

THE TRANSFORMATION OF RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY IN THE ERA OF NEW MEDIA: ANALYZING DISPARITIES IN OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN FEMALE AND MALE ULAMA IN THE NAHDLATUL ULAMA ONLINE MEDIA

Hafidhoh Ma'rufah

Sekolah Pascasarjana, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta
hafidhoh.marufah@gmail.com

Abstract

The advent of new media has altered the conventional religious authority. Nahdlatul Ulama, one of Indonesia's established religious groups, has been somewhat delayed in harnessing new media platforms, such as its YouTube channel and NU Online website, to disseminate Islamic ideals. Regrettably, NU Online only offers platforms dedicated to the exploration of women's concerns, with female researchers serving as the primary sources of knowledge. This study aims to elucidate the reasons behind the disparity in opportunities between female professors and their male counterparts in the NU media sphere. The study employed a qualitative netnography methodology and examined the data through the lens of Peter L. Berger's Social Construction theory. The findings indicate that the prevailing stereotype of women, namely the perception that women are only supplementary to males, leads to a disparity in the allocation of resources between female and male priests at NU. Female priests, with diverse knowledge and educational capital, should rightfully be recognized as authoritative figures in the realm of religion.

Keywords: Religious Authority, Nahdlatul Ulama, New Media, Women Ulama

Abstrak

Munculnya new media membuat otoritas keagamaan tradisional mengalami pergeseran. Nahdlatul Ulama sebagai salah satu organisasi keagamaan tradisional di Indonesia sedikit terlambat memanfaatkan new media untuk menyebarkan nilai-nilai Islam melalui kanal youtube dan website NU Online. Sayangnya, website NU Online hanya memberi ruang-ruang yang membahas persoalan perempuan saja yang diisi oleh ulama perempuan sebagai narasumber. Penelitian ini mencoba mengungkap kenapa ulama-ulama perempuan ini tidak mendapat kesempatan seluas ulama laki-laki di ruang media NU. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif netnografi dan dianalisis dengan teori Konstruksi Sosial Peter L. Berger. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa stereotype terhadap perempuan, yakni bahwa perempuan hanya dipandang sebagai pelengkap laki-laki, menyebabkan positioning ulama perempuan NU belum mendapat porsi yang seimbang dengan ulama laki-laki. Ulama perempuan dengan berbagai modal pengetahuan dan pendidikan sebetulnya layak diposisikan sebagai pihak yang otoritatif dalam keagamaan.

Kata Kunci: Otoritas Keagamaan, Nahdlatul Ulama, New media, Ulama Perempuan

A. INTRODUCTION

Rothenberg and Celia E have conducted research on two Islamic websites with international reach, namely Islam Online and Islamica. This research took the keyword discussion of jinn in both websites. From this research, two typologies of discussion were found, which also indicate that religious authority has shifted. (Rothenberg 2011).

The first website, Online Islam is identified with the great tradition. Rothenberg and Celia E define the great tradition as Islam that comes from the main sources of Islamic teachings, namely the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith. While the second website, Islamica, is referred to as the small tradition because it contains local Islamic practices in their respective regions. In the discussion about jinn, Islam Online provides answers to questions from netizens using arguments derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. The author of the answer is also an educated Islamic scholar and answers the question normatively. Islamica, on the other hand, allows the question to be answered by each user of the website. So that users answer with a local point of view according to the understanding of jinn that develops and is believed in their respective regions (Rothenberg 2011).

The two websites above prove that religious authority has shifted from traditional oral to virtual. The study above illustrates that anyone can provide answers or even *fatwa* as long as they are able to play the internet and its algorithms. Gudrun Krämer And Sabine Schmidtke (Krämer and Schmidtke 2006), asking the questions, "Who speaks for Islam?" and "Who do Muslims turn to when they look for guidance?" These two questions make it difficult to define who has the most authority in Islam. According to Weber, authority describes the ability to follow the decisions of a person who is obeyed and without coercion. This distinguishes it from power, which tends to use coercion. Although authority and power

are difficult to distinguish in the current context (Krämer and Schmidtke 2006). Interpreting religious texts requires some skills. Either inherited or acquired from other parties. Parties that are considered to have religious authority can be individuals, groups, or institutions (Krämer and Schmidtke 2006). In Islam, a person is said to have authority or is called an Islamic leader after gaining recognition and support from the people (Turner 2007).

