POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY IN QUR'ANIC TRANSLATION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE INDONESIAN MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS TRANSLATION AND THE HILALI-KHAN TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the ideological and cultural influences on the interpretation of Qur'anic verses through a comparative analysis of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) translation from Indonesia and the translation by Muhammad Taqi al-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan from Saudi Arabia. Focusing on theological, political, and gender themes, this study examines key verses addressing concepts such as *tauhid* (the oneness of God), *awliyā'* (relations between Muslims and non-Muslims), and gender roles. The Kemenag translation reflects Indonesia's pluralistic and inclusive policies, promoting interfaith harmony, mutual respect, and gender equality. On the other hand, the Hilali-Khan translation adheres to a literal framework influenced by Wahhabi ideology, emphasizing theological exclusivity and traditional gender hierarchies. These differences highlight the impact of socio-political contexts on Qur'anic translation strategies and their implications for societal perceptions and theological discourse. Through a comparative textual and discourse analysis approach, this study demonstrates that inclusive and context-aware translations contribute to promoting justice, tolerance, and social cohesion. The findings underscore the need to balance theological fidelity with socio-political responsiveness to serve diverse Muslim societies.

Keywords: *Hilali-Khan Translation; Kemenag Translation; Politics and Ideology; Qur'anic Translation.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pengaruh ideologi dan budaya terhadap penafsiran ayat-ayat al-Qur'an melalui analisis komparatif terhadap terjemahan Kementerian Agama (Kemenag) Indonesia dan terjemahan Muhammad Taqi al-Din al-Hilali & Muhammad Muhsin Khan dari Arab Saudi. Berfokus pada tema-tema teologis, politik, dan gender, penelitian ini mengkaji ayat-ayat kunci yang membahas konsep-konsep seperti tauhid (keesaan Tuhan), awliyā' (hubungan antara Muslim dan non-Muslim), dan peran gender. Terjemahan Kemenag mencerminkan kebijakan Indonesia yang pluralistik dan inklusif, mempromosikan kerukunan antar agama, saling menghormati, dan kesetaraan gender. Sebaliknya, terjemahan Hilali-Khan menganut kerangka kerja harfiah yang dipengaruhi oleh ideologi Wahabi, yang menekankan eksklusivitas teologis dan hirarki gender tradisional. Perbedaan-perbedaan ini menyoroti dampak konteks sosial-politik terhadap strategi penerjemahan al-Quran dan implikasinya terhadap persepsi masyarakat dan wacana teologis. Melalui pendekatan analisis tekstual dan wacana komparatif, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terjemahan yang inklusif dan sadar konteks berkontribusi dalam mempromosikan keadilan, toleransi, dan kohesi sosial. Temuan ini menggarisbawahi perlunya menyeimbangkan kesetiaan teologis dengan responsivitas sosial-politik untuk melayani masyarakat Muslim yang beragam**.**

A. Introduction

The translation of religious texts, particularly the Qur'an, is not a neutral act but a reflection of the ideological and political contexts in which it occurs. Despite the Qur'an being considered untranslatable in the classical tradition, state-authorized translations have become central to shaping contemporary Islamic discourse.[1] This influence is especially evident when governments or dominant religious ideologies actively shape the interpretative lens to render sacred texts. The intersection of translation, ideology, and governance provides fertile ground for understanding how religious texts are adapted to align with specific sociopolitical goals.

The translation of the Qur'an in Indonesia serves as a compelling case study of this phenomenon. Through the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag), the Indonesian government has produced an official translation that aligns with its pluralistic and inclusive policies. This translation emphasizes tolerance and diversity, reflecting the nation's commitment to maintaining harmony among its diverse religious and cultural communities. This approach has become an essential tool for fostering national unity and addressing sensitive social issues, as demonstrated in translations addressing theological concepts such as *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God) and *khalīfah* (leadership and human responsibility).[2] By promoting interpretations that resonate with local cultural values, the government effectively mitigates sectarian tensions and shapes public understanding of Islam.

Conversely, the Hilali-Khan translation, a product of the Wahhabi ideological framework in Saudi Arabia, offers a markedly different interpretative approach. The Wahhabi ideology, characterized by strict adherence to the original teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, often prioritizes literal interpretations over contextual nuances. This methodology aims to preserve what is perceived as the purity of Islam, rejecting innovations (*bid'ah*) and subsequent interpretations. The Hilali-Khan translation reflects this approach, often adopting rigid and conservative interpretations that reinforce Wahhabi principles. Such translations have significant implications for theological discourse, particularly in regions influenced by Wahhabism, as they shape public perceptions of Islamic teachings.[3]

The divergence between these two approaches underscores the profound impact of ideology on Qur'anic translation. While the Indonesian translation promotes inclusivity and adaptability to local contexts, the Wahhabi-oriented Hilali-Khan translation reflects a conservative and literal stance. These differences are not merely academic but have tangible effects on how key theological concepts are understood and applied. For instance, the

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[1] Burçin K Mustafa, 'Ambiguity, Ideology, and Doctrine Propagation in Qur'an Translation', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 21.1 (2019), pp. 21–49.

[2] Mohamad Zaka Al Farisi, 'Acceptability of the Quran Translation', *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 61.2 (2023), pp. 329–63, doi:10.14421/ajis.2023.612.329-363; Fadhli Lukman, 'Against the "Control Argument": Assessing the State's Authority in the State-Commissioned Qur'ān Translation', *Islamic Studies Review*, 2.1 (2023), pp. 1–24.

[3] Fadhli Lukman, 'Conflicting Interests in the Creation of a State-Authorised Translation: Comparing the Saudi and Indonesian Editions of Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya', *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 26.1 (2024), pp. 38–62, doi:10.3366/jqs.2024.0568.

concept of *tawḥīd* in the Indonesian translation often adopts metaphorical interpretations that emphasize God's transcendence. In contrast, the Hilali-Khan translation adheres to a more literal understanding of God's attributes, such as His presence above the Throne (*'alā al-'Arsh istawā*).[4]

Similarly, the concept of khalīfah is interpreted differently, reflecting diverse ideological priorities and commitments. In the Indonesian context, khalīfah is often framed within the human responsibility and governance paradigm, emphasizing collective stewardship and accountability. This contrasts with the Hilali-Khan translation, which aligns the concept with theological-political dimensions that reinforce a conservative understanding of leadership and governance.[5] These interpretative differences illustrate how Qur'anic translation can strategically reinforce or challenge prevailing sociopolitical structures.

