

FRAGMENTED *IJTIHÂD* AND FATWA GOVERNANCE: A Progressive *Ijtihâd* Analysis of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI)

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Abstract: This article examines the configuration of *tajazzu' al-ijtihâd* (fragmented or partial *ijtihâd*) in the fatwa-making process of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia/MUI) and evaluates it through the theoretical lens of Progressive *Ijtihâd*. In the context of contemporary socio-religious complexities, Islamic legal reasoning can no longer rely solely on the capacity of individual jurists; rather, it requires specialization, multidisciplinary collaboration, and adaptive interpretive methodologies. This study employs a normative-comparative approach by analyzing MUI's Fatwa Determination Guidelines, thematic fatwas, classical theories of *ijtihâd*, and the epistemic framework of Progressive *Ijtihâd*. The findings reveal that MUI's institutional structure has, in principle, adopted a model of *tajazzu' al-ijtihâd* through commission-based specialization, thematic task allocation, and the inclusion of cross-disciplinary experts. However, epistemically, MUI's fatwa practices remain dominated by textual-normative tendencies, resulting in limited integration of empirical data, social analysis, and a comprehensive *maqâshid*-based assessment. Consequently, certain fatwas lack full responsiveness to social change and the practical needs of modern Muslim communities. This article concludes that realizing a truly progressive form of *ijtihâd* requires MUI to strengthen methodological consistency, increase the participation of non-*fiqh* experts, and adopt a problem-solving approach aligned with the objectives of *maqâshid al-syarî'ah*. These findings contribute to contemporary Islamic legal theory by elucidating the challenges and relevance of institutional *ijtihâd* in modern Muslim societies.

Keywords: *ijtihâd* progresif; *tajazzu' al-ijtihâd*; MUI; fatwa governance; metodologi hukum Islam.

Abstrak: Artikel ini menganalisis konfigurasi *tajazzu' al-ijtihâd* (*ijtihâd* terfragmentasi) dalam proses penetapan fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) serta mengevaluasinya melalui perspektif *Ijtihâd* Progresif. Di tengah kompleksitas sosial-keagamaan kontemporer, mekanisme *ijtihâd* tidak lagi dapat ditopang oleh kapasitas individual, tetapi memerlukan spesialisasi, kolaborasi multi-disipliner, dan metodologi interpretatif yang adaptif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan normatif-komparatif dengan menelaah Pedoman Penetapan Fatwa MUI, fatwa-fatwa tematik, teori *ijtihâd* klasik, dan konstruksi epistemik *Ijtihâd* Progresif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa struktur kelembagaan MUI pada dasarnya telah mengadopsi bentuk *tajazzu' al-ijtihâd* melalui pembagian komisi, penugasan tematik, dan keterlibatan ahli lintas disiplin. Namun, secara epistemik, praktik *ijtihâd* MUI masih didominasi oleh pendekatan tekstual-normatif sehingga kurang mengintegrasikan data empiris, analisis sosial, serta pertimbangan *maqâshid* secara komprehensif. Hal ini mengakibatkan fatwa-fatwa tertentu tidak sepenuhnya responsif terhadap perubahan sosial dan kebutuhan masyarakat modern. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahwa untuk mewujudkan *ijtihâd* yang progresif, MUI perlu memperkuat konsistensi metodologis, memperluas partisipasi ahli non-fikih, serta mengadopsi pendekatan berbasis *problem solving* yang sejalan dengan prinsip *maqâshid al-syarî'ah*. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pengembangan teori hukum Islam kontemporer, terutama dalam memahami relevansi dan tantangan *ijtihâd* institusional di negara Muslim modern.

Keywords: *ijtihâd* progresif; fragmentasi *ijtihâd*; MUI; tata kelola fatwa; metodologi hukum Islam.

Introduction

The debate on the nature, scope, and methodology of *ijtihād* has long shaped the intellectual landscape of Islamic legal thought. Historically conceived as the highest form of juristic exertion (*istinbâth al-ahkâm*) performed by scholars possessing comprehensive mastery over the sources, *ijtihād* has evolved considerably in modern contexts.¹ Among its most understudied yet increasingly relevant dimensions is *tajazzu' al-ijtihād*—the idea that *ijtihād* can be undertaken partially or in specialized domains rather than comprehensively across the entirety of Islamic jurisprudence.² Classical legal theorists such as al-Ghazâlî,³ al-'Izz ibn 'Abd al-Salâm, and Ibn al-Qayyim⁴ recognized that juristic knowledge is inherently differentiated and that scholars may attain competence in some legal fields but not others. In this view, partial *ijtihād* is not a concession to contemporary limitations but an epistemologically grounded principle that aligns with the nature of human knowledge.

In modernity, *tajazzu'* has gained renewed importance. The rapid expansion of scientific knowledge, the emergence of new fields such as biotechnology, digital finance, and environmental ethics, and the increasing interconnection between religious norms and state governance have transformed the landscape in which Islamic law is practiced.⁵ The complexity of these issues makes it implausible for any individual jurist, no matter how learned, to independently command all relevant disciplines.⁶ This

shift reinforces the necessity of specialization, expert collaboration, and cross-disciplinary methods—an epistemic posture that echoes the logic of partial *ijtihād*.⁷ Contemporary Islamic legal theory, particularly within frameworks such as Progressive *Ijtihād*,⁸ increasingly demands an approach that integrates textual fidelity with contextual awareness and empirical reasoning. Thus, *tajazzu' al-ijtihād* becomes essential not only as a technical legal concept but also as a methodological paradigm capable of addressing the socio-legal challenges of the modern world.

In Indonesia, the most prominent institutional embodiment of contemporary *ijtihād* is the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI). Established in 1975, MUI functions as the national authority for issuing fatwas, mediating religious disputes, and providing normative guidance for public life. Its fatwas influence state policy, commercial regulation, halal certification, financial systems, public health directives, and socio-moral issues. Over time, MUI has developed a structured institutional mechanism that embodies the principles of partial *ijtihād*. Fatwa deliberations are conducted through thematic commissions—*Komisi Fatwa*, *Komisi Hukum dan Perundang-undangan*, *Komisi Pengkajian*, *Komisi Ekonomi Syariah*, and others—reflecting a division of labor according to scholarly expertise.⁹ The *Pedoman Penetapan Fatwa* issued in 2012 further institutionalizes this structure by outlining procedural guidelines for consultation, deliberation, expert engagement, and fatwa formulation.

