bukhārī* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Darussalam Publishers and Distributors, 2011), pp. 87–8.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 88. The circumstance of the verse refers to a Hadith narrated by at-Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah, and Abu Dāwud and explains that the Prophet said: “The Jews and Christians were divided into seventy-one or seventy-two religious sects, and this nation will be divided into seventy-three religious sects – all in Hell, except one, and that one is the one on which I and my Companions are today i.e. following the Qur’an and the Prophet’ Sunnah (legal ways, orders, acts of worship, statement of the Prophet).”

all of you together, to the Rope of Allah (i.e. this Qur'an), clear to you, that you may be guided,” to Indonesian context. The verse suggests us to be committed on the teachings of the Qur'an which pays attention on the importance of unity in this case is the unity of Indonesian Nation, based on divine values.⁵⁴

The primacy of the use of the verse of the Qur'an in this recommendation seemed purposively chosen by the network to tackle latent obstacles found in political matters which incline to consider everything as political game in which it is always seen as an effort to win any initiative by all means. Divine source is above all personal and organizational interest. Both interests have always believed to be the sources of political conflict. For Indonesian context, this claim is relevant. Though Indonesian country is not religious state, its citizens are religious. It is reasonable if Indonesian people particularly that of politicians are persuaded by religious language. The exponents of the networks come from religious trainings and backgrounds after all. The use of the Qur'an like this is common and allowable because the Qur'an is treated as source of reference where the dimensions of the meanings of the Qur'an are contextualized based on the demand of age. Ziba Mir Hosseini, quoting Abdolkarim Soroush asserts that the holy text is absolute and stable, whereas the opinion about it including the meaning about it is temporary, changing and dynamic. They are perceived by religious scholars differently.⁵⁵ Kathryn Robinson finds that Muslims in Indonesia commonly base their perception about gender relations on the Qur'an, and Hadith. In so doing, they aim at formulating “humanistic ideals” which is based on the Qur'an and Hadith. They do it by localizing the message of the religious main texts into Indonesian version of Islam. For example, they accept modern values like human rights and understand

⁵⁴ “Seruan Moral, Jaringan Ulama Perempuan Indonesia, Untuk Menjaga Keutuhan Bangsa Indonesia,” Read by Nyai Hj. Badriyaah Fayumi at Istiqlal Mosque on March 1, 2018. “Seruan Moral Kebhinekaan Menjaga dan Memperjuangkan Kebhinekaan” (20 Feb 2018), <https://kontras.org/2018/02/20/seruan-moral-kebhinekaan-menjaga-dan-memperjuangkan-kebhinekaan/>, accessed 12 Jun 2018.

⁵⁵ Ziba Mir Hosseini, “Meninjau Ulang Pemikiran Gender dalam Islam”, in *Perempuan Multikultural: Negosiasi dan Representasi*, ed. by Edi Hayat and Miftahus Surur (Jakarta: Desantara, 2005), pp. 265–7.

is based on Islamic perspective.⁵⁶

It is this religious awareness that the recommendation was all based. The network rightly placed the point of gratefulness and the importance of unity as its opening paragraph, as it says that:

*“Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia yang berdiri berkat rahmat Allah Swt., adalah hasil perjuangan segenap elemen bangsa. Karena itu, menjaga keutuhan dan mencegah perpecahan agar bisa mewujudkan cita-cita berbangsa dan bernegara adalah amanah ilahiyah dan mandat kebangsaan.”*⁵⁷

“The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia which stands by the grace of Allah SWT is the result of the struggle of all elements of the nation. Therefore, maintaining wholeness and preventing disunity in order to realize the ideals of nation and state is a divine and national mandate.”

Having introduced the recommendation with theological basis, the two following paragraphs condemn the abuse of information to spread lie, hoax, hatred speech, discrimination, persecution, character assassination, etc., for political purposes. Instead, in the next paragraph, the press release invites candidates of head of province, of major, and of president, political party supporters, government, its apparatus and its law enforcers, religious and social figures, religious adherents, and all citizens to combat these negative practices.⁵⁸ At the same time, it expects that all participants of political processes in this and following year events put brotherhood and unity above their political interests, respect law, pay attention to public education to improve awareness, maintain local traditions, and make rooms for public gatherings and discussions. In the last part of the recommendation the network calls everyone to the content of press release, and expects that Allah may guide and help all of us to make these heard by all, and all of us do accordingly.