One sensitive area where the influence of ideology becomes evident is in the translation of verses related to interfaith relations and gender. For instance, the term awliyā' in Qur'anic verses discussing relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims is translated with varying emphases. Indonesian translations often convey an inclusive perspective, advocating diversity and mutual respect. In contrast, the Hilali-Khan translation adopts a more exclusive stance, warning against alliances with non-Muslims, reflecting the Wahhabi ideological foundation.[6]

Gender issues in Qur'anic translation further illustrate the complexity of interactions between cultural and political ideologies. Translations often reflect societal norms and political agendas, resulting in differing portrayals of women and gender roles. Influenced by pluralistic policies, Indonesian translations often adopt interpretations promoting gender equality and empowerment. Conversely, traditional translations shaped by conservative ideologies may reinforce patriarchal structures. For example, the Hilali-Khan translation frequently reflects rigid interpretations of gender roles, aligning with Wahhabi principles that emphasize male authority and female subordination.[7]

The ideological framework within Qur'anic translation has far-reaching implications. In Indonesia, the government's efforts to produce translations aligned with national values have positioned these texts as tools for social cohesion. By addressing issues such as interfaith harmony, governance, and gender equality, these translations contribute to creating a more inclusive and tolerant society. However, the contrasting approach of the Hilali-Khan

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[4] Majda Babiker Ahmed Abdelkarim and Ali Albashir Mohammed Alhaj, 'A Study of the Translatability and Untranslatability of Qur'ānic Arabic Particle Laʿalla لَعَلَّ in Some Selected Surahs: A Linguistic Perspective', *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 15.2 (2024), pp. 579–87, doi:10.17507/jltr.1502.26; Troy E Spier, 'Extremist Propaganda and Qur'anic Scripture: A "radical'' Corpus-Based Study of the Dabiq"', *Discourse & Society*, 29.5 (2018), pp. 553–67, doi:10.1177/0957926518770265.

[5] Aam Abdussalam and others, 'Exegetical Translation of the Qur'an: An Action Research on Prospective Islamic Teachers in Indonesia', *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 11.2 (2021), pp. 254–68.

[6] Lukman, 'Conflicting Interests in the Creation of a State-Authorised Translation: Comparing the Saudi and Indonesian Editions of Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya'.

[7] Ali Albashir Mohammad, 'Cultural and Stylistic Losses and Gains Faced in Translating the Qur'anic Arabic Words Known as Kur'hun كُرْهٌ into English: A Comparative Study', *International Journal of Religion*, 5.3 (2024), pp. 519–32, doi:10.61707/sx9kzx85.

translation demonstrates how ideology can also be used to reinforce exclusivity and conservatism. This dichotomy highlights the critical role of translation in shaping not only religious understanding but also broader social and political dynamics.

This study aims to explore these ideological differences through a comparative analysis of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) translation and the Hilali-Khan translation. By examining key Qur'anic concepts such as tawḥīd, khalīfah, interfaith relations, and gender roles, the study seeks to uncover how government-supported ideologies influence the interpretation of sacred texts. Through this analysis, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the interplay between religion, politics, and translation and elucidates the sociopolitical dimensions of religious interpretation.

The study employs a qualitative comparative textual method to analyze the ideological dimensions embedded in Qur'anic translations, focusing on linguistic, contextual, and ideological variations between the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) translation and the Hilali-Khan translation from Saudi Arabia. This analysis is grounded in the framework of comparative translation studies, which emphasizes how translation strategies-such as literal and interpretative approaches-can reflect particular ideological positions shaped by socio-political contexts.[8] Particular attention is given to idiomatic expressions and near-synonyms, as these linguistic choices may reflect the ideological orientation and discourse strategy of the translators.

This study applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as developed by Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk to examine how power, ideology, and language interact in shaping Qur'anic translation. This approach allows the study to investigate how cultural and political contexts influence translation practices, uncovering the ideological basis for specific translation choices by connecting discursive elements (e.g., lexical choices, modality, and metaphors) with broader institutional and political interests.[9] The Indonesian translation, guided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, aligns with pluralistic national policies, promoting interfaith harmony and cultural inclusivity.[10] In contrast, the Hilali-Khan translation adheres strictly to Wahhabi principles, prioritizing literalism and theological purity to align with the ideological framework of Saudi Arabia.[11]

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[8] Adham Obeidat and Tengku Sepora Binti Mahadi, 'The English Translation of Idiomatic Collocations in The Noble Quran: Problem and Solutions', *Issues in Language Studies*, 9.2 (2020), pp. 78–93, doi:10.33736/ils.2246.2020; Abdul-Qader Khaleel Mohammed Abdul-Ghafour and others, 'Meanings of Near-Synonyms and Their Translation Issues in the Holy Qur'ān', *GEMA Online®Journal of Language Studies*, 17.4 (2017), pp. 258–73, doi:10.17576/gema-2017-1704-17.

[9] Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (Routledge, 2013); Teun A Van Dijk, 'Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach', 1998.

[10] Andri Nirwana and others, 'Exploration of Wasatiyah Diction to Realize Sustainable Tolerance Between Religious Communities: A Study of the Translation of the Quran of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia', *Revista de Gestão Social e Ambiental*, 18.6 (2024), p. e05717, doi:10.24857/rgsa.v18n6-012; Lukman, 'Conflicting Interests in the Creation of a State-Authorised Translation: Comparing the Saudi and Indonesian Editions of Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya'.

[11] Hamam Faizin, 'TOWARDS A GENDER-SENSITIVE TRANSLATION OF THE QURʾ ĀN THE CASE OF THE MOST RECENT REVISION OF AL-QUR'ĀN DAN TERJEMAHNYA'; Alalddin Al-tarawneh, 'A HEBREW-SKOPOS APPROACH TO TRANSLATING MUQA ÙÙ A ' Ó T IN THE QUR ' Ó NIC OATHS', XLIII.1, pp. 29–51 <https://hamdardislamicus.com.pk/index.php/hi/article/download/35/51>.

The study analyzes several key Qur'anic verses related to theology, governance, interfaith relations, and gender issues. By thematically comparing these translations, the research also highlights the dynamic interaction between linguistic strategies, sociopolitical contexts, and ideological goals, providing a comprehensive understanding of how sacred texts are interpreted and disseminated across diverse cultural landscapes.

B. Result and Discussion

Theological Interpretations in Qur'anic Translations

This section focuses on a comparative interpretation of selected verses that address theological concepts, particularly those related to interfaith relations and divine attributes. The verses analyzed include QS Āli 'Imrān (3):28, Al-Mā'idah (5):51, Al-A'rāf (7):54, Yūnus (10):3, and Al-Ḥadīd (57):4. These verses were chosen due to their relevance in representing contrasting ideologies-namely inclusivism in the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) translation and exclusivism in the Hilali-Khan translation, especially on issues of *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God), *awliyā'* (alliances with non-Muslims), and *istiwā* (divine establishment above the Throne).