In this era of globalization, anyone can claim to have religious authority and take on the role of priest (Turner 2007). For the tech-savvy generation, the internet is a space to express or obtain religious opinions contentedly and freely (Bunt 2018). This is what brings people to the term shopping *fatwa*, because people can determine which *fatwa* suits their needs (Wahid 2020).

The appearance of Islam through technology is not without consequences. The Islam consumed by the public through online media is not always applied in a truly Islamic manner, and it is even presented by people who are not considered proficient in Islamic sciences. Gary R. Bunt calls this tradition the cut and paste tradition. This tradition arises because preachers take *da'wah* materials from the internet, copy, paste without even giving attribution in the *da'wah* they deliver (Bunt 2018). So it is questionable where are the sources of Islamic teachings spread through this technology? Or in the language of traditionalists, is the sanad clear? Another consequence is the development of radical movements and intolerance through information technology.

The opening of new media also encourages the process of accelerating the rejuvenation of ulama, so that young ulama from both traditionalist and contemporary circles are born. These young scholars are between 30-45 years old. Of course, this age is relatively young compared to the age of religious figures who are well known for their scientific capacity (Jinan 2012). Traditionalist

circles are characterized by the emergence of gus and ning (a term for the sons and daughters of *Kiai*) to the public arena and the emergence of young *ustaz* and *ustaza* from salafi circles to social media.

The development of information technology does not only provide space for male scholars to preach. Female scholars also have a place, although not as much as men. Women get space to expand religious activities such as teaching, *da'wah* or *tausyiah*, and other activities. However, these activities are still limited. Ismah explained that many women study religion intensively in pesantren. They learn various religious disciplines. But only a few of them can have the opportunity to participate in fatwa forums like men. Women still encounter several questions such as women's leadership, women's voice is *aurat* and women's status and position in the public sphere (Ismah 2016). One of the organizations with religious authority is MUI and Nahdlatul Ulama. In MUI there is a fatwa commission consisting of several male and female scholars, but the number is not balanced. In 2020-2025 there were 8 female scholars out of 72 members (Nisa and Saenong 2022). In NU, there are several women's issues in *bahthul masa'il*, but women's opinions are not given much attention. The restriction of women's opinion was questioned in the *bahthul masa'il* forum in 1935 (Rofi'ah 2014).

Public space is a shared space. In social and historical reality, public space has become a place of power and power contestation. Unfortunately, men still dominate religious authority, including in Indonesia (Hasanah 2016). Women clerics can strengthen their authority by building good relationships with the community (Ismah 2016). As Hasanah wrote, *majelis taklim* can be a place to expand the network of women scholars so as to generate public trust in women scholars. The existence of these institutions or organizations gives birth to women's leadership (authority)

(Hasanah 2016). In addition to *majelis taklim*, Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, and mass organizations can also be a place for women scholars to build their authority.

In addition to establishing relationships with the community face-to-face, the world of digital *da'wah* also cannot be underestimated. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the phenomenon of religious revival in the digital world has strengthened. The world of *da'wah* in Indonesia has become a forum for contestation among preachers from various ideological understanding circles. Female preachers or clerics legitimize their authority through the presence of technology (Nisa and Saenong 2022). Female scholars from the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama are no exception. The appearance of these scholars also marks the response of traditionalists to salafists who are increasingly active in proselytizing on social media. There is a symptom of fighting back from the old santri as an effort to stem the salafi preaching (Zamhari and Mustofa 2020). Although there have been changes with the emergence of various female scholars in the public sphere, their work is still seen as limited to complementary (Hasanah 2016).

There are several studies on women in the contestation of religious authority in Indonesia. Such as research conducted by Kirana Nur Lyansari on the emergence of hijrah artists who fill the digital *da'wah* space. Taking a hijrah artist, Peggy Melati Sukma, Kirana tried to map the branding and strategies in preaching. As a result, Peggy's *da'wah* has five strategies, namely storytelling, promoting Islamic lifestyle, doing charity, using social media, and religious communities (Lyansari 2022). Another study was conducted by Ai Fatimah Nur Fuad. This study focuses on women in the Tarbiyah community in contemporary Indonesia. In this study, Tarbiyah women are encouraged to develop their Islamic knowledge, religiosity, and religious authority through Liqo' training organized by the Tarbiyah movement (Fuad 2021).