After the three contact persons Nyai Hj. Badriyah Fayumi, Lc. MA, Nyai Ninik Rahayu, SH, MS, and Nyai Hj. Hindun Anisah, MA, had contacted a number people mostly female clerics, one hundred thirty-eight female Muslim clerics including the three contact persons signed the recommendation. They are coming from different backgrounds ranging

⁵⁶ Kathryn Robinson, *Gender, Islam and Democracy in Indonesia* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 165.

⁵⁷ “Seruan Moral Kebhinekaan Menjaga dan Memperjuangkan Kebhinekaan”.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

from wife of kyai, head of pesantren, religious teacher at *Majlis Taklim*, lecturer, social figure to state apparatus. They were educated either at general or religious education institution. Suited with the claim as clerics, many of them pursued their education up to doctorate degree, at least they were graduated from S1 (Undergraduate) program as reflected in the list. It adds the value of the press release that the expectation was written based on careful and thoughtful consideration.

The press release was covered by at least 18 digital news agencies, national as well as international news agencies including *Kompas*, *Media Indonesia*, *The Jakarta Post*, *BBC*, *VOA*, etc., and one printed newspaper, *Kompas*. It means that the press release attracted large audience, and the echo of its message was magnified by these coverages.

E. Other Press Releases: Disseminating the Message

As it was expected that the Istiqlal Press Release could be followed by similar moral movements, several other organizations answered the call and made the message viral and louder. Fayumi explained that “The Women Ulema Network shares a similar concern; hence, this moral call will be followed up simultaneously by all female cleric networks, which have been solidifying since the first Indonesian Women Ulema Congress in Cirebon, West Java, in April 2017.”⁵⁹ To illustrate the response to this expectation, two other recommendations: Jaringan Perempuan Lintas Iman (Woman Inter Faiths Network), and Halaqoh Ulama Perempuan Se-Jawa (Java Female Clerics Circle) are discussed.

1. *Woman Inter Faiths Network for Maintaining 'Kebbhinekaan' (Diversity)*

Woman Inter Faiths Network for Maintaining Diversity held a Moral Appeal on March 6, 2018 in Jakarta, five days after the press release of Female Muslim Cleric Network was held at Istiqlal Mosque, represented by thirty five different agencies ranging from Non-Government Organizations which are concerned with peace building, tolerance, and woman's fate, higher education institutions, and individuals who have similar concerns.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Nurbaiti, “Female Islamic clerics call for unity ahead of elections”.

⁶⁰ Fathiyah Wardah, “Jaringan Ulama Perempuan Indonesia Serukan Semua Pihak Jaga Keutuhan Bangsa”, *VOA Indonesia* (2 Mar 2018), <https://www.voaindonesia>.

The press release text began with statement that the founders of this nation state wanted it as a plural and democratic state. This determination was considered as grace from God who had unified various tribes and adherents of different religions in one state nation called Indonesia, and had given the people of the country with principle of co-existence: *Bhineka Tunggal Eka* (Unity in Diversity).

The network saw this grace as something that every citizen has obligation to nurture and defend from any effort to divide social cohesion of the nation such as hoax, hatred speech, character assassination, woman's persecution, and physical assault over religious figures, minority groups, and over religious facilities. It is therefore the network condemned any politicization of identity and of religion for temporary and artificial goal.⁶¹ Having introduced with these considerations, the network then addressed six recommendations. Basically, they agreed to follow up what Female Muslim Cleric Network's declaration had raised, reaffirming the five points, and added one point in which all women from different religions are expected to invite others to pay attention to peace and tolerance and to be united to fight for all forms of violence, discrimination, duping over woman, child and vulnerable groups.⁶²

2. *Java Female Clerics Circle*

Following up the 1st KUPI's recommendation⁶³ and Istiqlal Press Release (March 1, 2018), Java Female Clerics Circle held a Press Conference on March 29, at Aston Inn Central Semarang, Central Java, after they conducted a *Halaqoh* (Study Circle) for three days, March 27-29, 2018. The Halaqoh which discussed about female Muslim cleric movement and mainstreaming moderate Islam, was attended by 100 participants representing different organizations in Java. It was hosted by Center for Woman and Child Studies of UIN Walisongo. The Press

com/a/jaringan-ulama-perempuan-indonesia-seruan-jaga-keutuhan-bangsa-/4277194.html, accessed 13 Jun 2018.