At the structural level, this division of labor closely aligns with the logic of *tajazzu' al-ijtihād*—where legal reasoning is conducted not by an idealized solitary *mujtahid*, but by a collectivity of scholars specializing in distinct fields. Many of MUI's contemporary fatwas—such as those addressing cryptocurrency, vaccines,

¹ Rahim Mustafa, “Masalah Tajazzu' Al-Ijtihad: Nash'atuha Wa Tatawwuruha Fi Kutub Ushul Al-Fiqh,” *Al-Majallah al-Jaza'iriyah li al-Buhuth al-'Ilmiyah wa al-Taqqiyah* 7, no. 2 (2023): 470.

² Hasan bin Hamid al-Usaymi, “Tajazzu' Al-Ijtihad Wa 'Alaqatuhu Bi Al-Nawazil (Dirasah Usuliyyah),” *Majallat Abhath* 20, no. 20 (2020): 128–161.

³ al-Ghazali, *Al-Mustashfa Min Illm Al-Ushul*, vol. 4 (Madinah: Syirkah al-Madinah al-Munawwarah Lil al-Thabaah, 2008), 389.

⁴ Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jauziyah, *I'lam Al-Muwaqqi'in 'an Rabb Al-'Alamin*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1996), 166.

⁵ Musthafa Rahim, “Fragmentation of Independent Reasoning (Ijtihad), Its Inception, and Its Development in the Books of Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence,” *Majalah Abhath* 7, no. 2 (2022): 470–482.

⁶ Musthafa Rahim, Nirhamna Hanif Fadillah, and others, “Comparative Study of Ijtihad Methods Between Ahlussunnah

and Syi'ah,” *Tasfiyah* 7, no. 1 (2022): 91.

⁷ Fuady Abdullah, “Independensi Dari Mazhab: Ijtihad Dalam Perspektif Al-Shawkani,” *Al-Mashlahah* 9, no. 2 (2021): 258–263.

⁸ Yusdani, “Islamic Law and Contemporary Challenges from Fresh Ijtihad Point of View,” *Jurnal Hukum Islam* 20, no. 1 (2022): 113–135.

⁹ H Tohir, *Fatwa MUI Dalam Perspektif Hukum Nasional Dan Internasional* (Jakarta: Pustaka Prima, 2019).

digital transactions, environmental conservation, and biomedical ethics—require interdisciplinary expertise that extends far beyond classical *fiqh* categories.¹⁰ MUI acknowledges this complexity by permitting the inclusion of external experts (*khubara'*) from fields such as medicine, economics, digital technology, and environmental science.

Yet, this structural conformity to the principle of partial *ijtihād* raises deeper epistemological questions about whether MUI's methodological practice is consistent with the demands of contemporary Islamic legal reasoning, especially through the lens of Progressive *Ijtihād*.

Although MUI has formally adopted a commission-based model that reflects *tajazzu'*, epistemic challenges persist within its fatwa-making process. The *Pedoman Penetapan Fatwa* merely states that experts “may be invited” (*dapat menghadirkan ahli*)—rendering interdisciplinary expertise optional rather than integral. As a result, the degree of contextualization varies significantly across fatwas. In many cases, the final legal reasoning remains predominantly textual, relying heavily on classical jurisprudential precedents without robust engagement with empirical realities or the scientific dimensions of contemporary problems.¹¹

This poses a methodological tension when viewed through the framework of Progressive *Ijtihād*, which emphasizes: Contextual analysis of socio-historical realities, Integration of empirical and scientific data, Interdisciplinary collaboration as a methodological necessity, *maqâshid*-oriented reasoning prioritizing welfare and justice, A dynamic, problem-solving orientation.

While MUI's structure accommodates specialization, its epistemic approach often retains traditionalist characteristics that limit the transformative potential of partial *ijtihād*. This raises critical questions: Does MUI's adoption of *tajazzu'*

merely reflect organizational convenience, or does it represent a deeper epistemological shift toward progressive legal reasoning? And how consistent is the application of partial *ijtihād* within the fatwa-making process?

Several studies have examined aspects of *ijtihād*, fatwa governance, and MUI's institutional role, but important gaps remain. First, studies on *tajazzu' al-ijtihād* have primarily focused on its classical doctrinal foundations. Scholars have explored whether partial *ijtihād* is permissible, how classical jurists conceptualized the fragmentation of expertise, and its implications for legal authority. However, these works remain largely theoretical and do not analyze how *tajazzu'* operates within contemporary fatwa institutions, particularly in Indonesia.¹² Second, research on MUI has tended to emphasize sociopolitical aspects—such as its institutional authority, its relationship with the state, and the socio-political impact of its fatwas. While this scholarship highlights MUI's influence on public policy, it does not examine the internal epistemic logic guiding its fatwa methodology.¹³ Third, a growing body of literature discusses Progressive *Ijtihād*, focusing on its theoretical propositions related to contextualization, *maqâshid*, and reform.¹⁴ However, these studies do not explore how its principles might be applied within institutional fatwa governance or how they align with the practical mechanisms of partial *ijtihād*. Fourth, comparative studies examining fatwa institutions in other Muslim-majority countries—such as Malaysia's National Fatwa Council, Egypt's Dâr al-Iftâ', or the Kuwaiti Fatwa Council—have identified varying levels of interdisciplinarity and methodological consistency.¹⁵

¹² Ahmad Qorib, *Pluralitas Kebenaran Ijtihad: Telaah Terhadap Model Perbandingan Mazhab Fikih Versi Imam Sya'rani* (Bandung: Citapustaka Media, 2008); Musthafa Sa'id Al-Khin, *Abhast Ushul Al-Fiqh Al-Islamiy Tarikhuhu Wa Tathowwuru* (Damascus: Dar al-Kalam al-Taib, 2000).

¹³ Ahmad Zakaria Syahida Amali and Fairuz Sabiq, “Analisis Metode Penetapan Hukum Bitcoin (Studi Fatwa MUI),” *J-Alif* 8, no. 1 (2023).