An analysis of Qur'anic translations by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) and Hilali-Khan reveals the strong influence of political ideology in interpreting theological and social concepts, such as the term awliyā' found in QS Āli 'Imrān (3):28 and QS Al-Mā'idah (5):51. This term addresses relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims, and its varying interpretations reflect contrasting ideological frameworks. Kemenag adopts an inclusive approach, interpreting *awliyā'* as "close friends" or "allies," reflecting pragmatic flexibility for alliances under certain conditions. For instance, QS Āli 'Imrān (3):28 is translated as:

> *"Janganlah orang-orang mukmin menjadikan orang kafir sebagai para wali... kecuali untuk menjaga diri dari sesuatu yang kamu takuti dari mereka."*[12]
> *"Let not the believers take the disbelievers as Auliyâ (friends, protectors, helpers)... except if you indeed fear a danger from them."*

This emphasizes pragmatic tolerance for coexistence in diverse societies. Conversely, Hilali-Khan uses the term "supporters, helpers" with a stricter tone:

> *"Let not the believers take the disbelievers as Auliyâ (supporters, helpers) instead of the believers... except if you indeed fear a danger from them."*[13]

This literalism reflects Wahhabi ideology, which prioritizes separation between Muslims and non-Muslims except in situations of threat.

These translation strategies carry significant socio-political implications. The Kemenag translation aligns with Indonesia's pluralistic policies, promoting interfaith harmony and coexistence in a diverse society. By emphasizing mutual respect and tolerance, the translation supports interfaith dialogue and strengthens national unity amidst potential sectarian tensions. In contrast, the Hilali-Khan translation, with its exclusive tone, supports Saudi Arabia's conservative policies influenced by Wahhabi ideology. The prohibition

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[12] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*, JK (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al Qur'an Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kemenag, 2019).

[13] Khan Hilali, *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an into the English Language* (Maktaburrais, 1404).

against alliances with non-Muslims in this translation reinforces narratives of separation and theological superiority, potentially marginalizing non-Muslim communities and limiting opportunities for interfaith collaboration.

From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, the differing lexical choices (e.g., "teman setia" vs. "supporters") and modal expressions reveal underlying power asymmetries projected through translation. These linguistic choices are not neutral but encode discursive strategies to support the ideological objectives of each state's religious narrative.

The differing interpretations of *awliyā'* reflect the distinct needs and conditions of societies. In Indonesia, where religious pluralism is an integral part of social life, Kemenag's translation integrates Islamic teachings with local cultural realities to create harmony. Conversely, in Saudi Arabia, where Wahhabism dominates, Hilali-Khan's literal approach rejects contextual adaptation in favor of preserving what is considered doctrinal purity. For instance, QS Al-Mā'idah (5):51 is translated by Kemenag as:

"Wahai orang-orang yang beriman, janganlah kamu menjadikan orang Yahudi dan Nasrani sebagai teman setia(-mu)."[14]

"O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as Auliyâ (friends, protectors, helpers)."

While the Kemenag translation implies relational flexibility, the Hilali-Khan version reflects theological exclusivity and detachment from socio-political realities.

The political ideology underlying these translation strategies is striking. Kemenag's translation demonstrates how religious texts can be used to promote coexistence and social harmony, while Hilali-Khan highlights how literalism can reinforce theological conservatism. Although maintaining doctrinal integrity, the exclusive approach of Hilali-Khan risks exacerbating sectarian tensions and limiting interfaith dialogue opportunities. Balancing theological integrity with socio-political realities is thus crucial in translating Qur'anic verses, as seen in Kemenag's efforts to blend the essence of Islamic teachings with modern societal needs. On the other hand, translations like Hilali-Khan underscore the need to consider more adaptive interpretations to foster a more connected and tolerant world.

The translation of Qur'anic verses relating to theological concepts, particularly *istiwā 'ala al-'Arsh* (Allah's establishment above the Throne), reveals significant ideological and interpretative differences. These distinctions are evident in the comparison between Kemenag's translation from Indonesia and Hilali-Khan's translation from Saudi Arabia.

The phrase *istiwā 'ala al-'Arsh* appears in several Qur'anic chapters, such as Al-A'rāf (7):54, Yūnus (10):3, and Al-Furqān (25):59. Classical Islamic scholars, particularly within the Salafi tradition, interpret this phrase literally, asserting that Allah established Himself above the Throne "in a manner befitting His Majesty" without delving into its modality.[15] The Hilali-Khan translation reflects this approach:

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[14] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.

[15] Abdelkarim and Alhaj, 'A Study of the Translatability and Untranslatability of Qur'ānic Arabic Particle La'alla لَعَلَّ in Some Selected Surahs: A Linguistic Perspective'.

"Indeed, your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in Six Days, and then He rose over (Istawâ) the Throne (really in a manner that suits His Majesty)." (Hilali-Khan, Al-A'rāf (7):54.[16]

In contrast, Kemenag's translation tends toward a metaphorical or contextual understanding:

"Sesungguhnya Tuhanmu adalah Allah yang telah menciptakan langit dan bumi dalam enam masa, kemudian Dia bersemayam di atas 'Arasy." *"Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, then established Himself above the Throne."* (Kemenag, Al-A'rāf (7):54.[17]

The accompanying footnote explains:

"Bersemayam di atas 'Arasy adalah satu sifat Allah yang wajib diimani sesuai dengan keagungan Allah Swt. dan kesucian-Nya." "Establishment above the Throne is an attribute of Allah that must be believed in accordance with His Majesty and Holiness."

This explanation adopts a non-literal stance, emphasizing divine transcendence and the symbolic nature of Allah's authority.

By framing *istiwā* in metaphorical terms, Kemenag's translation avoids rigid interpretations, aligning with broader goals of fostering interfaith understanding.[18] This approach contrasts with the strict literalism in Hilali-Khan's translation, rooted in Wahhabi ideology, which aims to preserve what it perceives as the purity of Islamic teachings.[19]

Example from Yūnus (10):3.

"He rose over (Istawâ) the Throne (really in a manner that suits His Majesty), disposing the affair of all things." (Hilali-Khan, Yūnus (10):3.[20]

The Kemenag translation offers a more nuanced interpretation: *"Kemudian Dia bersemayam di atas 'Arasy seraya mengatur segala urusan."*

"Then He established Himself above the Throne, while managing all affairs." (Kemenag, Yūnus (10):3.[21]

The differences between the translations of QS Yūnus (10):3 by Hilali-Khan and Kemenag reflect starkly divergent ideological and theological approaches. Hilali-Khan's translation employs the phrase, *"He rose over (Istawâ) the Throne (really in a manner that suits His Majesty),"* emphasizing a literal and textual approach. The phrasing highlights *Istawâ* as a physical act, albeit accompanied by the clarification *"in a manner that suits His Majesty"* to avoid anthropomorphism. This approach underscores a commitment to literalism

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[16] Hilali, *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an into the English Language*.

