

BETWEEN CONTEXTUALIZATION AND DISTORTION: INTERPRETATION OF QUR'ANIC VERSES ON NATIONALISM IN DETIK.COM AND NU ONLINE

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Abstract: *The development of digital media has significantly transformed the patterns of Qur'anic interpretation, including on the issue of nationalism in Islam. This study analyzes how verses related to nationalism are interpreted by two online media platforms: Detik.com and NU Online. Using a qualitative method with content analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis approaches, Detik.com interprets Q.S. Al-Isrā' [17]: 70 as a foundation for freedom and human dignity, although academic tafsir traditionally views this verse as referring to the general honor bestowed upon humankind. The platform also uses Q.S. Al-Mumtahanah [60]: 8 to equate love for the homeland with defending religion, despite the verse's original context focusing more on social relations and tolerance. Meanwhile, NU Online references Q.S. Al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 85 as theological legitimacy for love of one's homeland, although it primarily refers to Allah's promise to the Prophet Muhammad regarding his return to Mecca. Likewise, Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]: 66 is interpreted as evidence of the significance of one's birthplace, even though the verse contextually concerns the command to emigrate as a test of faith. The findings reveal that while these interpretations aim to contextualize nationalism within Islam, there is a tendency toward distortion due to selective verse usage and deviations from established academic tafsir methodology. It is crucial to apply sound and objective interpretive methods that go beyond pragmatic interests and remain academically accountable. This ensures that interpretations of nationalism-related verses in Islam reflect the Qur'an's teachings in a comprehensive, logical manner, avoiding narrow ideological biases that risk diminishing the depth of the sacred text.*

Keywords: Nationalism, Online Media, Qur'anic Interpretation.

Abstrak: Perkembangan media digital telah mengubah pola penafsiran Al-Qur'an, termasuk dalam isu nasionalisme dalam Islam. Studi ini menganalisis bagaimana ayat-ayat yang berkaitan dengan nasionalisme ditafsirkan di dua media online, Detik.com dan NU Online. Dengan metode

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kualitatif dan dengan pendekatan analisis isi serta Analisis Wacana Kritis, Detik.com menafsirkan Q.S. Al-Isrā' [17]: 70 sebagai dasar kemerdekaan dan martabat manusia, meski ayat ini dalam tafsir akademik lebih merujuk pada keistimewaan manusia secara umum. Dalam media online tersebut, Q.S. Al-Mumtahanah [60]: 8 juga digunakan untuk menyamakan cinta tanah air dengan pembelaan agama, padahal konteksnya lebih pada hubungan sosial dan toleransi. Sementara NU Online mengangkat Q.S. Al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 85 sebagai legitimasi teologis cinta tanah air, padahal ayat tersebut terkait janji Allah kepada Nabi Muhammad saw. untuk kembali ke Makkah. Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]: 66 ditafsirkan sebagai bukti pentingnya tanah kelahiran, meskipun konteks aslinya tentang perintah hijrah dalam ujian iman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun tafsir yang disajikan bertujuan untuk mengontekstualisasikan nasionalisme dalam Islam, terdapat kecenderungan distorsi akibat selektivitas ayat dan penyimpangan dari metodologi tafsir akademik. Diperlukan penerapan metode tafsir yang sahih dan objektif, yang tidak hanya mengedepankan kepentingan pragmatis tetapi juga dapat dipertanggungjawabkan secara akademik. Hal ini penting agar interpretasi ayat-ayat nasionalisme dalam Islam tetap mencerminkan esensi ajaran Al-Qur'an secara komprehensif, logis dan tidak terjebak dalam bias ideologis yang sempit yang dapat berdampak kepada penyempitan kandungan makna Al-Qur'an.

Kata-kata Kunci: *Media Online, Nasionalisme, Tafsir Al-Qur'an.*

Introduction

The development of digital technology has brought significant transformations in various aspects of life, including the dissemination and understanding of Qur'anic interpretation (tafsir). In classical times, tafsir developed through oral discussions in religious gatherings and was later documented in tafsir books. Today, however, tafsir is also available in digital formats, making it more accessible to the wider public. Online media has become the primary platform for people to instantly access various interpretations of the Qur'an.¹ This phenomenon has expanded the reach of tafsir information but has also led to challenges regarding authority, methodology, and objectivity in interpreting certain verses. With the increasing consumption of digital-based information, Qur'anic interpretation in online media tends to be simplified and sometimes influenced by specific socio-political contexts.²

1 See, Moh Yusuf Hm and Muhammad Satra, "Kajian Tafsir Al-Quran di Era Digital: Literasi dan Pengaruh Teknologi," *Jurnal Literasiologi* 12, no. 5 (December 29, 2024): 226–39, <https://doi.org/10.47783/literasiologi.v12i5.863>; Muhamad Fajar Mubarak and Muhamad Fanji Romdhoni, "Digitalisasi Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir Sosial Media di Indonesia," *Jurnal Iman dan Spiritualitas* 1, no. 1 (February 16, 2021): 110–14, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v1i1.11552>; Achmad Rifai, "Tafsirweb: Digitalization of Qur'anic Interpretation and Democratization of Religious Sources in Indonesia," *Jurnal At-Tibyan: Jurnal Ilmu Alqur'an dan Tafsir* 5, no. 2 (December 11, 2020): 152–70, <https://doi.org/10.32505/at-tibyan.v5i2.1640>; Moh Nor Ichwan, Mustaqim Pabbajah, and Faizal Amin, "Digitization of Religious Tafsir: The Fading of Indonesian Ulama Authority in Post Truth Era," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 25, no. 2 (September 20, 2024): 320–45, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v25i2.5545>.