⁶¹ ICRP, "Seruan Moral Jaringan Perempuan Lintas Iman Menjaga Kebhinekaan", <https://icrp-online.com/seruan-moral-jaringan-perempuan-lintas-iman-menjaga-kebhinekaan/>, accessed 13 Jun 2018.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Tim KUPI (ed.), *Dokumen Resmi Proses & Hasil Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*.

Release was read by Nyai Kamila Hamidah, head of Maslakul Huda Al Kautsar Pesantren, Kajen Pati.⁶⁴

The Halaqah sent a message of the importance of sovereignty of Indonesia as a nation state, and of defending it by every element of the nation including woman.⁶⁵ Nyai Jauharotul Farida, head of Thariqah Mu'tabarah Pesantren, Semarang and head of Center for Woman and Child Studies, UIN Walisongo Semarang asserted that female Muslim clerics are ready to defend and guard the country.⁶⁶

The content of the Halaqoh message consists of eight points. Point one emphasize the importance of Islamic principles in implementing religious practices respecting differences, based on *abl Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* (one sect of Muslims which holds Sunnah and the opinion of the mainstream Muslim scholars as the right teachings of Islam). In understanding Islam, the Halaqoh prefers moderate Islam to radical one, and this point constitutes the second. Point three calls for female Muslim clerics to strengthen the network and to educate young generation in order they are able to avoid from acts of radicalism and terrorism. Point four and five consecutively call for confirming tolerance as one of the nation pillars, and Pancasila (Five Principles), *Bhineka Tunggal Eka* (Unity in Diversity), UUD 1945 (Basic Constitutions 1945) as the unchangeable ideology of the nation. The rests of the points were addressed to respond to present political situation. Point six asserts the importance of *silaturahmi* in maintaining brotherhood as citizens of the nation. Point seven refuse and condemn hoaxes and hatred speech as both are negative and threatening unity. The last point, eight, invite politicians and representative members to behave in their deed and speech.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Rikza Khamami and Muiz, "Ulama Perempuan Kuatkan Persaudaraan dan Jaga Keutuhan NKRI di Tahun Politik" (29 Mar 2018), <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/87919/ulama-perempuan-kuatkan-persaudaraan-dan-jaga-keutuhan-nkri-di-tahun-politik->, accessed 13 Jun 2018.

⁶⁵ "Ulama Perempuan Se-Jawa Siap Jaga Kedaulatan", *Republika Online* (30 Mar 2018), <https://republika.co.id/share/p6dscj366>, accessed 12 Jun 2018.

⁶⁶ Khamami and Muiz, *Ulama Perempuan Kuatkan Persaudaraan dan Jaga Keutuhan NKRI di Tahun Politik*.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

F. The Rise of Muslim Women Intelligentsias in Indonesia

The event of the 1st KUPI and activities that followed after it in the first half of 2018-Istiqal Press Release and two other recommendations-represents new form of Muslim woman clerics' movement. Zaenah Anwar identifies four points that make Indonesian Muslims able to exercise their female agency and propose alternative voice towards democratic undertakings.⁶⁸ Agencies from various circumstances ranging from grassroots religious teachers in villages, to professionals working in urban areas were interested in playing roles as parts of this historical event. Furthermore, the birth of female Muslim clerics can be seen also as the effort to reconstruct history of female Muslim clerics. For example, this effort was initiated by PPIM (Pusat Kajian Islam dan Masyarakat/ Center for the Study of Islam and Society) in 2002 as mentioned earlier. PPIM as one of the study centers that UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta has, had published an important related book entitled *Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*.⁶⁹ The book documented the profile of a number of female Muslim clerics and constructed their existence in the history of Islam in Indonesia. The three NGOs mentioned above, and other similar woman organizations contributed to providing facts and practices of female Muslim clerics' movements too. Four years later, Pieterella Van Doorn Harder published her book,⁷⁰ as mentioned earlier, discussing the active role of educated female Muslim women in their affiliated mass organization -Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama/NU, in dealing with a number of the themes such as religious radicalism, authoritarianism, woman education and employment, family planning, etc. Nurlaelawati and Salim informs that actually educated female Muslim women had