¹⁴ D Rahmawati, *Teori Hukum Progresif Dan Implementasinya* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2021).

¹⁵ Qorib, *Pluralitas Kebenaran Ijtihad: Telaah Terhadap Model Perbandingan Mazhab Fikih Versi Imam Sya'rani*.

¹⁰ Abu Saiful, *Fatwa MUI: Pengaruh Dan Implementasinya* (Jakarta: Lembaga Kajian Islam, 2018).

¹¹ Ahmad Badrut Tamam, “Kedudukan Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Dan Fatwa Dewan Syariah Nasional (DSN) Dalam Sistem Hukum Indonesia,” *Al-Musthofa* 4, no. 1 (2021).

Yet, little research directly compares these findings to the Indonesian context or assesses how MUI's model aligns with global trends in Islamic legal institutionalization.

Taken together, these four categories of prior research reveal a substantial gap: no study has systematically examined the alignment between MUI's structural adoption of partial *ijtihad* and the methodological requirements of Progressive *Ijtihad* as a contemporary legal framework. Furthermore, there is insufficient scholarly attention to how partial *ijtihad* influences fatwa coherence, methodological rigor, and the responsiveness of Islamic legal institutions to modern societal challenges.

This research is therefore positioned to bridge these gaps by offering a dual-level examination: (1) a structural analysis of how *tajazzu' al-ijtihad* is configured institutionally within MUI, and (2) an epistemological analysis assessing whether MUI's fatwa method aligns with the principles of Progressive *Ijtihad*.

Based on this gap, the present study has three main objectives: to explain the conceptual foundation of *tajazzu' al-ijtihad* and its relevance to contemporary Islamic legal methodology, to analyze how the structure and practice of fatwa-making within MUI operationalize partial *ijtihad*, to evaluate the alignment between MUI's application of partial *ijtihad* and the principles of Progressive *Ijtihad*, particularly regarding interdisciplinarity, contextual analysis, and *maqâshid*-oriented reasoning.

These objectives integrate theoretical, structural, and epistemological dimensions, thereby capturing the full spectrum of issues surrounding *ijtihad* fragmentation and fatwa governance.

The intersection of *tajazzu' al-ijtihad* and Progressive *Ijtihad* represents a promising pathway for renewing the methodological foundations of fatwa governance in Indonesia. MUI, as the country's central fatwa institution, occupies a pivotal role in shaping religious norms and public policy. While it has structurally adopted mechanisms consistent with partial *ijtihad*, significant epistemological challenges remain regarding methodological consistency,

interdisciplinarity, and social responsiveness. This study aims to address these challenges by analyzing the extent to which MUI's fatwa methodology aligns with the demands of Progressive *Ijtihad* and by offering a refined epistemic framework for future institutional practice.

Method

This study adopts a normative legal research design (doctrinal legal research),¹⁶ which focuses on examining legal norms, authoritative texts, and institutional fatwa documents through a structured and interpretive analysis. The research relies on a combination¹⁷ of the case approach—analyzing selected MUI fatwas related to contemporary issues requiring specialized reasoning—and the comparative approach, in which MUI's fatwa determination mechanisms are compared with classical theories of *tajazzu' al-ijtihad*, Progressive *Ijtihad*, and fatwa governance models in other Muslim-majority countries. Legal materials used in this study include: (1) primary legal sources, such as the MUI Fatwa Guidelines (2012), the Compendium of MUI Fatwas, classical jurisprudential texts like *Al-Mushthashfâ*, and contemporary methodological works; (2) secondary materials, including books on legal theory, academic articles, and research reports; and (3) non-legal materials such as texts on politics, economics, sociology, census data, and dictionaries, which support interdisciplinary understanding in line with the epistemic demands of Progressive *Ijtihad*. The collection of these materials is conducted through library research, document analysis, and archival study, which together ensure the comprehensiveness and reliability of the data.

The collected materials are then processed through several stages—inventory, identification, classification, and systematization—to create a coherent analytical structure and avoid contradictions across legal sources. Analytical techniques employed

¹⁶ Muhaimin, *Metode Penelitian Hukum*, Mataram University Press, vol. 1 (Mataram University Press, 2020), 45.

¹⁷ Muhaimin, *Metode Penelitian Hukum*, Mataram University Press.

include grammatical, systematic, comparative, and teleological interpretation, allowing the study to assess how MUI operationalizes partial *ijtihād* in its fatwa governance and to what extent its methods align with the objectives of modern Islamic legal reasoning. These interpretive methods also help detect potential gaps, such as inconsistencies, normative ambiguities, or insufficient interdisciplinary integration. Finally, conclusions are drawn using both deductive reasoning, moving from general jurisprudential principles to specific assessments of MUI's methodology, and inductive reasoning, identifying patterns within MUI's fatwa practices to formulate broader conclusions about the coherence of its epistemic framework. Together, these methodological choices ensure that the research is analytically rigorous, conceptually grounded, and capable of providing a comprehensive evaluation of *tajazzu' al-ijtihād* within Indonesia's contemporary fatwa governance landscape.

Result and Discussions

Epistemic Structure of *Tajazzu' al- Ijtihād* in Classical and Contemporary Islamic Legal Thought

The concept of *tajazzu' al-ijtihād*, commonly translated as partial or fragmented *ijtihād*, represents one of the most important yet understudied dimensions of Islamic legal epistemology.¹⁸ While classical discourse on *ijtihād* often portrays the *mujtahid* as a scholar possessing encyclopedic mastery over all domains of Islamic law, many jurists recognized the epistemic reality that no scholar, regardless of intellectual capacity, could attain absolute and exhaustive mastery over the entire corpus of sharia.¹⁹ Emerging from this recognition was *tajazzu' al-ijtihād*, a doctrine that permits jurists to exercise *ijtihād* within specific areas of expertise, provided they meet the methodological, linguistic, and analytical requirements relevant to

those domains.²⁰ This epistemic structure—deeply rooted in classical *uṣūl al-fiqh* and later refined by modern scholars—forms the theoretical foundation for understanding contemporary institutional fatwa practices, including those of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI).²¹

Prominent classical scholars such as al-Ghazālī, al-Rāzī, al-Āmidī,²² Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn al-Qayyim explicitly acknowledged the permissibility and inevitability of partial *ijtihād*. Some early jurists insisted that a *mujtahid* must possess comprehensive mastery across all jurisprudential domains (*mujtahid mutlaq*), but this represented an ideal rather than a sociological reality. Al-Ghazālī, in *al-Mustasfā*, emphasized that specialist competence within a specific legal field is sufficient for issuing sound legal reasoning in that domain, as long as the jurist understands the relevant textual evidences and principles of deduction. Similarly, al-Rāzī argued that legal knowledge is inherently differentiated (*mutaqassim*) and that human capacity naturally varies across fields; thus, a jurist may excel in legal maxims yet not in hadith criticism, or possess strong linguistic analysis but limited knowledge in financial transactions.