The study of women with techno-religion was also conducted by Ellys Lestari Pambayun. This study focuses on the phenomenon of identity formation obtained through women's preaching on social media and tries to reveal the identities of the three resource persons (Pambayun 2020). Meanwhile, this research will discuss how NU as a representative of traditional circles with the largest number of members in Indonesia facilitates its female ulama to take on the role of religious authority in the public sphere? Do NU women clerics have the capacity or qualifications to be said to have religious authority?

B. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative research method with a netnography approach. Data and information were obtained from NU Online's YouTube channel as the primary source. There are many videos on this channel, but in this study, the focus is on videos filled by female scholars, such as videos in the NU Online menstruation class category, Suara Muslimah, Worship Tutorials, and videos outside the three categories that feature female scholars as fillers. Secondary data is collected through the preachers' Instagram accounts and NU Online as well as websites, books, and articles that support this study.

NU Online is an official NU communication channel with a wide reach and significant following across social media platforms. Therefore, research on this channel is important due to its influence and relevance to the Indonesian Muslim community and possibly the wider Muslim world. The research is limited to the Youtube channel only, although NU Online has many media, Youtube is considered an appropriate representation, because it displays preachers more clearly both in pictures and audio,

The data obtained will be analyzed using the social construction theory of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann. In

this theory, there is a dialectical process that occurs in humans through three moments; externalization, objectification, and internalization (Berger and Luckmann 1990). The three moments do not always occur to people in a time sequence. Each individual is characterized by all three, and so the analysis of society goes through all three moments. A reality in society is humanity's own production and is socially constructed and considered real (Dharma 2018).

Social order is an ongoing human product. It is not biologically acquired. It is the result of human activity from the past and exists as long as humans continue to produce it. Externalization is an anthropological necessity. Humans cannot forever live in a closed environment. Humans continue to externalize themselves in various social activities. In the process of externalization, individuals immerse themselves in the world, both physically and mentally (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

The actions obtained from the externalization process then undergo objectification. habits obtained from externalization are institutionalized. Externalization and objectification are dialectical processes that take place continuously. In other words, society is both a producer and a consumer of social (Dharma 2018). The important thing in the objectification process is signification. Signification is a sign that distinguishes one objectification from another. All objectification is susceptible to the utilization of a sign, even if it was not originally produced with this purpose (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

According to Berger and Luckmann, individuals are not born as members of society. The individual is a predisposition that has a tendency towards sociality. This is what makes individuals part of the members of society. Individuals exist in a space and time that brings them to the dialectical process of society (Dharma 2018). Internalization is the process of understanding and

interpreting an individual directly from an objective moment to reveal a meaning. In this case there is an interaction of meaning from the subjective processes of others, so that it has subjective meaning for that individual. Internalization is the re-absorption of reality by humans and how they transform it back from the structures of the objective world into the structures of subjective consciousness (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

In becoming part of society, individuals will get socialized. Socialization makes people comprehensively and consistently identified with the objective world of society or one of its sectors (Dharma 2018). Socialization is divided into two; primary and secondary. Primary socialization is the process by which individuals learn the basic values, norms, and skills necessary for survival in society from their family and environment. Primary socialization begins at birth and continues throughout childhood. Meanwhile, secondary socialization is the process by which individuals acquire the values, norms, and skills needed to function in the wider society, such as schools, workplaces, and organizations. Secondary socialization begins after primary socialization and lasts throughout life (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Women Ulama of Nahdlatul Ulama

NU has various important roles in empowering women through its women's organizations. Muslimat NU, which was established at the 13th Congress in Banten, became a historical record of the struggle of NU women. Through two figures, Mrs. R Djuaesih and Mrs. Siti Sarah voiced and represented women's aspirations. Both of them firmly conveyed the urgency of the awakening of women in the organization as men. Internally, in NU at that time there was no special organization or forum for the women's movement. This moment became an important marker for

the birth of the formulation of the role of NU women in organizations, society, social, economic, education and *da'wah* (Adawiyah and El Syam 2022).

In the age level of members under Muslimat NU, there is Fatayat NU. This organization is an Islamic youth organization which is one of NU's autonomous institutions. Fatayat was established in Surabaya, April 24, 1950. Various important roles are carried out by Fatayat NU, such as policy advocacy, conducting awareness at the grassroots community, and establishing institutions to overcome various community problems, such as domestic violence, sexual harassment and violence, and other issues (Adawiyah and El Syam 2022).