⁶⁸ The four points are: Islam in Indonesia developed mainly not depending on state jurisdiction, Islam in Indonesia has strong culture, tradition and identity, state Islamic higher education institutions have contributed significantly to help Muslims dealing with modernity, and many of the graduates of these education institutions become 'the forefront of the democratic movement.' Zainah Anwar, "Grassroots Leaders Show the Way", in *Diskursus Keulamaan Perempuan Indonesia: Kumpulan Tulisan Terkait Materi Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*, ed. by Tim KUPI (Jakarta; Cirebon: KUPI, 2017), pp. 112–6.

⁶⁹ Jajat Burhanuddin (ed.), *Ulama Perempuan Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama dan PPIM, 2002).

⁷⁰ Doorn-Harder, *Women Shaping Islam*.

been playing formal citizenship engagement as participants in courtroom since 1960s, and their roles began to be greater since 1989 when the government granted female Muslim clerics to be judges at the religious courts.⁷¹ In 2009, Ann Kull published her article where she discussed about female Muslims teachers reflects an expression of nationalism in terms of fulfilling obligations to educate people, though within the constraints of patriarchal gender values which in many ways challenges their engagements.⁷²

Recent Muslim woman clerics' movement represents also interesting and important signs for the construction of Indonesia's Muslim women movement. On one hand, it continues further what the 1st Indonesian Woman Congress had achieved in 1928. It raised fundamental issues and criticized the weakness of woman's institutional affiliation, the pooriness of their wellbeing, and the practice of child marriage. It proposed some programs to improve them, such as by extending the effort to eliminate woman violence, and to promote environmental sustainability issues. On the other hand, it represents a new sign which affects the historiography of the women's movement in Indonesia. The historiography of Indonesian Muslim women shifts the cultural historical construction from the pave of peripheral position to the central one. Indonesian woman clerics stand on their own and on equal footing with their gender counterparts in sending their aspirations and movements. The way they carry out their efforts is by developing an inclusive paradigm and attitude to invite everyone regardless their gender to struggle together to uphold Islamic values, nationalism, and humanity. They depend not only on Religious sources but also national constitution, and international covenant sources such UN's covenant on gender equity and human rights. This stand is different from other groups of Muslims which tend to up hold more on textual sources of Islam in particular the Qur'an, and treat secular sources as

⁷¹ Euis Nurlaelawati and Arskal Salim, "Gendering the Islamic Judiciary: Female Judges in the Religious Courts of Indonesia", *Al-Jami'ab: Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 51, no. 2 (2013), pp. 247–78.

⁷² Ann Kull, "At the Forefront of a Post-Patriarchal Islamic Education: Female Teachers in Indonesia", *Journal of International Women's Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2009), pp. 25–39.

the sources of Muslim's enemy.⁷³ By doing so, they certainly encompass their own theological barriers, and enjoy larger space and opportunity to engage culturally and politically. In Indonesian context, this reform thought became possible to do due to continuous introduction of a gender equity awareness in Islamic education which had been introduced since late 1980s and early 1990s. Ann Kull identifies this progress by analyzing documents collected through fieldwork in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Makassar, Banjarmasin, and Bandung, such as brochures, books, course literature, research, interviews, and discussions, and by scrutinizing the emergence and development of Centers for Women Studies at state Islamic higher educations in these five cities.⁷⁴

Though woman's social engagements have existed as along as the engagements of male clerics' engagement in Indonesia, their movement marks actually the rising women intelligentsias in new context, the age of information technology. This rising becomes possible due to national education program of both general and religious education programs, political shift into more democratic undertakings, economic growth, better transportation facilities, more freedom of cultural expressions, and of course due to information technology development itself which facilitates doing things faster and more infiltratory, and disrupts many dominant and traditional practices. Accordingly, their moral movement becomes easily disseminated and their voice can easily be magnified through the use of information technology in broader sense of its meaning. Their areas of engagement cover theoretical as well as practical aspect of gender discourse and practice. As intelligentsias, Muslim woman clerics offer their voices in terms of alternative interpretation of religious texts, moderate form of Islam, collective solidarity which supports social cohesion, and their modern identity.⁷⁵ As an illustration, Nelly Martin-

⁷³ Kathryn Robinson, "Female Ulama: Voice a Vision for Indonesia's Future", in *Liputan Media Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*, ed. by Tim KUPI (Cirebon: KUPI, 2017), pp. 262–5; Kathryn Robinson, "Female Ulama: Voice a Vision for Indonesia's Future", *New Mandala* (30 May 2017), <https://www.newmandala.org/female-ulama-voice-vision-indonesias-future/>, accessed 5 Dec 2019.