Ibn Taymiyyah²³ and Ibn al-Qayyim provided the strongest classical endorsement for partial *ijtihād*. For them, the essence of *ijtihād* is not the possession of total legal omniscience but the ability to reach a correct judgment through disciplined reasoning. Ibn al-Qayyim went further by asserting that jurists are obligated (*wājib*) to issue *ijtihād* within their domain of expertise and forbidden (*harām*) from issuing legal opinions in areas beyond their competence. This ethical dimension is central: partial *ijtihād* is not merely permissible but necessary to prevent error and misconduct. These classical articulations

²⁰ Muhammad Abduh, *Al-Islam Wa Al-Nasraniyya Ma'a Al-'Ilm Wa Al-Madaniyya* (Cairo: Al-Manar, 1902).

²¹ B Syafii, "Ijtihad Dan Fatwa: Suatu Analisis Terhadap Fatwa MUI," *Jurnal Hukum Islam* 18, no. 1 (2023).

²² al-Amidi, *Al-Ihkam Fi Ushul Al-Ahkam* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1404).

²³ Ibn Taimiyyah, *Majmu Fatawa*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Arabiyyah, 1398), 18.

¹⁸ Muhammad bin Makram Ibn Manzhur, *Lisan Al-Arab*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar ash-Shadir, n.d.), 45.

¹⁹ Siradjuddin Abbas, *Sejarah Dan Keagungan Madzhab Syafi'i* (Jakarta: Pustaka, 2006).

demonstrate that *tajazzu'* is not an aberration from the ideal model of Islamic jurisprudence but part of its epistemological DNA.

The development of *tajazzu'* led scholars to refine categories of *mujtahid* based on scope and competency. While earlier theories recognized broad categories such as *mujtahid mutlaq* (absolute jurist) and *mujtahid fi al-madhab* (jurist within a school), later jurists proposed finer distinctions,²⁴ such as *Mujtahid fi masâ'il mu'ayyanah*, *Mujtahid fi bâb min al-abwâb*, *Mujtahid fi madhab mu'ayyan*, *Mujtahid fi al-fatwâ*.

These categories reflect classical scholars' recognition that competency varies across individuals and that *ijtihâd* is not a monolithic activity. Specialization became increasingly prominent as legal complexity expanded.²⁵ A scholar proficient in inheritance law may not be equally competent in criminal matters; a hadith expert may not possess deep knowledge of economic transactions. Hence, *tajazzu'* aligns with human cognitive limitations, acknowledging that knowledge is both fragmented and domain-specific.

Crucially, the validity of partial *ijtihâd* does not diminish the authority of the jurist. Classical scholars held that a specialist *mujtahid* is equally authoritative within their field as a comprehensive *mujtahid mutlaq*, because the validity of *ijtihâd* derives from methodological correctness rather than breadth of expertise.²⁶ This principle forms the theoretical bridge to contemporary fatwa institutions, where specialization is structurally embedded.

The transformation of modern life has heightened the necessity of partial *ijtihâd*. Technological advancements, scientific discoveries, biomedical innovations, digital finance, environmental ethics, and global socio-economic shifts have created legal problems unimaginable to classical jurists.²⁷ No

individual scholar today can master all the knowledge required to address modern fatwa questions. Consequently, *tajazzu'* naturally evolves into both specialization and multidisciplinary collaboration.²⁸

Contemporary issues such as cryptocurrency, artificial intelligence, stem cell research, climate engineering, or digital banking require expertise not only in classical jurisprudence but also in economics, computer science, medicine, and environmental studies. This necessity aligns with the methodological premise of Progressive *Ijtihâd*, which mandates empirical grounding, contextual understanding, and engagement with contemporary sciences.²⁹ In this modern setting, *tajazzu' al-ijtihâd* becomes not merely an option but an epistemic requirement for ensuring accuracy, justice, and relevance of legal rulings.³⁰

Modern scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Jasser Auda, Muhammad Hashim Kamali, and contemporary Indonesian scholars including Al-Yasa' Abubakar have emphasized that *ijtihâd* today must be collective (*ijtihâd jamâ'i*), interdisciplinary, and sensitive to the complexity of modern realities.³¹ Their writings echo classical insights while expanding the methodological framework to incorporate empirical research, systems thinking, and *maqâshid*-oriented reasoning.³²

Therefore, the transformation of *tajazzu'* from a classical possibility into a modern necessity is driven by exponential growth of scientific knowledge, fragmentation of expertise, complexity of legal-

(MUI) Dan Fatwa Dewan Syariah Nasional (DSN) Dalam Sistem Hukum Indonesia."

²⁸ Amali and Sabiq, "Analisis Metode Penetapan Hukum Bitcoin (Studi Fatwa MUI)."

²⁹ M Al-Khatib, "Contemporary Ijtihad, Ethics and Modernity," *Journal of Islamic Ethics* 3, no. 2 (n.d.).

³⁰ Yusefri Yusefri, Mu'adil Faizin, and Wahyu Abdul Jafar, "Protecting Child Labor Rights: Maqasid Sharia Framework and Policy Recommendations," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 2 (July 31, 2024): 1188, <https://jurnal.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/samarah/article/view/24559>.

³¹ Rupi'i Amri, "Dinamika Ijtihad Pada Masa Taklid Dan Kemunduran," *Tarjih* 16, no. 1 (2019).

³² Zainuddin Syarif and Abd Hannan, "Fundamentalism and the Challenges of Religious Moderation in the New Normal Era," *Madania: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* 25, no. 1 (2021): 1.