[17] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.

[18] Yayan Nurbayan, 'Metaphors in the Quran and Its Translation Accuracy in Indonesian', *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8.3 (2019), p. 710, doi:10.17509/ijal.v8i3.15550; Faizin, 'TOWARDS A GENDER-SENSITIVE TRANSLATION OF THE QURʾĀN THE CASE OF THE MOST RECENT REVISION OF AL-QURʾĀN DAN TERJEMAHNYA'.

[19] Mykhaylo Yakubovych, *The Kingdom and the Qur'an: Translating the Holy Book of Islam in Saudi Arabia* (Open Book Publishers, 2024).

[20] Hilali, *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an into the English Language*.

[21] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.

and an absolute assertion of divine authority. Conversely, the Kemenag translation uses the phrase:

"Dia bersemayam di atas 'Arasy seraya mengatur segala urusan," attributing a more symbolic meaning to the *'Arasy* as a representation of Allah's majesty. The focus on *"mengatur segala urusan"* (*managing all affairs*) emphasizes Allah's active involvement in human affairs, resonating with Indonesia's pluralistic and inclusive values.

The tone and style of these translations also differ significantly. The Hilali-Khan translation is formal and defensive, aimed at reinforcing divine authority through literal descriptions, leaving little room for philosophical interpretation. In contrast, the Kemenag translation is more flexible and reflective, allowing for metaphorical interpretations suitable for multicultural contexts.

This explanatory strategy signals an interpretive shift away from physical literalism toward symbolic representation of divine sovereignty. The linguistic choice "*bersemayam*" and the focus on managing affairs ("*mengatur segala urusan*") function within CDA as indicators of discourse adaptation to pluralist socio-religious realities.

In the socio-political context, the Hilali-Khan translation reflects the dominance of Wahhabi ideology in Saudi Arabia, which seeks to preserve conservative doctrines through a literal understanding of sacred texts. On the other hand, the Kemenag translation reflects the needs of Indonesia's pluralistic society, where social harmony and the adaptation of Islamic values within the frameworks of democracy and modernity are priorities. These differences demonstrate how ideology and socio-political contexts shape translation strategies and influence readers' perceptions of Islamic teachings.

The literalist approach in Hilali-Khan's translation aligns closely with Wahhabi ideology, emphasizing textual fidelity over contextual adaptation. While this strategy strengthens theological narratives, it often overlooks cultural and historical dimensions that could enrich the understanding of Qur'anic concepts. For instance, interpreting *Istawâ* as a literal action risks anthropomorphizing Allah, potentially conflicting with broader Islamic principles of divine transcendence.[22]

This literalism also shapes global Islamic discourse, promoting a homogeneous understanding of Islam that frequently marginalizes alternative interpretations. As Yakubovych notes,[23] the dominance of Wahhabi literalism in Qur'anic translations has influenced theological discussions worldwide, often sidelining diverse perspectives from other Islamic traditions.

Example from Al-Ḥadīd (57):4.

Kemenag Translation:

"Dialah yang menciptakan langit dan bumi dalam enam masa. Kemudian, Dia bersemayam di atas 'Arasy. Dia bersamamu di mana saja kamu berada."[24]

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[22] Ali Salman Hummadi and others, 'Rhetorical Loss in Translating Prepositional Phrases of the Holy Qur'an', *Sage Open*, 10.1 (2020), doi:10.1177/2158244020902094.

[23] Mykhaylo Yakubovych, 'The Kingdom and the Qur'An', 2024, doi:10.11647/obp.0381.

[24] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.

"He is the one who created the heavens and the earth in six periods. Then He established Himself above the Throne. He is with you wherever you are."

Hilali-Khan Translation:

"He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days and then rose over (Istawâ) the Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty)."[25]

Kemenag's translation emphasizes Allah's transcendence and presence, aligning with Indonesia's pluralistic theology. In contrast, Hilali-Khan highlights Allah's sovereignty and authority but is less sensitive to contextual nuances.

The socio-political context behind these translations highlights their ideological foundations. In Indonesia, *tauhid* is often interpreted with an emphasis on communal harmony and interfaith coexistence, reflecting the government's pluralistic policies.[26] This approach fosters an inclusive understanding of Islam that aligns with national values and mitigates sectarian tensions. Conversely, Saudi Arabia, influenced by Wahhabi ideology, frames *tauhid* within a rigid and exclusive framework, emphasizing strict monotheism while rejecting mediation or intercession.

Theological differences in Qur'anic translations have profound implications for religious practice and public perception. The Hilali-Khan translation significantly shapes non-Muslims' perceptions of Islam, particularly in its descriptions of Allah that verge on anthropomorphism. The literal approach often emphasizes physical attributes, leading to misunderstandings about Islamic theology. For instance, anthropomorphic language in this translation can reinforce stereotypes that Islam portrays God with human-like qualities, contrasting sharply with the abstract representations in other translations.[27]

Studies show that overly literal translations can distort the meaning of Qur'anic verses and lead to misunderstandings among non-Muslims.[28] Moreover, reliance on literal interpretations, as seen in Hilali-Khan's translation, can contribute to the spread of extremist narratives. Radical groups have been known to misuse Qur'anic verses to justify their actions, exploiting translations that prioritize textual literalism over contextual understanding.[29]

Hilali-Khan's emphasis on literalism impacts theological discourse and shapes broader societal perceptions of Islam. These implications underscore the need for translations that balance textual fidelity with interpretive nuance, fostering a more accurate and inclusive understanding of Islamic teachings. In Indonesia, Kemenag's contextual

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[25] Hilali, *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an into the English Language*.

[26] Lukman, 'Conflicting Interests in the Creation of a State-Authorised Translation: Comparing the Saudi and Indonesian Editions of Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya'.

[27] Alalddin Al-Tarawneh, 'The Role of Quran Translations in Radicalizing Muslims in the West and Misrepresenting Islam', *Journal of Religion and Violence*, 9.1 (2021), pp. 101–22; Abdelkarim and Alhaj, 'A Study of the Translatability and Untranslatability of Qur'ānic Arabic Particle Laʿalla لَعَلَّ in Some Selected Surahs: A Linguistic Perspective'.

[28] Noureldin Mohamed Abdelaal and Sabariah Md Rashid, 'Semantic Loss in the Holy Qur'an Translation With Special Reference to Surah Al-W a QiAAa (Chapter of The Event Inevitable)', *Sage Open*, 5.4 (2015), doi:10.1177/2158244015605880; Ronza N Abu Rumman and Mohd Nour Al Salem, 'The Translation of Quranic Metaphorical Expressions From Arabic Into English', *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 14.3 (2023), pp. 646–55, doi:10.17507/jltr.1403.12.