2 See, Muhammad Rosyid and Bhirawa Anoraga, "More Than a Tafsir: Convergence, Contestation, and Deradicalization of Quranic Interpretations on Website," *SUHUF* 16, no. 2 (December 29, 2023): 419–39, <https://doi.org/10.22548/shf.v16i2.868>; Sihabussalam Sihabussalam, Sa'adatul Lailah, and Roma Wijaya, "Digital Era Qur'anic Interpretation in Indonesia,"

One contemporary issue frequently discussed in online tafsir studies is nationalism in Islam. Nationalism, generally defined as love for one's homeland, has various meanings within the Islamic discourse.³ Several Qur'anic verses are often cited to justify nationalism in the context of Islam, such as Q.S. Al-Hujurāt [49]: 13 which states that Allah created humans into different nations and tribes so they may know one another, and Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 143, which affirms the concept of *ummatan wasaṭan* (a moderate community), sometimes interpreted as a balance between national identity and Islamic values.⁴

However, problems arise when these verses related to nationalism are freely interpreted in online media without adhering to proper academic tafsir methodologies. Online platforms such as Detik.com and NU Online, which have a significant influence in disseminating religious information in Indonesia, frequently present interpretations of nationalism-related verses in their popular articles. NU Online, for instance, in its article titled "*3 Ayat Al-Qur'an tentang Nasionalisme*," interprets several Qur'anic verses as legitimization of nationalism in Islam. The article mentions Q.S. Al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 85 as one of the verses that indicates the importance of love for one's homeland.⁵

Although online media interpretations can broaden public understanding, there is a potential bias in the interpretation of these verses. Interpretations found in mass media often do not follow academic tafsir methodologies but rather emphasize popular perspectives that are easily accepted by audiences.⁶

SUHUF 17, no. 1 (June 28, 2024): 87–114, <https://doi.org/10.22548/shf.v17i1.998>.

3 See, Julia Bea Kurniawaty and Santyo Widayatmo, "Nasionalisme di Era Digital: Tantangan dan Peluang Bagi Generasi Z Indonesia," *JAGADDHITA: Jurnal Kebhinnekaan dan Wawasan Kebangsaan* 3, no. 2 (June 29, 2024): 42–50, <https://doi.org/10.30998/jagaddhita.v3i2.3039>; Ferra Martian et al., "Konstruksi Nasionalisme Generasi Z di Era Media Digital dalam Membangun Ketahanan Informasional," *Jurnal Riset Manajemen Komunikasi*, December 30, 2024, 133–40, <https://doi.org/10.29313/jrmk.v4i2.4399>; Ahmad Arif Fadilah, Nabilah Qanitah, and Lulu Elvira Nawafil, "Membangun Nasionalisme di Era Digital: Peran Media Sosial dalam Memperkokoh Persatuan dan Kesatuan Bangsa," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial dan Humaniora* 4, no. 1 (2025): 2039–46; Faisal Mustofa and Cahyo Hasanudin, "Upaya Mempertahankan Rasa Nasionalisme di Era Digital Terhadap Budaya Asing," *Seminar Nasional dan Gelar Karya Produk Hasil Pembelajaran* 2, no. 2 (December 14, 2024): 1042–48; Ana Suheri et al., "Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Nasionalisme dan Integrasi Bangsa di Era Modern," *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Universitas PGRI Palangka Raya* 1 (September 29, 2022): 327–41, <https://doi.org/10.54683/puppr.v1i0.33>.

4 Muhammad Syakir NF, "3 Ayat Al-Qur'an tentang Nasionalisme," NU Online, 2023, <https://islam.nu.or.id/nasional/3-ayat-al-qur-an-tentang-nasionalisme-75rND>.

5 Ahmad Fauzi Nasution, *Metodologi Tafsir di Era Digital: Antara Kontekstualisasi dan Distorsi* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ilmu, 2022), 12.

6 See, Iqrom Faldiansyah, "Strategi Tafsir Ayat dalam Dakwah di Era Digital: Mengoptimalkan Media Sosial sebagai Makna Dakwah: Strategies for Tafsir Da'wah Verses in the Digital age: Optimizing Social Media as a Da'wah Means," *Jurnal Bimas Islam* 17, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 505–24, <https://doi.org/10.37302/jbi.v17i2.1323>; Hartati Yuningsih and Abdul Ghany, "Transformasi Tafsir Al-Qur'an di Era Media Digital: Analisis Metodologi Tafsir dalam Channel Youtube Kajian Tafsir Al-Ma'rifah," *Al-Qudwah* 2, no. 2 (August 19, 2024): 187–204, <https://doi.org/10.24014/alqudwah.v2i2.29123>.