At the age of students or teenagers, NU also has a forum for women, namely the Nahdlatul Ulama Women's Student Association or IPPNU. The IPPNU organization focuses on fostering and training NU women who are still in university and high school or madrasah, as well as female students at the university level. IPPNU is also a forum for breeding future leaders of NU and the nation in the future (Adawiyah and El Syam 2022). The three NU women's organizations above are proof that NU has an important role in empowering women in Indonesia. During the leadership of K.H. Yahya Cholil Staquf, NU made a breakthrough by including a number of women's names in the 2022-2027 NU management (Niam 2022).

Entering the era of information technology, NU women are taking on increasingly diverse roles. In the political field, there are the names of Khofifah Indar Parawansa (East Java Governor and Chairperson of Muslimat NU) and Ida Fauziah (Minister of Manpower and former head Fatayat NU). In addition, there are also the names of *Nyai* Hj. Badriyah Fayumi (Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the Women Ulema Congress), Sinta Nuriyah Wahid (active in humanitarian issues), Sheila Hasiana and Imaz

Fatimatuz Zahro (preachers and influencers), and a number of other names.

In the world of pesantren, pesantren women actually have agency and authority in the context of religious education. These women, known as *Nyai*, become role models for their students. *Nyai* has no small influence and authority in pesantren. *Nyai* delivers religious lectures in daily recitations to santri as well as lectures delivered to the community around the pesantren. The community also recognizes the *Nyai*'s ability in the field of religion. In addition, the pesantren also equips female santri to appear in the public sphere. The roles and duties of women are also learned through the yellowclassical books. The various authorities possessed by pesantren women cannot be separated from male control. Both in print and digital media (Jannah 2019).

2. Overview of NU Online

Communication and information technology has changed human life, including religious life. Human interaction face to face does not only occur in the real world, but also virtually in the virtual world through social media. Social media was born as part of the development of technology based on the real world (Suherdiana and Muhaemin 2018).

The Internet has been used to facilitate work in various lines of life, such as education, economics, politics, social, and religion (Setia and Iqbal 2022). In Indonesia, the high use of the internet and social media means that proselytizing requires a special strategy. This is to target the habits of the younger generation who prefer to play social media than previous generations. The development of this technology is responded by various religious organizations in Indonesia to develop *da'wah* strategies in the new era (Suherdiana and Muhaemin 2018).

One of the organizations that responds to the development of technology and information is Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). As the largest mass organization in Indonesia, NU is actually late in responding to the development of technology and information compared to the salafi community. Hosen explained that the occurrence of social transformation coincided with the emergence of the internet and the phenomenon of spirituality in cyberspace. People found a new medium to learn religion through the internet. With the speed and ease of access, people can learn religion anytime with anyone through the internet. Although the internet also creates a new problem called knowledge anarchy. There is a chaos of religious knowledge because it is unclear who is the beacon of religious knowledge (Hosen 2008).

Although late, it does not mean that NU does not make any innovations to respond to this technological development. NU initially used printed media for the process of *da'wah* and information delivered to various regions. However, this method is considered less effective, because of the large number of congregations and the distribution of print media that costs a lot of money, so many people have not been targeted. Especially regarding urgent information such as the determination of the beginning of the *Hijriyah* month. This is also a trigger for NU to require new media for the delivery of information and *da'wah* (Aziz 2021).

The establishment of new digital-based media was considered by the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board (PBNU), of which K.H. Hasyim Muzadi was the chairman at the time. Relying on newspapers or other print media is not enough, NU must deliver information quickly to the people, especially if important and urgent issues arise. Later, at the 30th NU Congress in Lirboyo, this idea was presented and approved by NU leaders. This idea was followed up by one of the NU lajnahs, the Lajnah Ta'lif wan Nasr

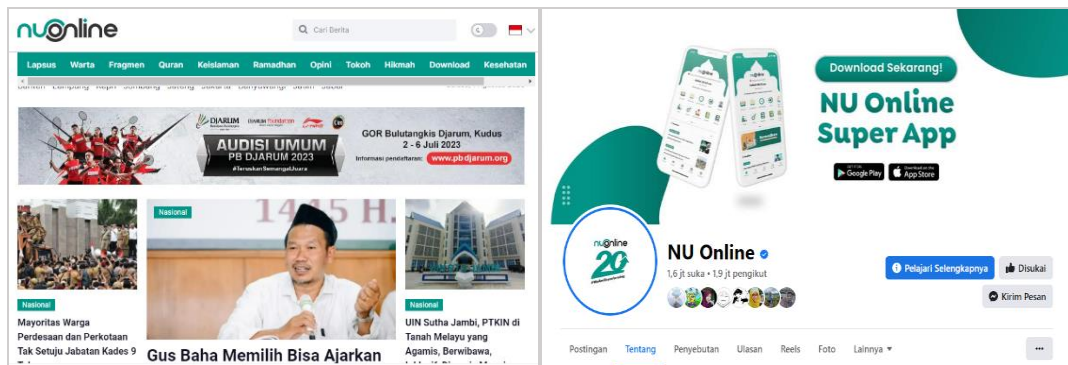
(LTN). In the next development, a team was formed to realize NU digital media. Through a long process of PBNU and LTN NU and several other figures, NU Online was formed as a news website inaugurated by PBNU. It was officially introduced to the public on July 11, 2003 at Borobudur Hotel, Jakarta (Aziz 2021).