²⁴ Al Yasa' Abu Bakar, *Metode Istislahiah: Pemanfaatan Ilmu Pengetahuan Dalam Ushul Fiqh* (Jakarta: Prenada Media Group, 2016).

²⁵ Halimatus Adiah and Irwansyah, "Urgensi Ijtihad Di Era Kontemporer," *Jurnal Cerdas Hukum* 2, no. 2 (2024).

²⁶ Ibn Rushd, *Bidayat Al-Mujtahid Wa Nihayat Al-Muqtasid* Vol 2 (Kairo: Dar al-Hadith, 1995).

²⁷ Tamam, "Kedudukan Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia

ethical dilemmas, the institutionalization of fatwa bodies, and the sociopolitical role of fatwas in policy and governance.³³

The Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) represents an institutional embodiment of the epistemic logic of partial *ijtihād*. Structurally, MUI divides its fatwa work into thematic commissions—fatwa, law and legislation, food and health, economics, environment, and others. This division is a direct application of *tajazzu'*, allocating fatwa deliberation to scholars with domain-specific expertise. Moreover, the *Pedoman Penetapan Fatwa MUI* explicitly allows the inclusion of external experts (*khubara'*) from medicine, economics, digital technology, and environmental science.³⁴

Table 1. Configuration Mirrors Classical Insights in Several Ways

Classical Insight	Contemporary Institutional Parallel (MUI)
Specialization is legitimate	Commissions divided by thematic clusters
Competence must match domain	Scholars selected by expertise (<i>fiqh</i> , economics, medicine)
Consultation with experts encouraged	External specialists invited to provide empirical data
Partial <i>ijtihād</i> yields binding reasoning	Commission fatwas authoritative within MUI structure

However, the relevance of *tajazzu'* for MUI is not merely structural; it is epistemological. The institution must not only divide tasks but also ensure that fatwa reasoning incorporates: empirical evidence, multidisciplinary consultation, policy impact assessment, and *maqāshid*-driven objectives.³⁵

The challenge, as explored in subsequent sections of the dissertation, lies in whether MUI consistently actualizes this epistemic requirement.

While its structural model aligns with *tajazzu'*, its epistemic method often remains heavily textual, with interdisciplinary input positioned as optional rather than essential.³⁶

Thus, understanding the theoretical foundations of *tajazzu' al-ijtihād* provides the critical lens through which MUI's fatwa methodology can later be evaluated—particularly regarding alignment with Progressive *Ijtihād*, methodological completeness, and responsiveness to contemporary challenges.

Fatwa Governance of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) and the Institutional Manifestation of Partial *Ijtihād*

The Indonesian Council of Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) represents one of the most systematically organized fatwa institutions in the Muslim world, embodying a hybrid epistemological structure that merges classical juristic principles with modern institutional governance. As a national umbrella body comprising diverse Islamic organizations and scholarly backgrounds, MUI functions not merely as a religious authority but also as a socio-legal institution whose fatwas influence public policy, state regulations, and Muslim daily life.³⁷ Within this institutional configuration, the concept of *tajazzu' al-ijtihād*—partial or fragmented *ijtihād*—finds a concrete manifestation in the way fatwa responsibilities are distributed and how legal reasoning is conducted.

Classical jurists conceptualized *tajazzu'* as the acknowledgment that *ijtihād* competence can validly be restricted to specific fields, and contemporary circumstances have reinforced the necessity of this model. MUI's fatwa governance reflects this epistemological orientation through its structural specialization, collective deliberation, and periodic integration of interdisciplinary expertise. However, while structurally aligned with *tajazzu'*, the epistemic actualization of partial *ijtihād* within MUI remains

³³ Andrizal and others, "Ijtihad Bayani Sebagai Metode Penemuan Hukum Islam," *Jurnal Hukum Respublica* 22, no. 2 (2023).

³⁴ Reza Aslam, "Islamic Financial Instruments: An Ijtihad Approach," *Journal of Islamic Economics* 12, no. 2 (2022).

³⁵ Samiji Asri, "Apakah Mungkin Pada Masa Yang Akan Datang Lahir Seorang Mujtahid?," *Journal of Islamic and Law Studies* 5, no. 1 (2021).

³⁶ Fathurrahman Azhari, "Perjalanan Ijtihad Dalam Perkembangan Fikih," *Syariah* 14, no. 1 (2019).

³⁷ Azhari Akmal Tarigan and others, *45 Tahun MUI Kota Medan Berkhidmah Untuk Umat* (Medan: Merdeka Kreasi, 2021).

uneven, revealing both strengths and methodological limitations that require critical evaluation.³⁸

To understand the institutional manifestation of *tajazzu'*, one must first examine MUI's organizational architecture. The Fatwa Commission, which forms the core of MUI's juristic authority, is divided into several thematic clusters corresponding to different domains of Islamic law, such as doctrinal matters (*masâ'il dīniyyah*), national issues (*masâ'il wathaniyyah*), contemporary jurisprudential questions (*masâ'il fiqhiyyah mu'âshirah*), Islamic economics, halal certification and food regulation, biomedical-ethical concerns, and socio-environmental issues.³⁹

Each cluster is handled by scholars whose expertise aligns with the domain under discussion, thereby institutionalizing specialization as the normative framework for fatwa deliberation. This structure reflects the classical understanding of *ijtihād* as a differentiated activity: no single *mujtahid*—no matter how knowledgeable—possesses total mastery over all fields of Islamic jurisprudence. Instead, classical scholars such as al-Ghazâlî, al-Râzî, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn al-Qayyim emphasized that scholars could legitimately perform *ijtihād* in limited areas provided they possessed methodological competence within those domains. MUI's thematic clustering thus operationalizes this classical insight in a modern institutional context, dividing the vast terrain of Islamic law into manageable and specialized subfields.⁴⁰

MUI's fatwa-making process is guided by its 2012 *Pedoman Penetapan Fatwa*, a detailed regulatory document outlining the methods and procedures for issuing fatwas. This guideline structures the fatwa process into several interrelated stages: identification of legal issues, compilation of textual and empirical evidence, preliminary internal discussions, expert consultation when required, deliberative debate within the Fatwa Commission, drafting and review

of the fatwa text, and final ratification by MUI leadership. Although deeply rooted in the classical juristic tradition of *bahth al-masâ'il* (scholarly deliberation), this process is also influenced by principles of modern regulatory governance, such as documentation, transparency, and procedural standardization.⁴¹ The combination of classical and modern elements makes MUI an example of what scholars term a hybrid fatwa institution—neither fully traditional nor completely bureaucratic, but a negotiated synthesis of both.