Additionally, there is a tendency for certain interpretations to support nationalism narratives within specific political contexts, potentially distorting the meaning of the verses. For example, online interpretations of nationalism-related verses may overlook the historical and methodological aspects of tafsir, leading to a reductive understanding that does not reflect the complexity of classical and contemporary scholarly interpretations.⁷

In this context, it is crucial to distinguish between contextualization and distortion in interpreting nationalism-related verses. Contextualization refers to efforts to understand the verses within evolving social and political realities while adhering to valid tafsir principles. Distortion, on the other hand, occurs when Qur'anic verses are misinterpreted or adjusted to fit specific interests without considering methodological principles in tafsir studies.⁸ Therefore, this research aims to investigate how nationalism-related verses are interpreted in online media and to assess whether these interpretations are based on academic approaches or subject to distortion in their presentation.

Specifically, this study will examine how nationalism-related verses are interpreted in two major online media platforms, Detik.com and NU Online. The analysis will focus on the sources used in their tafsir, the methods applied in interpreting the verses, and the extent to which these interpretations align with academic tafsir principles. This study seeks to answer the following key question: *How are nationalism-related verses interpreted in Detik.com and NU Online?* Are these interpretations contextual, or do they involve distortion?

By exploring this issue, this research aims to analyze the patterns of Qur'anic interpretation on nationalism in online media, particularly on Detik.com and NU Online. Additionally, it seeks to determine the extent to which these interpretations adhere to academic tafsir methodologies and whether indications of distortion exist in their presentation.

This study employs a qualitative approach with content analysis to examine the patterns of Qur'anic interpretation on nationalism found in online media articles, particularly on Detik.com and NU Online. To gain a deeper understanding of how online media constructs and disseminates the discourse of nationalism through Qur'anic tafsir, this research also applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This approach enables an examination of text structures, word choices, and the socio-political contexts that play a role in shaping tafsir narratives in digital media.⁹

Additionally, this study refers to Teun A. van Dijk's model, which emphasizes the relationship between text, social cognition, and social context in discourse production.¹⁰ This approach helps in understanding that online media does

7 Ahmad Munawwar, *Metode Tafsir dalam Kajian Islam Nusantara* (Malang: UIN Malang Press, 202), 78.

8 Nasution. *Metodologi Tafsir di Era Digital: Antara Kontekstualisasi dan Distorsi*, 23.

9 Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (London: Longman, 1995), 88.

10 Teun A. van Dijk, *Discourse and Context: A Sociocognitive Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 20.

not merely present Qur'anic interpretations in a neutral manner but also shapes public understanding by selecting specific diction and linking verse interpretations to evolving socio-political realities. Van Dijk's model also reveals how certain ideologies can be reproduced through media texts, which, in the context of this study, relates to nationalism and Islam in the digital public sphere.¹¹

Detik.com and NU Online: Tendency and Affiliation

Detik.com, one of Indonesia's leading digital news platforms, has played a pivotal role in shaping the country's media landscape since its inception in 1998. Established by Budiono Darsono, Yayan Sopyan, and Abdul Rahman, Detik.com emerged during a time of political and economic turmoil, providing real-time news updates when internet-based media was still a novelty in Indonesia.¹² Over the years, the platform has experienced significant growth, adapting to the evolving technological landscape and the shifting demands of its readership.

The site quickly gained traction and, according to Nielsen, became the most visited news website in Indonesia, attracting an average of 25 million unique visitors per month. Recognizing the growing reliance on mobile technology, Detik.com launched its mobile application in 2011, ensuring easier access for smartphone users.¹³

Additionally, the platform expanded its content offerings with video-based journalism through DetikTV and live-streaming services, reinforcing its position as a comprehensive digital news provider. Detik.com's business model relies heavily on digital advertising and paid content. A significant portion of its revenue comes from various forms of advertisements, including banner ads, video ads, and sponsored content. A report by eMarketer listed Detik.com among the top five digital media platforms with the highest advertising revenue in Indonesia.¹⁴ To maintain engagement, the platform has actively collaborated with brands and corporations to produce content tailored to its audience. Moreover, Detik.com organizes events and social campaigns to further solidify its connection with readers.

Beyond its commercial success, Detik.com has made substantial contributions to Indonesia's digital media digitalization. The platform is not only known for its speed in delivering news but also for its commitment to accuracy and credibility. A 2018 study by Universitas Indonesia found that 70% of respondents regarded Detik.com as one of the most reliable online news sources in the country. Additionally, the platform has promoted digital literacy through various educational initiatives, including webinars and workshops on responsible media consumption. Despite its achievements, Detik.com faces ongoing challenges, particularly the

¹¹ Dijk, 21.

¹² "Company Profile Detikcom," 2021, <https://detiknetwork.com/logo/logo/pdf-Company-Profile-detikcom-2021.pdf>.

¹³ Similarweb, "Detik.Com Traffic Analytics, Ranking & Audience [February 2025]," Similarweb, 2025, <https://www.similarweb.com/website/detik.com/>.