⁷⁴ Kull, "At the Forefront of a Post-Patriarchal Islamic Education", p. 36.

⁷⁵ Inayah Rohmaniyah, "Ulama Perempuan: Modalitas Perempuan dalam Kontestasi Global", in *Diskursus Keulamaan Perempuan Indonesia: Kumpulan Tulisan Terkait Materi Kongres Ulama Perempuan Indonesia*, ed. by Tim KUPI (Jakarta; Cirebon: KUPI,

Anatias, an Indonesian who had studies and lived in America for a decade, and is now working in New Zealand, renegotiates her Islamness and Indonesianness. She has different views about what so called as being a good Indonesian Muslim woman today. She whose belief and awareness have been influenced significantly by gender equity perspective, modernity norms and systems in general, questions many of the traditional and existing wisdoms, seeking for what it means to be Indonesian Muslim and good Indonesian Muslim in contemporary Indonesia. Her criticism reflects a new self-awareness as female Indonesian Muslim in which many Indonesian Woman today gain many of social engagement arenas which were previously belonging exclusively to men.⁷⁶

G. Nationalism and Media: New Arena of Muslim Woman Cleric's Moral Movement

The function of media for human beings is central to making perception of various forms of social, cultural and political events and issues.⁷⁷ Information Technology has changed modern social conditions.⁷⁸ Different agents are open and free to take advantage for each interest, traditionalist or modernist, liberalist as well as fundamentalist. Andi Faisal Bakti, for example, discusses Salafist's use of media, in this case using TV in broadcasting their programs and activities.⁷⁹

Like many other movements which take advantage of media and its information technology in documenting their events, disseminating their messages and receiving media coverage, Muslim woman clerics do the same with their movement and message. In their movements, either in the 1st KUPI, and press releases, they use Whats Apps, memes, email,

2017), p. 109.

⁷⁶ Martin-Anatias, "On Being a 'Good' Indonesian Muslim Woman".

⁷⁷ David L. Altheide, "Identity and the Definition of the Situation in a Mass-Mediated Context", *Symbolic Interaction*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2000), pp. 1–27; William A. Gamson et al., "Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality", *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 18 (1992), pp. 373–93.

⁷⁸ Bryan S. Turner, "Religious Authority and the New Media", *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 24, no. 2 (2007), p. 117.

⁷⁹ Andi Faisal Bakti, "Media and Religion: Rodja TV's Involvement in The Civil Society Discourse for Community Development", *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, vol. 34, no. 3 (2018), p. 226; 230.

website, google forms for registration and selection, and press release. Accordingly, they receive significant attention from media coverage. Media coverage can function both documentation and representation as it is or beyond. Some studies illustrate positive function of it.⁸⁰ Some other studies find that the media has been used to show the incompatibility of Islam with modern values. Aware of the dilemmatic character of technological determination for human life, they use it to counter the impact of the abuse of it criticizing hoaxes which are circulated easily in virtual world, violence over children and women, gender discrimination and injustice.⁸¹ Instead, Indonesian female Muslim clerics take advantage of media to support their modern religious movement expressing their nationalism through the discourse which is based on religion (Islam/al-Qur'an), national constitution, gender discourse and practice, and international covenants. Their moral movement can be categorized as cultural defense. Bruce explains that term refers to the effort of religious adherents to utilize religious identity and institutions to nurture sense of belonging over nation, local ethnic, and culture.⁸²

⁸⁰ Roman Loimeier, "Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 33, no. 3 (2003), pp. 237–62; Dorothea E. Schulz, "Promises of (Im)mediate Salvation: Islam, Broadcast Media, and the Remaking of Religious Experience in Mali", *American Ethnologist*, vol. 33, no. 2 (2006), pp. 210–29; Jack Glascock, Curtis B. Livesay, and Thomas E. Ruggiero, "Religious Involvement, Audience Demographics, and Media Bias", *Journal of Media and Religion*, vol. 7, no. 4 (2008), pp. 256–70.