Central to MUI's institutional practice is the principle of specialization as a form of *tajazzu'*. In practice, jurists with expertise in specific areas tend to handle fatwas related to their specialization.⁴² For example, scholars trained in *mu'âmalât* (commercial law) lead deliberations on Islamic finance and fintech issues; jurists familiar with biomedical jurisprudence contribute prominently to fatwas concerning vaccines, organ transplantation, reproductive technologies, or pharmaceutical ethics; and experts in *fiqh al-bi'ah* (environmental jurisprudence) participate in deliberations on environmental degradation, climate impacts, or conservation.⁴³ MUI's division of labor thus reflects the epistemological reality that legal issues increasingly intersect with scientific, economic, medical, and technological knowledge, making specialization not only desirable but necessary for producing sound legal reasoning. This form of *tajazzu'*—*ijtihād* restricted to a domain of expertise—mirrors the classical category of *mujtahid fî bâb min al-abwâb*, a jurist competent to issue legal opinions within a particular field, while acknowledging limitations beyond it.

Beyond internal specialization, MUI also institutionalizes *tajazzu'* through the selective inclusion of external experts (*khubara'*). The 2012 guidelines explicitly state that fatwa deliberations may involve professionals from fields such as medicine, economics, engineering, environmental

³⁸ A Hasyim, "Peran Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Dalam Konteks Hukum Nasional," *Jurnal Hukum dan Syariah* 19, no. 2 (2023).

³⁹ S Mustafa, "Peran MUI Dalam Menyikapi Isu Kontemporer Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Hukum dan Syariah* 22, no. 2 (2024).

⁴⁰ Rahma Puspita, *Kedudukan Fatwa MUI Dalam Konteks Hukum Nasional* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 2022).

⁴¹ Saiful, *Fatwa MUI: Pengaruh Dan Implementasinya*.

⁴² Syafii, "Ijtihad Dan Fatwa: Suatu Analisis Terhadap Fatwa MUI."

⁴³ M Syahrini, "Kedudukan Fatwa MUI Dalam Sistem Hukum Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 16, no. 2 (2024).

science, or digital technology.⁴⁴ This acknowledgment marks a significant epistemic evolution: the fatwa is not treated merely as a product of textual analysis but as a form of multidisciplinary reasoning informed by empirical evidence and scientific expertise. Complex fatwas—such as those on cryptocurrency, vaccines, environmental damage, bioengineering, or *halal* industrial processes—have required input from technical specialists who provide empirical data, laboratory findings, legal-economic analyses, or technological explanations. In this manner, MUI operationalizes the classical principle that *ijtihād* must be grounded in accurate knowledge of the subject matter (*maʿrifat al-waqiʿ*), an idea emphasized by Ibn al-Qayyim and later expanded by modern scholars advocating Progressive *Ijtihād*.⁴⁵

However, despite this structural resemblance to *tajazzuʿ*, MUI's practice reveals epistemic limitations. First, expert involvement in fatwa deliberation is framed as optional rather than mandatory. The guidelines use permissive language ("may invite experts") rather than obligatory phrasing, resulting in inconsistent implementation.⁴⁶ In some fatwas, expert testimony forms a core component of the deliberation, while in others—especially those concerning highly technical financial or environmental issues—empirical or scientific analysis remains limited. This optional character stands in contrast to the demands of contemporary legal issues, which increasingly require interdisciplinary knowledge for sound judgment. Second, although MUI's structural organization reflects specialization, its epistemological approach still tends to privilege textual-normative reasoning over empirical contextualization. Many fatwas remain primarily anchored in scriptural evidence, classical juristic opinions, and normative analogies (*qiyās*), with limited incorporation of empirical

data or contemporary research methodologies.⁴⁷ This imbalance reduces the epistemic potential of *tajazzuʿ* by underutilizing the expertise necessary for addressing modern complexities.

Several case studies from MUI illustrate the practical manifestation of *tajazzuʿ* within a collective framework. The fatwa on cryptocurrency, for instance, involved jurists specializing in commercial law alongside financial economists and blockchain experts. This integrated deliberation reflects a sophisticated form of partial *ijtihād* in which domain-specific expertise was central to the legal reasoning. Similarly, the fatwa on Covid-19 vaccines required the involvement of epidemiologists, medical researchers, and pharmaceutical scientists, whose contributions shaped the fatwa's assessment of vaccine safety, efficacy, and *halal* status. Environmental fatwas, such as those addressing pollution, deforestation, or ecosystem damage, similarly involved collaboration between scholars knowledgeable in environmental jurisprudence and technical experts in environmental science. These cases illustrate that MUI's fatwa governance possesses the institutional capacity to actualize *tajazzuʿ* in practice, especially when dealing with issues that clearly exceed the expertise of purely juristic scholars.

Yet, the partial and inconsistent nature of this integration underscores a deeper structural gap. While MUI has successfully institutionalized specialization through thematic commissions and periodically engages experts on technical issues, it has not fully integrated multidisciplinary research as a mandatory component of fatwa formulation. Unlike some international fatwa bodies—such as Malaysia's National Fatwa Council or Egypt's Dār al-Iftāʾ, which have research units dedicated to generating empirical reports prior to deliberation—MUI does not consistently produce or require scientific research before issuing a fatwa. Consequently, the manifestation of *tajazzuʿ* within MUI remains incomplete: structurally present but epistemologically underdeveloped.

⁴⁴ Tohir, *Fatwa MUI Dalam Perspektif Hukum Nasional Dan Internasional*.

⁴⁵ al-Qayyim al-Jauziyah, *Iʿlam Al-Muwaqqiʿin ʿan Rabb Al-ʿAlamin*, vol. 4, p. .