¹⁴ "Company Profile Detikcom."

intense competition from other digital news outlets and the widespread issue of misinformation on social media. In response, the platform has strengthened its news verification systems and enhanced its investigative journalism efforts to maintain its credibility.¹⁵

Looking ahead, Detik.com's future success will depend on its ability to innovate. Integrating advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning could enhance content personalization and user experience, ensuring its continued relevance in an increasingly digital world.

In conclusion, Detik.com has cemented itself as a dominant force in Indonesia's digital news industry. Its rich history, robust business model, and substantial contributions to media digitalization highlight its importance in the country's information ecosystem. However, as the digital landscape continues to evolve, Detik.com must remain agile, embracing technological advancements and adapting to emerging challenges to sustain its position as a trusted news source for the Indonesian public.

NU Online, the digital news platform managed by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), has played a crucial role in disseminating religious and social information in Indonesia since its launch in 2003. As the largest Islamic organization in the country, NU recognized the growing need for a reliable and accessible online platform that could serve both its members and the broader public. Initially created to provide updates on NU's activities, religious rulings (fatwas), and discussions on social and political issues, NU Online quickly gained traction as a trusted source of information.¹⁶ According to a 2021 survey by the Indonesian Survey Institute, the platform became one of the most visited religious-based media outlets, attracting an average of 5 million visitors per month.

The rapid growth of NU Online can be attributed to the extensive network of NU across Indonesia, which has enabled it to reach a wide audience. Over the years, the platform has embraced technological advancements by diversifying its content to include multimedia formats such as video lectures, podcasts, and infographics. This approach has been particularly effective in engaging younger generations, who prefer visually appealing and interactive content.¹⁷

NU Online's content strategy focuses on religious, social, and cultural issues, presented in a language that is easy to understand while maintaining the core values of moderate Islam. A 2020 study by Gadjah Mada University found that 80% of NU Online's readers consider its content relevant to their daily lives and aligned with the principles of Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah. Beyond its written articles, NU Online has actively engaged with educational institutions, pesantren (Islamic

15 "Company Profile Detikcom."

16 Suci Amaliyah, "Cerita Tim IT Berjibaku Bangun Website NU Online yang Kini Berusia 20 Tahun," NU Online, 2023, <https://www.nu.or.id/nasional/cerita-tim-it-berjibaku-bangun-website-nu-online-yang-kini-berusia-20-tahun-GXRFJ>.

17 See, Hasan Aziz and Fahrudin Fahrudin, "Modernisasi Media Massa Nahdlatul Ulama," *KARMAWIBANGGA: Historical Studies Journal* 3, no. 2 (2021): 101–12, <https://doi.org/10.31316/2021>.

boarding schools), and community organizations. Through online discussions and webinars, the platform has facilitated conversations on pressing issues such as religious tolerance, pluralism, and social justice.¹⁸

The platform's significance extends beyond news reporting; it serves as a critical medium for promoting a moderate and inclusive understanding of Islam. NU Online is frequently used as a reference for religious guidance, especially among NU followers, who rely on it for insights into fatwas and contemporary issues. A 2019 report by the Center for Islamic and Social Studies highlighted NU Online's role in countering radical ideologies by producing educational content that emphasizes peace, coexistence, and interfaith harmony.¹⁹

Moreover, NU Online has contributed to improving digital literacy, particularly among pesantren communities and rural populations. Through training programs, it has helped communities understand the importance of digital media as a tool for education and communication. This effort has empowered individuals who might otherwise have limited access to reliable information sources, ensuring they can navigate the digital space responsibly.

Despite its achievements, NU Online faces several challenges. The rise of competing religious news platforms, the spread of misinformation, and the influence of social media have all posed significant hurdles. To address these issues, NU Online continues to strengthen its information verification processes and collaborates with reputable religious institutions to ensure the accuracy and reliability of its content.

Looking ahead, the future of NU Online will depend on its ability to innovate and adapt to the rapidly changing digital landscape. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning could enhance content personalization, making information more relevant and engaging for individual users. Additionally, expanding its reach among younger audiences through more interactive and visually appealing content will be crucial for maintaining its influence in the coming years.

In conclusion, NU Online has established itself as a leading digital news platform rooted in religious and social values. Its long-standing presence, well-structured content model, and impactful role in society have made it a primary reference for NU members and the wider public. However, to sustain its relevance and

¹⁸ Amaliyah.

¹⁹ See, Suluh Gembyeng Ciptadi, "The Social Construction of Tolerance Discourse through Online Media: Study of NU Online," *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 18, no. 1 (May 3, 2024): 113–23, <https://doi.org/10.24090/komunika.v18i1.8431>; Liya Nikmah Jazhila et al., "Nahdlatul Ulama's Dedication to Promoting Religious Moderation: A Virtual Ethnographic Study of the NU Online Website," *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial dan Budaya* 9, no. 1 (2024): 88–103, <https://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v9i1.4613>; Akbar Trio Mashuri, Abdul Rojak Lubis, and Agoes Moh Moefad, "Construction of Religious Moderation at Nahdlatul Ulama Online Media in East Java," *MUHARRIK: Jurnal Dakwah dan Sosial* 6, no. 1 (May 26, 2023): 71–86, <https://doi.org/10.37680/muharrik.v6i1.2814>; Desi Fitri Salsabila, Choiriyah, and Muslimin, "Analisis Isi Media NU Online dalam Mencegah Radikalisme di Indonesia," *Pubmedia Social Sciences and Humanities* 1, no. 3 (January 14, 2024): 19–19, <https://doi.org/10.47134/pssh.v1i3.182>.

effectiveness, NU Online must continue to evolve, embracing new technologies and addressing emerging challenges in the digital media landscape.