⁸¹ Martin-Anatias, "On Being a 'Good' Indonesian Muslim Woman"; Mansoor Moaddel, "The Study of Islamic Culture and Politics: An Overview and Assessment", *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 28, no. 1 (2002), pp. 359–86; Sina Ali Muscati, "Arab/Muslim 'Otherness': The Role of Racial Constructions in the Gulf War and the Continuing Crisis with Iraq", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2002), pp. 131–48; Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, "The Dynamics of Islamic Identity in North America", in *Muslims on the Americanization Path?* ed. by Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Karim H. Karim, "The Historical Resilience of Primary Stereotypes: Core Images of the Muslim Other", in *The Language and Politics of Exclusion: Others in Discourse* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc, 1997), pp. 153–82; Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: How Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).

⁸² See Steve Bruce, *Secularization: In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 50; David E.J. Herbert, "Theorizing Religion and Media in Contemporary Societies: An Account of Religious 'Publicization'", *European*

The message of Muslim woman clerics' moral movement which received significant coverage by medias plays as an alternative voice and needed force over the opposite discourse which is supportive over the ideas of radicalism, violence, and terrorism. The 1st KUPI, and three other recommendation presented by Muslim women clerics used and covered by media well. The 1st KUPI alone was covered by 133 medias of local and national news providers as well as international ones. Similar responses were also received by the three other press releases. Even the government of England invited Badriyah Fayumi and several female Muslim clerics through its Rising Peace Program Forum on March 15, 2018 to present issue about "Woman Leadership for Peace, Prosperity, and Pluralism."

The case of Muslim woman cleric moral movement in relation to media means two folds, utilization of media and media coverage. In terms of the utilization of media, the event was well retained and exposed largely way beyond the audience or readers of its initial implementations themselves. As if the world celebrates the event. Another point is that the exposure of these events in media marks their inclusive advantage of the modern values and system. As a result, they receive an overwhelming positive response. Furthermore, the fact that their moral movement made use of religion in sending their aspiration to public asserts a crucial fact that religion actually could not be privatized or re-privatized as proposed by secularists. They assert that there would not be place for religion in modern era.⁸³ Indonesian female Muslim cleric's movement, once again, proves otherwise. Religion, in this case Islam, still plays an important role in modern era. The use of the Qur'an as framework of this movement supplies not only additional data to their movement, but also it helps them to base their struggle on religious values. Finally, the case of Indonesian female Muslim cleric movement which largely covered by media can be seen as a signification of their identity and representation in modern public sphere as the voice of soft nationalism.

Journal of Cultural Studies, vol. 14, no. 6 (2011), p. 630.

⁸³ Herbert, "Theorizing Religion and Media in Contemporary Societies", pp. 629–30. The liberalization of national media economies and the growth of transnational media spheres is transforming the relationship between religion, popular culture and politics in contemporary societies in ways not adequately accounted for in existing sociological theories of religion (secularization, neo-secularization and rational choice

H. Concluding Remarks

Having discussed above, the study finds that ulama perempuan have made an alternative voice in their moral movements. As in other Islamic movements, in this case, female Muslim clerics make the Qur'an function as foundational reference, as well as their basic stand. Meanwhile, opinion of clerics, and Indonesian constitution are also discussed for the sake of extending the dimensions of the efforts in respecting and increasing the status and roles of women using some of religious sources (the Qur'an) in their movements in proposing how to improve the status and role of women, the well beings of children, and environment sustainability. In doing so, they made several important efforts, starting from the congress where they issued a number of important recommendations, the creation of female Muslim cleric networks, networks expansion to different religious adherents, up to the use of information technology, i.e. press release.

Their movement attracts other agents to supports their movement, and to follow up some of their recommendations. Their movement also attracts medias to magnify the voice and make the movement gear as strong alternative message of soft nationalism which are characterized by non-violent approaches in addressing their messages. All these processes and progresses create new arenas for women's moral movement, and represent the rise of female Muslim intelligentsias in Indonesia.

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