⁴⁶ Ilyas Supena, "Konstruksi Epistemologi Fikih Pandemi: Analisis Fatwa-Fatwa MUI," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 15, no. 1 SE-ARTICLES (June 11, 2021): 121–136, <https://ejournal.uinsaizu.ac.id/index.php/almanahij/article/view/4203>.

⁴⁷ Tamam, "Kedudukan Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Dan Fatwa Dewan Syariah Nasional (DSN) Dalam Sistem Hukum Indonesia."

Despite its limitations, the significance of *tajazzu'* for MUI cannot be overstated. Partial *ijtihad* enables MUI to address complex modern issues that classical jurists could not have foreseen, such as digital currencies, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, climate change, industrial food systems, and global health crises. It provides a methodological justification for integrating expert knowledge into juristic deliberation and supports the adaptation of Islamic legal reasoning to the demands of contemporary life. Moreover, it aligns MUI with global trends in Islamic legal institutions, which increasingly rely on collective *ijtihad*, specialization, and multidisciplinary collaboration to produce relevant and authoritative fatwas.⁴⁸

In conclusion, MUI's fatwa governance demonstrates both the potential and the challenges of institutionalizing *tajazzu' al-ijtihad*. The structural division of labor and the selective integration of experts reflect a sophisticated adaptation of classical juristic theory to modern administrative realities. However, the epistemic application remains uneven, hindered by optional expert involvement, overreliance on textual-normative methods, and limited use of empirical research. These features signal the need for deeper methodological reform—an issue that will be critically evaluated through the lens of Progressive *Ijtihad* in the subsequent section of this dissertation. Ultimately, MUI's institutional embodiment of *tajazzu'* represents a crucial step toward modernizing Islamic legal governance, but its effectiveness depends on fully integrating specialization, interdisciplinarity, and empirical grounding as foundational pillars of contemporary fatwa production.

Evaluating MUI's Partial *ijtihad* Through the Lens of Progressive *Ijtihad*: Strengths, Gaps, and Reform Trajectories

The institutionalization of *tajazzu' al-ijtihad* within the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI)

represents an important development in the modernization of Islamic legal reasoning, yet its effectiveness can only be fully understood when evaluated through the conceptual lens of Progressive *Ijtihad*. Progressive *Ijtihad*, as articulated by Abdullah Saeed, Jasser Auda, Fazlur Rahman, and contemporary Indonesian scholars, offers an epistemological framework that prioritizes contextual realities, human-centered ethics, multi-disciplinary reasoning, empirical grounding, and *maqâshid*-oriented objectives. This approach demands that modern fatwa institutions move beyond classical textualism and adopt a holistic methodology capable of responding to the deeply interconnected ethical, scientific, economic, and political challenges of contemporary Muslim societies. When this framework is applied to MUI, a dual picture emerges: on the one hand, the institution demonstrates structural mechanisms that reflect partial *ijtihad*, showing a degree of responsiveness to the complexities of modernity; on the other hand, significant methodological and epistemic gaps undermine its ability to fully actualize the progressive and multidisciplinary character required for contemporary Islamic legal governance. These gaps reveal that while MUI has made substantial progress in institutionalizing specialization, it remains insufficiently aligned with the empirical, contextual, and ethically grounded requirements of Progressive *Ijtihad*. The result is an incomplete evolution: a system structurally suited for modern jurisprudence yet epistemologically tethered to outdated assumptions that limit the transformative potential of Islamic law in modern Indonesia.

To begin with, MUI's strongest alignment with Progressive *Ijtihad* lies in its structural manifestation of *tajazzu' al-ijtihad*. The institutional division of fatwa responsibilities into thematic clusters—such as doctrinal theology, contemporary jurisprudence, halal certification, Islamic finance, environmental ethics, biomedical issues, and national legal questions—demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of knowledge specialization. This division reflects the classical recognition that no single jurist is capable of mastering the entire corpus of Islamic law in equal depth, and it embodies the

⁴⁸ Muhamad Hasan Sebyar, "Harmonization of Islamic Legal Institutions and Customary Law in Marriage Dispensation Cases at The Panyabungan Religious Court," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 2, no. 2 (2023): 155.

modern principle that complex societal problems require domain-specific expertise. Furthermore, in several high-profile fatwas, MUI has demonstrated a willingness to incorporate interdisciplinary input, recognizing that empirical knowledge is essential for informed legal judgment. Fatwas on Covid-19 vaccination biotechnology, environmental degradation, fintech products, and halal industrial processes show evidence of consultation with relevant experts in medicine, pharmacology, economics, public health, digital technology, and environmental science. These cases indicate that MUI has taken meaningful steps toward contextual legal reasoning, validating the premise of Progressive *Ijtihād* that empirical realities must be integrated into normative deliberation. Additionally, certain MUI fatwas reveal sensitivity to broader societal considerations such as public health, economic stability, environmental sustainability, and inter-religious harmony, reflecting a *maqâshid*-oriented concern for human welfare and the common good.⁴⁹

Despite these important strengths, however, the alignment between MUI's fatwa methodology and the principles of Progressive *Ijtihād* remains partial and inconsistent. The most significant misalignment arises from the institution's continued reliance on textual-normative reasoning as the primary epistemic foundation for fatwa formulation. While textual sources are unquestionably central to Islamic legal deliberation, Progressive *Ijtihad* insists that texts must be interpreted in concert with contemporary social realities, empirical data, historical dynamics, and ethical considerations grounded in human experience. Yet, the file clearly indicates that many MUI fatwas continue to prioritize textual citations—Quranic verses, hadith reports, classical juristic opinions, and analogical reasoning—while giving limited attention to empirical research, scientific data, or sociological findings. This textual bias becomes especially problematic in domains such as biomedical ethics, digital finance, environmental regulation, and governance issues, where the underlying realities are scientifically complex and

cannot be adequately understood through textual references alone. The result is fatwas that sometimes feel doctrinally consistent yet empirically fragile, lacking the methodological depth needed to address modern technological or scientific innovations.