Interpretation of Nationalism Verses in Detik.com and NU Online

Detik.com interprets nationalism in Islam by referring to various Qur'anic verses and hadiths that emphasize the importance of love for one's homeland. In its article, independence (*al-istiqlāl*) is defined as freedom from all forms of oppression, both on an individual and national level.²⁰ This interpretation highlights that Islam guarantees human beings the right to live freely, free from foreign domination. This concept is supported by Q.S. Al-Isrā' [17]: 70, which asserts that Allah has honored humankind by granting them freedom and superiority over other creatures.²¹

Furthermore, Detik.com cites Q.S. Al-Mumtaḥanah [60]: 8, which, according to Quraish Shihab, demonstrates that love for one's homeland is on par with defending religion. This verse underscores the importance of treating those who do not wage war against or expel Muslims with kindness, while also implying that safeguarding national sovereignty is part of Islamic teachings. In the context of Indonesia's independence struggle, this verse was used by scholars to justify *jihād* against colonial rulers in defense of national sovereignty.

In addition to the Qur'an, Detik.com also highlights hadiths related to nationalism and love for one's homeland. One such hadith is narrated by Anas bin Mālik, in which the Prophet Muhammad is described as hastening his camel's pace upon nearing Medina after a journey, demonstrating his deep longing and love for his birthplace.²² Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī interprets this hadith as evidence that love for one's homeland is endorsed in Islam.

By linking various Qur'anic verses and hadiths, Detik.com constructs a narrative that nationalism is not contradictory to Islam but is instead a natural human inclination acknowledged by religious teachings.²³ The article emphasizes that Islam not only teaches spiritual devotion but also social responsibility in building and defending one's nation. The interpretation presented in this article tends to be contextual, positioning nationalism as a religious obligation aimed at fostering justice, prosperity, and welfare for society.

Meanwhile, NU Online interprets nationalism in Islam by referencing several Qur'anic verses considered relevant to the concept of love for one's homeland. One of the cited verses is Q.S. Al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 85, which, according to *Rūḥ al-Bayān* by Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī al-Burūsawī, is understood as an indication that love for

20 Bayu Ardi Isnanto, "Ayat dan Hadits Tentang Kemerdekaan Serta Cinta Tanah Air," *detikhikmah*, 2024, <https://www.detik.com/hikmah/doa-dan-hadits/d-7488847/ayat-dan-hadits-tentang-kemerdekaan-serta-cinta-tanah-air>.

21 Tim Detikjateng, "Slogan Nasionalisme 'Hubbul Wathon Minal Iman' Hadist atau Bukan?," *detikjateng*, 2022, <https://www.detik.com/jateng/berita/d-6237618/slogan-nasionalisme-hubbul-wathon-minal-iman-hadist-atau-bukan>.

22 Isnanto, "Ayat dan Hadits Tentang Kemerdekaan Serta Cinta Tanah Air."

23 Isnanto.

one's homeland is part of faith. The NU Online article states that the Prophet Muhammad himself expressed his love for Mecca when migrating to Medina, serving as strong evidence that attachment to one's birthplace has a foundation in Islamic teachings.²⁴ This interpretation places nationalism within a spiritual perspective, emphasizing that love for one's homeland is a natural human instinct that does not conflict with Islamic values.

Additionally, NU Online cites Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]: 66 to highlight the significance of one's homeland for human life. The article references the opinion of Wahbah al-Zuhaylī in *Tafsīr al-Munīr*, which equates the command to leave one's homeland in this verse with a major sacrifice, comparable to losing one's life.²⁵ This underscores that love for one's homeland is not merely an emotional matter but is also tied to the survival of individuals and society. NU Online emphasizes that this verse carries a profound message about the deep connection between people and their homeland, reinforcing that building and protecting the nation is a duty to be upheld.

Furthermore, the article connects nationalism with Q.S. At-Tawbah [9]: 122, which, according to *Tafsīr al-Wāḍiḥ* by Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Ḥijāzī, underscores that the struggle to defend one's homeland can be pursued in multiple ways, including through knowledge and intellectual efforts.²⁶ NU Online highlights that this verse implies the importance of intellectual contributions in nation-building, alongside physical jihad, which often receives greater attention. In the context of nationalism, this interpretation provides a foundation for understanding that nation-building through education, preaching (*dakwah*), and moral reinforcement is a form of jihad that is equally important as armed struggle.

By referencing both classical and contemporary interpretations, NU Online constructs a narrative that nationalism has strong justification within Islamic teachings. The interpretation of nationalism-related verses in this article leans towards a contextual meaning, where Islamic values are linked to nationalism to strengthen collective identity and unity. However, this interpretation also reflects a particular ideological tendency that integrates nationalism as an essential aspect of religious life. This approach aligns with NU's characteristic emphasis on moderate Islam, where religion and love for one's homeland are not seen as contradictory but as complementary elements in building a harmonious civilization.