[29] Anjad A Mahasneh, 'The Translation of Jihad Verses After the Emergence of ISIS: Distortion or Reality', *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 10.5 (2021), p. 129, doi:10.36941/ajis-2021-0128.

approach promotes an inclusive understanding of Islam, encouraging dialogue and coexistence among diverse religious communities. This aligns with the government's broader strategy of using religious translations as tools for social cohesion.[30]

The Influence of Political Ideology in Qur'anic Translations

An analysis of Qur'anic translations by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) and Hilali-Khan reveals the strong influence of political ideology in interpreting key theological and social concepts, such as the term *awliyā'* found in Āli 'Imrān (3):28 and Al-Mā'idah (5):51. This term addresses the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims, and its varying interpretations reflect contrasting ideological frameworks. Kemenag adopts an inclusive approach, interpreting *awliyā'* as "close friends" or "allies," reflecting pragmatic flexibility for alliances under certain conditions. For example, Āli 'Imrān (3):28 is translated as:[31]

> *"Janganlah orang-orang mukmin menjadikan orang kafir sebagai para wali...*
> *kecuali untuk menjaga diri dari sesuatu yang kamu takuti dari mereka,"*
> *"Let not the believers take the disbelievers as Auliyâ (friends, protectors, helpers)...*
> *except if you indeed fear a danger from them."*

This translation emphasizes pragmatic tolerance for coexistence in diverse societies. Conversely, Hilali-Khan uses the term "supporters, helpers" with a stricter tone:[32]

> *"Let not the believers take the disbelievers as Auliyâ (supporters, helpers) instead of*
> *the believers... except if you indeed fear a danger from them."*

This literalism reflects Wahhabi ideological principles, prioritizing separation between Muslims and non-Muslims except in situations of threat.

This approach has significant socio-political implications. Kemenag's translation aligns with Indonesia's pluralistic policies, promoting interfaith harmony and coexistence within a diverse society. By emphasizing mutual respect and tolerance, the translation supports interfaith dialogue and strengthens national unity amidst potential sectarian tensions. In contrast, Hilali-Khan's exclusive tone supports Saudi Arabia's conservative policies influenced by Wahhabi ideology. The prohibition of alliances with non-Muslims in this translation reinforces narratives of separation and theological superiority, potentially marginalizing non-Muslim communities and limiting opportunities for interfaith collaboration.

The differing interpretations of *awliyā'* reflect the unique needs and conditions of various societies. These differences are evident across editions of Kemenag's translations. In the first edition (1965–1988), the term *awliyā'* in Āli 'Imrān (3):28 and An-Nisā' (4):144 was not directly translated but retained in its original Arabic form. For instance, An-Nisā' (4):144 was rendered as:[33]

> *"Hai orang-orang yang beriman, janganlah kamu mengambil orang-orang kafir*
> *sebagai wali dengan meninggalkan orang-orang mukmin."*

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[30] Nurbayan, 'Metaphors in the Quran and Its Translation Accuracy in Indonesian'.

[31] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.

[32] Hilali, *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an into the English Language*.

[33] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.

"O you who believe, do not take the disbelievers as Awliyâ (allies) over the believers."

Footnotes explained that *awliyā'* means "close friends," "leaders," "protectors," or "helpers." A similar explanation appeared for Āli 'Imrān (3):28.

In the revised editions (1998–2002), the term *awliyā'* was translated variably based on context. In Āli 'Imrān (3):28, An-Nisā' (4):139 and 144, and Al-Mā'idah (5):57, it was rendered as "leaders." Meanwhile, in Al-Mā'idah (5):51 and Al-Mumtahanah (60):1, it was interpreted as "close allies." In At-Tawbah (9):23, *awliyā'* was translated as "protectors," while in An-Nisā' (4):89, it appeared as "companions." This variation highlights the importance of contextual understanding in translating *awliyā'*.

Between 2002 and 2019, further shifts in word choice occurred in Kemenag's Qur'anic translations, particularly for *awliyā'*. In the 2002 edition, *awliyā'* was often rendered as "leaders" or "protectors," whereas the 2019 version shifted to "close allies" or retained "protectors" with additional clarification provided in footnotes.

Footnotes in the 2019 edition are a significant feature, reflecting efforts to adapt the meaning of *awliyā'* to its contextual use in the verses. For example, in Āli 'Imrān (3):28, the 2002 edition translated *awliyā'* as "leaders" in *"Janganlah orang-orang beriman menjadikan orang kafir sebagai pemimpin,"* whereas the 2019 edition revised it to *"para wali"* and added a footnote explaining that the term refers to a close relationship, both socially and emotionally.

Similar adjustments are evident in Al-Mā'idah (5):51, where *awliyā'* was translated as "close allies" in the 2019 edition, compared to "close allies of yours" in the 2002 version. These changes emphasize contextual understanding, and the 2019 footnotes aim to reduce potential misunderstandings arising from narrow or literal interpretations.

In Indonesia, where religious pluralism is integral to social life, Kemenag's translation integrates Islamic teachings with socio-political realities. Conversely, in Saudi Arabia, dominated by Wahhabism, Hilali-Khan's literal approach rejects contextual adaptation to preserve what is considered doctrinal purity. For instance, Hilali-Khan translates Al-Mā'idah (5):51 as:[34]

"O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as Auliyâ (friends, protectors, helpers),"

This reflects theological exclusivity and a detachment from socio-political realities.

The political ideology underlying these translation strategies is stark. Kemenag's translation demonstrates how religious texts can promote coexistence and social harmony, while Hilali-Khan highlights how literalism can reinforce theological conservatism. Although it preserves doctrinal integrity, Hilali-Khan's exclusive approach risks exacerbating sectarian tensions and limiting interfaith dialogue opportunities. Balancing theological integrity with socio-political realities is crucial in Qur'anic translation, as exemplified by Kemenag's efforts to blend Islamic teachings with the needs of modern society. Conversely, translations like Hilali-Khan underscore the need for more adaptive interpretations to foster a more connected and tolerant world.

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[34] Hilali, *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an into the English Language*.

Analysis of Qur'anic Verses on *Khilāfah* (Caliphate)

The analysis of Qur'anic verses related to *khilāfah* (caliphate) reveals significant ideological differences in translation strategies and interpretative frameworks. These differences are shaped by distinct cultural, theological, and political contexts, as reflected in the translations by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) and the Hilali-Khan version. The contrasting approaches to the concept of *khilāfah* illustrate the role of translation in framing leadership and governance within Islamic discourse.