The second major epistemic gap concerns MUI's treatment of expert participation as optional rather than mandatory. The *Pedoman Penetapan Fatwa* explicitly states that experts "may be invited" to contribute, which reveals a permissive rather than obligatory stance toward interdisciplinary collaboration. This optionality contradicts the core requirement of Progressive *Ijtihād*, which maintains that empirical knowledge is essential and that expert consultation is non-negotiable when dealing with technical or specialized matters. The consequences of this gap are evident in several fatwas where technical domains—such as cryptocurrency, genetically modified foods, or digital platform economies—were addressed without sufficient engagement from relevant experts. When expert involvement is not guaranteed, the entire process becomes vulnerable to inconsistency, with some fatwas enriched by interdisciplinary insights while others remain narrowly textual. This inconsistency undermines the credibility of the institution and exposes the fatwa process to criticism, both from academics and the broader public. In a world where scientific knowledge evolves rapidly and technological systems are deeply interconnected, reliance on optional expertise is insufficient and epistemologically untenable.

A third limitation relates to the lack of institutionalized empirical research within MUI's fatwa governance system. Compared with international fatwa bodies such as Malaysia's National Fatwa Council, the European Council for Fatwa and Research, or Egypt's Dâr al-Iftâ', MUI has not yet established a dedicated research division that systematically produces empirical studies on issues pending fatwa deliberation. The absence of such a unit means that MUI often enters deliberations without a comprehensive knowledge base of scientific or sociological data, relying instead on ad hoc consultation or partial evidence. Progressive *Ijtihād*, however, requires that *ijtihad* be preceded by

⁴⁹ Wahyu Abdul Jafar, "Mursalah Sebagai Alternatif Problem Solving Dalam Hukum Islam," *Jurnal Hukum* 13, no. 1 (2016): 97.

rigorous data collection, including economic analysis, medical reports, environmental assessments, and social impact evaluations. Without structured research support, fatwa deliberations may lack the depth and precision necessary for strongly grounded legal reasoning. This gap is particularly problematic given Indonesia's diverse socio-economic landscape, rapid technological development, and complex regulatory environment, all of which demand robust empirical understanding.

These epistemological limitations have important consequences. First, they lead to methodological fragility, where fatwas can be challenged for lacking adequate empirical support or multidisciplinary rigor. Second, they produce inconsistencies across fatwas: similar issues may receive different levels of scientific or contextual analysis depending on the experts present during deliberation. Third, these gaps reduce the relevance and responsiveness of fatwas to real-world Muslim needs, especially in areas where technology, economics, or public policy intersect with Islamic ethics.⁵⁰ Finally, these weaknesses contribute to diminished public confidence, as fatwas perceived as overly textual or insufficiently informed may be viewed as disconnected from contemporary challenges.

Addressing these gaps requires a series of transformative reforms grounded in the principles of Progressive *Ijtihâd*. First, expert participation must become mandatory for any fatwa involving empirical realities, scientific complexities, or technical knowledge. This requirement should be formalized in the institutional guidelines and enforced systematically. Second, MUI must establish a permanent research unit dedicated to interdisciplinary and empirical studies that support fatwa deliberation. This unit should produce policy briefs, scientific summaries, and technical analyses to ensure that all fatwas are grounded in accurate data. Third, MUI must strengthen its commitment to *maqâshid*-based reasoning, ensuring

that human welfare, justice, public interest, and ethical responsibility are central in evaluating legal issues. Fourth, methodological transparency must be enhanced. Beyond publishing fatwas, MUI should make public the reasoning process, sources consulted, expert involvement, and empirical data used. This transparency would align MUI with global best practices in ethical governance. Finally, MUI must invest in capacity building for its scholars, including training in social sciences, empirical methods, contemporary technologies, and interdisciplinary frameworks.

In conclusion, evaluating MUI's partial *ijtihâd* through the lens of Progressive *Ijtihâd* reveals a fatwa institution that is structurally advanced but epistemologically incomplete. While MUI has successfully institutionalized specialization and taken meaningful steps toward multidisciplinary reasoning, its methodological practices continue to exhibit significant gaps—particularly in empirical integration, mandatory expert involvement, and deep contextual analysis. To realize its full potential as a modern Islamic legal authority, MUI must strengthen its epistemological foundations through interdisciplinarity, empirical rigor, ethical transparency, and methodological reform. Only then can MUI truly embody a forward-looking model of Islamic legal governance capable of addressing the complex realities of contemporary Indonesia and contributing meaningfully to the global discourse on modern Islamic jurisprudence.

Conclusion

This study concludes that *tajazzu' al-ijtihâd*—partial or domain-specific *ijtihâd*—constitutes a historically grounded and epistemologically valid mode of Islamic legal reasoning that has become increasingly indispensable in the contemporary era due to the complexity of modern scientific, economic, ethical, and technological challenges. Classical jurists such as al-Ghazâlî, al-Râzî, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn al-Qayyim emphasized that *ijtihâd* competence is differentiated across legal domains, and that a jurist may legitimately exercise authority within

⁵⁰ Sukiati Sukiati et al., "Copyright as a Waqf Object in the Context of Fiqh and Positive Law," *Al-Istinbat : Jurnal Hukum Islam* 8, no. 1 (2023): 269–290.

a specific field, provided methodological rigor is maintained. The institutional structure of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) reflects this classical insight through its thematic clustering, division of labor, and periodic integration of external experts—demonstrating a structural realization of *tajazzu'* within a modern fatwa governance system. However, when examined through the lens of Progressive *Ijtihād*, which demands empirical grounding, multidisciplinary engagement, contextual sensitivity, and *maqâshid*-oriented ethical reasoning, MUI's application of partial *ijtihād* remains epistemologically incomplete. While certain fatwas exhibit meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration and contextual awareness, significant methodological gaps persist, including the optional nature of expert participation, limited integration of empirical research, and a dominant reliance on textual-normative reasoning even in highly technical matters. These gaps hinder the full realization of a progressive and contextually relevant model of Islamic legal reasoning. Therefore, strengthening MUI's fatwa governance requires institutionalizing mandatory expert involvement, establishing a permanent research unit to generate empirical data, enhancing transparency in methodological reasoning, and deepening *maqâshid*-based analysis to ensure that fatwas promote human welfare, justice, and public interest. By advancing toward a more empirically informed, interdisciplinary, and ethically grounded methodology, MUI can transform partial *ijtihād* from a structural practice into a fully actualized epistemic framework capable of addressing the evolving needs of Indonesian Muslims and contributing substantively to the global development of contemporary Islamic jurisprudence.

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