Contextualization vs. Distortion of Tafsir in Detik.com and NU Online

Nationalism Interpretation in Detik.Com and NU Online: Adaptive to Social Reality

24 NF, "3 Ayat Al-Qur'an tentang Nasionalisme,"

25 Supriyono, "Cinta Tanah Air, Berikut Dalil-dalil Nasionalisme dari Al-Qur'an dan Hadits," NU Online, 2024, <https://jabar.nu.or.id/syariah/cinta-tanah-air-berikut-dalil-dalil-nasionalisme-dari-al-qur-an-dan-hadits-jCNhL>.

26 NF, "3 Ayat Al-Qur'an tentang Nasionalisme."

In contemporary *tafsir* studies, the interpretation of Qur'anic verses often transforms in response to evolving social dynamics. The interpretations of nationalism in Islam presented by the two online media platforms, Detik.com and NU Online, reflect a hermeneutical approach that is adaptive to social realities. Both media outlets attempt to position nationalism within the Islamic framework by referring to Qur'anic verses and hadiths that emphasize the importance of love for one's homeland. However, despite sharing the same goal, their approaches reveal distinct tendencies. Detik.com emphasizes the connection between nationalism, freedom, and independence, whereas NU Online highlights the emotional and spiritual attachment of the people to their homeland.

Detik.com interprets nationalism in Islam by focusing on the concept of independence (*al-istiqlāl*) as freedom from all forms of oppression, both individually and collectively. In this approach, Q.S. Al-Isrā' [17]: 70 serves as a foundational reference, affirming that Allah has honored humankind by granting them freedom and the right to a prosperous life.²⁷ Detik.com also cites Q.S. Al-Mumtaḥanah [60]: 8, which, according to Quraish Shihab, illustrates that love for one's homeland is on par with defending religion. This approach frames nationalism as a collective struggle to uphold justice and resist oppression, aligning with the concept of *jihād fī sabilillāh*, which is frequently invoked in Islamic discourse on independence movements.²⁸

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the article on Detik.com demonstrates a strategic use of discourse to construct nationalism as an inherent part of Islamic teachings through the selective use of emotionally and symbolically charged Qur'anic verses and hadiths. The choice of diction, such as "independence," "colonialism," and "defending the homeland," forms an ideological framework that frames love for the nation as a religious obligation. However, from both textual and intertextual perspectives, there is a clear recontextualization of verses such as Q.S. Al-Isrā' [17]: 70 and Q.S. Al-Mumtaḥanah [60]: 8, which, in classical interpretations, emphasize human dignity and social relations rather than nationalism per se. Detik.com manipulates interpretive space by using these verses as discourse resources that affirm nationalistic ideological narratives. This reflects a power relationship in the production of meaning, where religious texts are transformed into moral legitimization tools for mobilizing collective national identity within a religious framework.

In contrast, NU Online presents a more complex narrative by referencing classical scholars such as Ismā'il Ḥaqqī al-Burūsawī and Wahbah al-Zuhaylī to support the claim that love for the homeland is part of faith. Through a discourse structure that places verses like Q.S. Al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 85 and Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]: 66 within emotional and spiritual contexts, NU Online constructs nationalism as a legitimate expression of religious belief. Nonetheless, this approach still contains ideological bias, as it employs contextual hermeneutics that obscure the original

27 Isnanto, "Ayat dan Hadits Tentang Kemerdekaan Serta Cinta Tanah Air."

28 M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an*, vol. 7 (Ciputat: Lentera, 2002), 133.

meanings of the verses in favor of affirming national values. In this context, religious texts are not merely communicative tools but hegemonic instruments that shape public perceptions of religion and the state. There is a discernible effort to integrate NU's moderate ideological project with Islamic symbols, which in practice risks oversimplifying the Qur'an's complex meanings and veering into strategic essentialism—namely, the instrumentalization of religious values to consolidate national identity within Indonesia's socio-political landscape.

On the other hand, NU Online presents an interpretation that places greater emphasis on emotional and spiritual attachment to the homeland. By citing Q.S. Al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 85, which, according to *Rūḥ al-Bayān*, suggests that love for one's homeland is part of faith, NU Online constructs a narrative in which nationalism is not only a political matter but also a human instinct that has theological justification.²⁹ This perspective is reinforced by hadiths demonstrating the Prophet Muhammad's love for Mecca and Medina, providing strong evidence that attachment to one's birthplace has a foundation in Islamic teachings. From this viewpoint, nationalism is regarded as an inherent expression of faith rather than merely a response to political situations.

Additionally, NU Online refers to Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]: 66 to emphasize the significance of the homeland in human life. In the interpretation of Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, this verse suggests that the command to leave one's homeland in dire circumstances is equated with the loss of life, highlighting the profound connection between people and their birthplace. Furthermore, Q.S. At-Tawbah [9]: 122 is used as a basis for asserting that nation-building efforts are not limited to physical struggle but also include contributions through knowledge and *dakwah* (preaching). Thus, NU Online's *tafsīr* tends to adopt a cultural and intellectual approach to understanding nationalism, contrasting with Detik.com's emphasis on political struggle and independence.