The concept of *khilāfah* appears in several Qur'anic verses, including Al-Baqarah (2):30, Ṣād (38):26, and Al-An'ām (6):165. These verses highlight humanity's role as stewards of the earth, emphasizing responsibilities tied to leadership and governance. However, the interpretations of these verses differ significantly between the Kemenag and Hilali-Khan translations, reflecting divergent theological commitments. For instance, in Al-Baqarah (2):30, Kemenag translates it as, *"Aku hendak menjadikan khalifah di bumi"*[35] (*"I am going to place a caliph on the earth"*), emphasizing humanity's collective responsibility as stewards of the earth. This approach aligns with Indonesia's pluralistic values, promoting ethical governance and social justice as central to leadership. Conversely, the Hilali-Khan translation reads:[36]

"I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth."

This translation focuses on a literal understanding of human succession and governance, reflecting Wahhabi theological principles that prioritize hierarchical and rigid interpretations of leadership.

In Ṣād (38):26, Kemenag translates *khalifah* similarly to Al-Baqarah (2):30, with an explanatory note in parentheses:

"Wahai Daud, sesungguhnya Kami menjadikanmu khalifah (penguasa) di bumi. Maka, berilah keputusan (perkara) di antara manusia dengan hak." (*"O David, indeed We have made you a caliph (ruler) on the earth. So judge between people in truth (and justice).*[37]

This interpretation emphasizes justice and accountability as core principles of governance. Meanwhile, Hilali-Khan renders the verse as:

"O Dâwûd (David)! Verily! We have placed you as a successor on the earth; so judge you between men in truth (and justice)."[38]

The Hilali-Khan translation maintains a literal focus, emphasizing obedience to divine commands without exploring broader ethical or social implications.

The differences between the translations of verses about Prophet David in the Kemenag and Hilali-Khan versions highlight contrasting approaches to conveying the meaning of *khalīfah*. The Kemenag translation employs the term *"khalifah (penguasa)"* (*caliph*) (*ruler*), directly emphasizing Prophet David's role as a leader with moral and social responsibilities. The explicit phrasing *"berilah keputusan (perkara) di antara manusia dengan hak"* (*"judge between people in truth"*) underscores Prophet David's duty to uphold

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[35] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.
[36] Hilali, *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an into the English Language*.
[37] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.
[38] Hilali, *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an into the English Language*.

justice and ensure decisions based on righteousness. This approach reflects Indonesia's contextual understanding of leadership as a moral responsibility that must be carried out with integrity.

In contrast, the Hilali-Khan translation uses the term *"successor"*, emphasizing the technical aspect of Prophet David's position as a successor in the sequence of leadership. The phrase *"so judge you between men in truth (and justice)"* directs attention to Prophet David's task of upholding justice but does not explicitly highlight the moral or social dimensions of leadership responsibilities as seen in Kemenag's translation.

The differences in translation strategies reflect broader political ideologies. The Kemenag translation integrates Islamic principles with contemporary values of democracy and pluralism, emphasizing justice, societal welfare, and ethical governance. This translation aligns with Indonesia's socio-political framework, which prioritizes inclusivity and harmony within a diverse society.[39] Meanwhile, the Hilali-Khan translation reinforces Wahhabi ideological commitments, emphasizing literal and authoritative interpretations of *khilāfah*. This approach supports a centralized and rigid governance model, prioritizing strict adherence to Islamic law, consistent with the state-sponsored religious narratives in Saudi Arabia.[40]

The ideological construction of Islamic leadership in the context of the terms "*khalifah*" and "successor/generations" as utilized by Kemenag and Hilali-Khan reveals significant variances in leadership perception and moral responsibility in Muslim societies. Kemenag's use of the term "khalifah" connotes a collective moral obligation shaped by Islamic values and communal accountability,[41] whereas Hilali-Khan's use of "successor" or "generations" indicates a more linear, authority-driven model.[42] This contrast influences how Muslim societies interpret the ethics of leadership-whether as shared responsibility rooted in justice, or as formalized adjudication within a hierarchical structure.

The Kemenag rendering, particularly in verses such as Ṣād (38):26, emphasizes leadership as a mandate to "judge among people in truth," suggesting governance anchored in ethical justice, communal welfare, and divine accountability. Meanwhile, Hilali-Khan's "judge between men in truth" leans toward individual authority, possibly detached from broader ethical discourse and communal scrutiny. These divergent representations resonate with broader governance models: participatory and pluralistic in Indonesia, centralized and theologically rigid in Saudi Arabia.

Such terminological choices can shape public trust, leadership expectations, and civic engagement. In plural societies, the framing adopted by Kemenag potentially supports

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[39] *European Muslims and the Qur'an*, ed. by Gulnaz Sibgatullina and Gerard Wiegers (De Gruyter, 2023), doi:10.1515/9783111140797; Faizin, 'TOWARDS A GENDER-SENSITIVE TRANSLATION OF THE QURʾĀN THE CASE OF THE MOST RECENT REVISION OF AL-QURʾĀN DAN TERJEMAHNYA'.

[40] Yakubovych, *The Kingdom and the Qur'an: Translating the Holy Book of Islam in Saudi Arabia*.

[41] Kurniawan Dwi Saputra and Septiana Dwiputri Maharani, 'Makna Peran Manusia Sebagai Khalifah Dan Paradigma Teosentrisme Dalam Etika Lingkungan Islam', *Kalimah: Jurnal Studi Agama Dan Pemikiran Islam*, 21.1 (2024), pp. 1–24, doi:10.21111/klm.v21i1.9118.

[42] Paul Mitchell, Halim Rane, and Adis Duderija, 'Views on Political Islam among Australian Converts to Islam: Findings of a National Survey', *Politics and Religion*, 16.3 (2023), pp. 492–515, doi:10.1017/S1755048323000135.

inclusive leadership models, while Hilali-Khan's reading might legitimize top-down authority with limited community agency.[43]

This divergence is evident in the translations of Al-An'ām (6):165. The Kemenag version reads:

> *"Dialah yang menjadikan kamu sebagai khalifah-khalifah di bumi dan Dia meninggikan sebagian kamu beberapa derajat atas sebagian (yang lain) untuk menguji kamu atas apa yang diberikan-Nya kepadamu."* (*"He is the one who made you caliphs on the earth and raised some of you above others in rank to test you in what He has given you."*)[44]

The Hilali-Khan version translates the same verse as:

> *"And it is He Who has made you generations coming after generations, replacing each other on the earth. And He has raised you in ranks, some above others, that He may try you in that which He has bestowed on you."*[45]

The fundamental differences between the Kemenag and Hilali-Khan translations of Al-An'ām (6):165 become apparent in word choice, emphasis, and ideological context. The Kemenag translation uses the term *"khalifah-khalifah di bumi"*[46] (*"caliphs on the earth"*), highlighting humanity's moral and social responsibilities as leaders entrusted by Allah. This phrase emphasizes that the granted power is not merely a right but a responsibility to be exercised ethically, adhering to principles of justice and societal welfare. Conversely, the Hilali-Khan translation opts for the phrase *"generations coming after generations, replacing each other,"* focusing on the succession of humanity. This approach reflects a literal understanding that emphasizes hierarchy and divine authority without explicitly addressing humans' social or moral responsibilities regarding their power.