By referencing both classical and contemporary interpretations, the nationalism-related *tafsīr* developed by these two media outlets demonstrates that Islam has the flexibility to respond to social realities.³⁰ Detik.com's approach, which centers on independence, is more relevant in the historical context of national struggles, while NU Online's emphasis on emotional and intellectual attachment is more suitable for fostering nationalism in times of peace. These two interpretations are not contradictory but rather illustrate how Islamic teachings can adapt to changing times and the needs of the *ummah*. The *tafsīr* of nationalism presented by both media platforms affirms that Islam is not only concerned with individual obedience to God but also with social responsibility in building and preserving national identity.

Distortion in Tafsir: Deviation from Academic Methodology

Tafsīr of the Qur'an, as a scientific discipline, follows a rigorous and systematic methodology to ensure that the interpretation of a verse remains within legitimate

29 Ismā'il Ḥaqqī al-Burūsawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayān* (Kairo: Dār al-Miftah, 1897), 23.

30 Shihab, *Tafsīr Al-Misbah*, 7:45–6.

scholarly parameters. However, to construct a narrative of nationalism in Islam, the interpretations developed by Detik.com and NU Online exhibit tendencies toward distortion of established academic methodology. Both media outlets tend to adopt a selective approach in interpreting Qur'anic verses, emphasizing meanings that align with certain ideological constructions without conducting in-depth linguistic, historical, and contextual analysis. As a result, their interpretations become instrumental, serving as a tool for legitimizing a pre-constructed nationalist perspective rather than an objective study rooted in the fundamental principles of *tafsīr*.

One clear indication of distortion in the interpretation presented by Detik.com is the use of Q.S. Al-Isrā' [17]: 70 as the foundation for the concept of freedom and independence. This verse speaks about the honor of humanity in general without explicitly addressing political freedom or national sovereignty.³¹ In academic *tafsīr* studies, this verse is more frequently associated with the essence of human dignity and superiority over other creatures, rather than with the modern concept of nationalism. Similarly, the use of Q.S. Al-Mumtaḥanah [60]: 8 to justify that love for one's homeland is equivalent to defending religion represents an extension of meaning that lacks consensus among classical scholars.³² This interpretation appears apologetic and tends to overlook the verse's true objective, which focuses on tolerance in social relations rather than nationalism in a political context.

Meanwhile, the interpretation presented by NU Online also demonstrates a pattern of verse selection that disregards contextual meaning. The use of Q.S. Al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 85, which, according to *Ruhul Bayan*, suggests that love for one's homeland is part of faith, is an example of forcing a verse into a nationalist framework that is not inherently present in the text. This verse is more directly relevant to Allah's promise to the Prophet Muhammad (saw.) that he would return to Mecca, rather than being an affirmation of modern nationalism.³³ Additionally, the use of Q.S. An-Nisā' [4]: 66 to emphasize the importance of homeland in human life is problematic in an academic approach, as this verse specifically addresses the test of faith in the context of hijrah, not merely an emotional connection to one's birthplace. Such interpretations reflect a forced reinterpretation designed to support a pre-determined nationalist ideology.

Furthermore, the interpretations developed by both media outlets fail to consider the historical aspect in understanding the concept of nationalism in Islam. Nationalism itself is a modern political phenomenon that emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly within the nation-state framework. In classical Islamic history, identity was primarily based on religious and communal allegiance (*ummah*) rather than geographical boundaries, as understood in

31 M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan Al-Qur'an: Tafsir Maudhu'i atas Pelbagai Persoalan Umat* (Bandung: Mizan, 2000), 112–13.

32 Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Tafsir Al-Munir*, trans. Abdul Hayyie al Kattani (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2016), 68–69.

33 Ismā'il Ḥaqqī al-Burūsawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayān* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Thurāth al-'Arabī, 2001), 150–51.

modern nationalism. The *tafsīr* presented by Detik.com and NU Online neglects this historical reality and instead attempts to align Qur'anic verses with a concept that only emerged within the evolution of global political thought. This approach not only deviates from academic *tafsīr* methodology, which prioritizes historical analysis, but also risks producing an anachronistic and inaccurate understanding of the relationship between Islam and nationalism.

Due to these methodological distortions, the nationalism-focused *tafsīr* developed by Detik.com and NU Online is more ideological than academic, lacking the foundation of rigorous scholarly research. The approaches used by both media outlets do not adhere to the core principles of *tafsīr*, such as linguistic analysis, *asbābun nuzūl* (circumstances of revelation), and correlation with authentic hadiths. Instead, Qur'anic verses are selectively chosen and interpreted pragmatically to support a specific nationalist agenda, which may not necessarily align with interpretations recognized in either classical or contemporary scholarly *tafsīr*. Therefore, within serious academic discourse, interpretations that deviate from proper methodology should be critically examined to prevent misconceptions in understanding the relationship between Islam and nationalism.

The Impact of Detik.com and NU Online Interpretations on Public Understanding

In the digital era, online media plays a significant role in shaping public religious understanding, including issues of nationalism. However, when interpretations presented by media outlets such as Detik.com and NU Online disregard the proper methodology of *tafsīr*, the potential for distortion of meaning becomes significant. The selective interpretation of Qur'anic verses, as seen in the cases of Q.S. Al-Isrā' [17]: 70 and Q.S. Al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 85, can lead to a biased and disproportionate understanding of the sacred text in its original context.³⁴ A study by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd emphasizes that interpretation detached from linguistic and historical methods tends to become a tool for legitimizing certain ideologies, rather than an objective and academic understanding. This poses the risk of reductionist comprehension, where the public only perceives the Qur'an through the lens of political interests shaped by the media, rather than through the genuine Islamic scholarly tradition.³⁵

Moreover, ideological interpretations that disregard the strict methodology of *tafsīr* contribute to fragmentation in Islamic understanding within society. From the perspective of *tafsīr* hermeneutics, as proposed by Toshihiko Izutsu, understanding the Qur'an should be based on analyzing meaning within its historical context and its relationship to key Islamic concepts. When online media prioritizes nationalist narratives without considering the intertextuality of verses and *asbābun nuzūl*, meaning is oversimplified, resulting in a superficial and

34 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (Tafsīr al-Rāzī)* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1990), 200–201.

35 Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (London: Routledge, 2006), 102–3.

partial understanding among readers.³⁶ Consequently, the public does not gain a comprehensive insight into the relationship between Islam and nationalism within academic discourse, but rather an understanding shaped by ideological interests that do not always align with Islamic *tafsīr* epistemology.

Furthermore, distorted interpretations also impact the formation of uncritical religious attitudes within society. Fazlur Rahman, in his work on Islamic *tafsīr* methodology, emphasizes the importance of a rational approach to understanding the Qur'an to avoid falling into textual interpretations that do not align with their proper context.³⁷ When online media presents *tafsīr* pragmatically, adapting it to certain narratives, the public tends to passively accept such interpretations without further examination. In the long run, this erodes the Islamic scholarly tradition, which emphasizes a multidisciplinary approach in understanding sacred texts.³⁸ Therefore, academic critique of online media interpretations is crucial to ensure that Islamic understanding in society remains within the framework of valid *tafsīr* methodology.³⁹

Recommendations for Interpreters and Islamic Media

To prevent distortion in Qur'anic interpretation presented by Islamic media, it is necessary to apply valid *tafsīr* methodology and uphold academic commitment in interpreting Qur'anic verses. First, adhering to *tafsīr bil-ma'thūr*. Media and interpreters must base their interpretations on the Qur'an itself, authentic hadiths, and the understanding of the Companions and classical scholars. As emphasized by al-Suyūṭī in *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, this approach preserves the original meaning and prevents forced interpretations.⁴⁰ Second, applying a rigorous *tafsīr bil-ra'y*. In employing rational interpretation, the media must follow a systematic methodology based on scholarly *ijtihād*. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, in *Tafsīr al-Munīr*, underscores the need for caution in interpreting verses to avoid ideological biases that distort meaning.⁴¹ Third, using a holistic hermeneutic approach. Islamic media should implement a holistic hermeneutic method, as developed by Fazlur Rahman in *Islam and Modernity*. This requires historical analysis and intertextual examination of verses to arrive at a more contextual understanding.⁴²

Fourth, collaboration with academic institutions and scholars. Media outlets should work with credible Islamic scholars and academic institutions to ensure

36 Toshihiko Izutsu, *Intertextuality and the Qur'an: A Critical Examination* (Tokyo: International Islamic Publishing House, 2002), 45–50.

37 Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 112–15.

38 Rahman, 116.

39 Rahman, 120.

40 Imām al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2005), 78–82.

41 Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Tafsīr al-Munīr* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1991), 203–7.

42 Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 150–55.

that their interpretations are research-based rather than merely opinion-driven. Toshihiko Izutsu (2002), in *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*, asserts that a verse's meaning must be understood within the broader framework of Islamic values, rather than merely tailored to a specific narrative.⁴³ And fifth, educating the public on proper *tafsīr* methods. Islamic media should take an educational role, presenting academically based studies so that public understanding of Islam is not just pragmatic but also academically grounded. By implementing these steps, interpretative distortions can be minimized, and public comprehension of the Qur'an will be more objective and aligned with Islamic scholarly tradition.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Interpretation of nationalism in Islam presented by online media such as Detik.com and NU Online reveals methodological distortions that deviate from the principles of academic *tafsīr*. The interpretations offered are selective and instrumental, primarily aimed at constructing ideological narratives rather than adhering to the scientific principles established by classical and contemporary *mufasssīrūn*. This approach neglects linguistic analysis, historical context, and *asbābun nuzūl*, which should be fundamental in interpreting Qur'anic verses. As a result, public understanding of the relationship between Islam and nationalism becomes biased, creating anachronistic and inaccurate interpretations within Islamic theology. Therefore, Islamic media and interpreters must take greater responsibility by applying valid *tafsīr* methodologies, grounding their interpretations in credible academic research, and avoiding the exploitation of Qur'anic verses for specific ideological narratives. This ensures that Qur'anic interpretations remain scientific, accountable, and aligned with the scholarly traditions of Islam.

⁴³ Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (Tokyo: International Islamic Publishing House, 2002), 67–70.

⁴⁴ Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, 160–65.

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