The differing interpretations of *khilāfah* carry significant socio-political implications. In Indonesia, Kemenag's translation supports a narrative of inclusivity and social harmony, aligned with the country's pluralistic policies by emphasizing societal welfare and ethical governance. Such translations encourage a nuanced understanding of leadership, resonating with Indonesia's democratic values.[47] In Saudi Arabia, the Hilali-Khan translation aligns with a more exclusive and authoritarian model of governance, prioritizing a literal interpretation of *khilāfah*. This approach reinforces traditional power structures and restricts discussions on governmental reform. It may perpetuate exclusivism and hinder efforts to promote interfaith dialogue or pluralism.[48]

The contrasting approaches to *khilāfah* in the Kemenag and Hilali-Khan translations underscore the interplay between theology and politics in Qur'anic interpretation. Kemenag reflects Indonesia's pluralistic and democratic values, promoting inclusivity and ethical

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[43] Zainal Arifin and Lailatu Rohmah, 'THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP OF THE TRANSNATIONAL ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY PERSPECTIVE AND RESPONSES TO DEMOCRACY PRACTICES IN INDONESIA', *Akademika : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, 24.1 (2019), pp. 213–32, doi:10.32332/akademika.v24i1.1474.

[44] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.

[45] Hilali, *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an into the English Language*.

[46] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.

[47] Mahasneh, 'The Translation of Jihad Verses After the Emergence of ISIS: Distortion or Reality'.

[48] Yakubovych, *The Kingdom and the Qur'an: Translating the Holy Book of Islam in Saudi Arabia*.

governance. Hilali-Khan aligns with Wahhabi orthodoxy, emphasizing authority and obedience.

These differences highlight the strategic role of translation in shaping perceptions of leadership and governance in Islamic discourse. By exploring the theological and political dimensions of *khilāfah*, this study underscores the importance of contextual interpretations that balance doctrinal integrity with contemporary socio-political realities. Such interpretations can foster a more inclusive understanding of leadership, promoting justice and societal welfare in diverse communities.

Gender in Qur'anic Translations: Ideological and Cultural Divergences

The translation of verses concerning gender is profoundly influenced by underlying ideological frameworks. Traditional patriarchal interpretations often emphasize male authority and female obedience, as seen in An-Nisā' (4):34, which discusses men's roles as protectors and maintainers of women. Hilali-Khan adopts a literal interpretation:

"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allâh has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means."[49]

This translation aligns with Wahhabi principles, emphasizing male superiority and preserving traditional gender hierarchies.[50] The directive allowing men to "strike them (lightly)" in cases of domestic discord reinforces a patriarchal framework, limiting the scope for gender equality within the text.

Conversely, Kemenag adopts a more nuanced and context-sensitive approach:

"Laki-laki (suami) adalah penanggung jawab atas para perempuan (istri) karena Allah telah melebihkan sebagian mereka (laki-laki) atas sebagian yang lain (perempuan) dan karena mereka (laki-laki) telah menafkahkan sebagian dari hartanya."[51]

"Men (husbands) are the protectors and maintainers of women (wives) because Allah has made some of them (men) excel over others (women) and because they (men) provide for them from their wealth."

The accompanying footnote explains men's responsibilities as protectors, emphasizing care, provision, and mutual respect:

"As the head of the family, the husband is responsible for protecting, nurturing, managing, and ensuring the welfare of the family."

This interpretation reflects Indonesia's socio-political commitment to promoting gender equality, framing male authority within a context of responsibility and justice rather than domination.[52]

In An-Nisā' (4):1, Hilali-Khan highlights the shared origin of men and women, underscoring their mutual dependency and respect. The verse reads:

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[49] Hilali, *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an into the English Language*.

[50] Ilyes Mukhrimhonovich Abrorov and others, 'Tafsir Application in the Customs and Rules and Social Behavior of the Various Society', *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology*, 9 (2022), pp. 2427–33, doi:10.6000/1929-4409.2020.09.294.

[51] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.

[52] Nurbayan, 'Metaphors in the Quran and Its Translation Accuracy in Indonesian'.

"O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife [Hawwâ (Eve)], and from them both He created many men and women."[53]

Kemenag emphasizes the equal creation of men and women, reinforcing the idea of gender equality within an Islamic framework:

"Wahai manusia, bertakwalah kepada Tuhanmu yang telah menciptakanmu dari diri yang satu (Adam) dan Dia menciptakan darinya pasangannya (Hawa). Dari keduanya Allah memperkembangbiakkan laki-laki dan perempuan yang banyak."[54]

"O mankind, fear your Lord who created you from one self (Adam) and created its mate (Eve) from it. From both of them, Allah propagated many men and women."

This egalitarian interpretation aligns with Indonesia's cultural and political emphasis on inclusivity and equality.[55] By framing gender relations within a shared human context, Kemenag promotes a balanced understanding of gender roles, challenging patriarchal norms that limit women's participation in public and private spheres.

In contrast, Hilali-Khan's literal framework, while acknowledging the shared origins of men and women, does not explicitly address contemporary gender equality issues. This approach leaves room for interpretations that reinforce traditional gender hierarchies, particularly in patriarchal societies where women's roles are already restricted.[56]

Contextual and metaphorical interpretations play a crucial role in reconciling theological integrity with contemporary understandings of gender equality. Feminist critiques often challenge literal readings of verses like An-Nisā' (4):34, arguing that such interpretations reflect cultural practices rather than the Qur'an's intended message.[57] Scholars advocate revisiting these verses within their historical and cultural contexts, emphasizing principles of justice and mutual respect.

Ibn Abī Ḥātim narrated from al-Ḥasan:

"A woman came to the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) to seek help regarding her husband who slapped her. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'Qiṣāṣ (retaliation).' Then Allah revealed the verse, 'Al-rijālu qawwāmūna 'ala al-nisā'' (Men are protectors and maintainers of women), and the woman returned without seeking retaliation."[58]

Ibn Jarīr also narrated from various chains of al-Ḥasan:

"A man from the Anṣār slapped his wife, and she sought retaliation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) allowed *qiṣāṣ* between them. Then the verse, *'Wa lā ta'jal bi al-qur'āni min qabli an yuqḍā ilayka waḥyuh'* (Ṭāhā: 114), and *'Al-rijālu qawwāmūna 'ala al-nisā''* were revealed."

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[53] Hilali, *Translation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an into the English Language*.

[54] KEMENAG, *Al Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.

[55] Al Farisi, 'Acceptability of the Quran Translation'.

[56] Muhammad Irsad, Abdul Mustaqim, and Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy, 'Paradigm Shifts in Gender Narratives of Tafsīr Al-Ibrīz through Oral Exegesis on Youtube', *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis*, 25.1 (2024), pp. 141–60, doi:10.14421/qh.v25i1.5416.

[57] Mohammad, 'Cultural and Stylistic Losses and Gains Faced in Translating the Qur'anic Arabic Words Known as Kur'hun كُرْهٌ into English: A Comparative Study'.

[58] Abī al-Faḍl Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *Lubab Al Nuqul Fi Asbab Al Nuzul* (muassasah al kitab al thaqafiyah, 2022).

Similar narrations were reported by Ibn 'Abbās and al-Suddī.

Ibn Mardawayh narrated from 'Ali:

"A man from the Anṣār brought his wife to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and she said, 'O Messenger of Allah, he struck me and left marks on my face.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'He should not have done that.' Then Allah revealed the verse, 'Al-rijālu qawwāmūna 'ala al-nisā'.' These narrations corroborate one another."

Pro-patriarchal interpretations, as explained in the *tafsir* of Ibn Kathīr, highlight the phrase *"Al-rijālu qawwāmūna 'ala al-nisā',"* which is interpreted as men being the protectors or maintainers of women. In this context, a protector is described as someone who has the right to govern and discipline women when necessary. This explanation supports the idea that men have superiority over women.[59] Al-Ṭabarī also emphasizes that this verse outlines the role of men as leaders and guides for their wives according to Allah's command.

According to Al-Ṭabarī, men bear the responsibility of providing a dowry (*mahr*) and financial support (*nafkah*) to their wives, reflecting the advantages Allah has given to men. The superiority of a husband over his wife is understood through the obligations he fulfills, creating a dynamic within the marital relationship.

Conversely, pro-gender equality interpretations, such as those proposed by Al-Ḥibrī, focus on the term *"qawwāmūna"* as a guide and caretaker without emphasizing the superiority of one gender over the other. The concept of *"faḍḍala"* is understood as an acceptable difference rather than an indication of male dominance. This interpretation promotes a more egalitarian understanding of the verse.

For example, Kemenag's translation explains the term *nusyuz* (disobedience) as *"an act of a wife neglecting her duties, such as leaving the home without her husband's consent,"* placing marital discord within the framework of mutual responsibility rather than unilateral authority. This interpretation encourages dialogue and reconciliation, promoting a fairer understanding of marital relationships.[60]

The differences between the Kemenag and Hilali-Khan translations have significant socio-political implications. Kemenag's emphasis on inclusivity and mutual respect aligns with Indonesia's pluralistic policies, constructing a national narrative that positions gender equality as a foundation for social harmony. By interpreting gender-related verses in ways that align with contemporary understandings of equality, Kemenag's translation empowers women and challenges patriarchal structures within society.[61]

In contrast, Hilali-Khan's reliance on literal interpretations reflects a more conservative worldview, reinforcing traditional gender roles that restrict women's participation in education, leadership, and public life. This approach can perpetuate systemic inequalities and hinder efforts to achieve gender justice in societies influenced by Wahhabi ideology.[62]

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[59] 'Imād al-Dīn Abī al-Fidā' Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Adzīm* (Dar al-Fikr, 2011).

[60] Rostam Sadiqi, 'Sequential and Recursive Structure Searching Algorithms for Arabic and English Texts', 8.1.1 (2020), pp. 62–67, doi:10.30534/ijeter/2020/0981.12020.

[61] Abrorov and others, 'Tafsir Application in the Customs and Rules and Social Behavior of the Various Society'.

[62] Mahasneh, 'The Translation of Jihad Verses After the Emergence of ISIS: Distortion or Reality'.

The interpretation of gender-related Qur'anic verses reflects broader ideological and cultural differences, with significant implications for societal norms and gender equality. Kemenag's inclusive and context-sensitive translation promotes messages of equality and mutual respect, aligning with Indonesia's pluralistic policies and fostering a more equitable understanding of gender roles. Conversely, the literal and patriarchal perspective in the Hilali-Khan translation reinforces traditional gender hierarchies, limiting space for women's empowerment within Islamic discourse.

These differences highlight the strategic role of translation in shaping theological and social understandings of gender. By adopting interpretations that emphasize justice, compassion, and mutual respect, translators can contribute to a more inclusive vision of Islam that supports gender equality and challenges systemic barriers to women's empowerment.

C. Conclusion

The findings of this study affirm that the act of translating the Qur'an is a deeply ideological enterprise, shaped not only by theological inclinations but also by state interests and socio-political imperatives. The comparative examination of the Kemenag and Hilali-Khan translations reveals that terms such as tawḥīd, khalīfah, and awliyā' become discursive sites where state ideologies are projected and normalized.

Kemenag's translation embodies an inclusive vision of Islam, one that aligns with Indonesia's commitment to pluralism, civic harmony, and interfaith relations. The emphasis on metaphorical interpretation, moral leadership, and relational ethics reflects a theological pragmatism that seeks to reconcile sacred texts with contemporary national values. This translation does not merely convey meaning but constructs a vision of Islam that is dialogical, socially embedded, and ethically responsive.

In contrast, the Hilali-Khan translation functions as a textual extension of Wahhabi orthodoxy. Its literalist tendencies, strict binaries between Muslims and non-Muslims, and rigid interpretations of divine attributes reveal an ideological project aimed at preserving doctrinal purity and religious exclusivism. This model marginalizes contextual nuances and suppresses alternative readings, reducing the interpretive elasticity of the Qur'anic message.

By foregrounding these contrasts, the study contributes to the growing literature on Qur'anic translation as a site of ideological contestation. It also deepens our understanding of how political theology operates at the level of language, influencing how communities imagine God, authority, and social relations.

The scientific contribution of this research lies in its methodological integration of Critical Discourse Analysis with comparative Qur'anic hermeneutics. It demonstrates how textual choices in translation reflect and reinforce particular modes of religious and political reasoning. Moreover, it offers a model for interrogating other state-authorized religious discourses across different cultural contexts.

In light of these insights, future inquiries may focus on how these translations are received by various audiences, how they shape religious education curricula, and how alternative voices navigate or resist dominant ideologies embedded in translated sacred texts. In doing so, scholars and practitioners alike can better assess the transformative and potentially divisive power of translation in contemporary Muslim societies.

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