NU Online has a goal or vision as a provider of soothing and trusted Islamic and NU information. And has a mission: 1) to be the first choice for obtaining reliable NU and Islamic information, 2) to produce information that is soothing and encourages religious cycles that are just, moderate, and respectful of diversity, 3) to produce quality information products, 4) to be a space to develop a high professional attitude accompanied by a spirit of service to the people and nation.

Since its establishment in 2003, NU Online has experienced rapid development. NU Online has grown into a religious website that is visited by many people. The development of technology that gave birth to smartphones contributed to introducing NU Online to a wider audience. NU Online is increasingly accessible to the public. The emergence of various types of social media also colored the growth of NU Online: NU Online facebook, twitter @nu_online, instagaram @nuonline_id, and Youtube NU Online. In addition, NU Online also innovated by creating the NU Online application for both Android and iOS users. This application contains religious guidance (*tahlil*, *sholawat*, prayer, Al-Qur'an) and news.

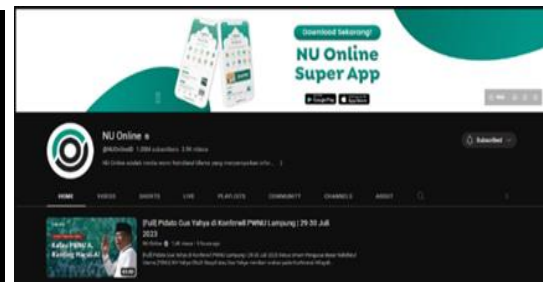
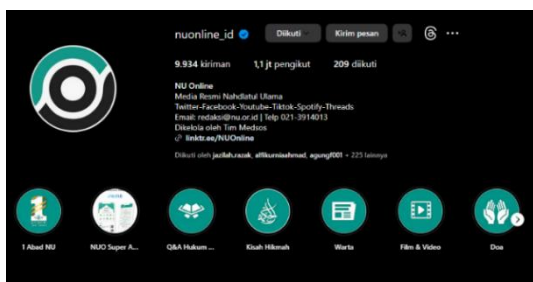
The Transformation of Religious Authority in The Era of New Media: Analyzing Disparities in Opportunities Between Female and Male Ulama in The Nahdlatul Ulama Online Media

Figure 1.
NU's Social Medias



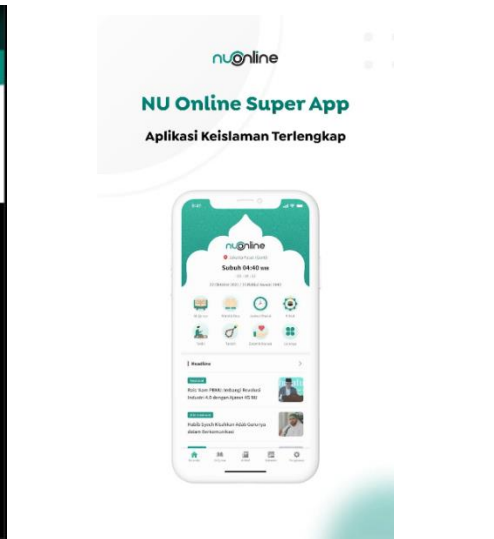
Source: NU Online website

Source: NU Online Facebook



Source: @nuonline_id Instagram account

Source: NU Online Youtube channel



Source: twitter account @nu_online

Source: NU Online application

3. NU Online YouTube Channel

Since its establishment in 2003, NU Online has made several innovations in preaching and disseminating information to the public. In 2017, NU Online developed *da'wah* through the Youtube platform. Youtube is one of the media that disseminates various information and entertainment in the form of videos. This platform

can be interpreted as new media with the help of the internet to access. Youtube is present not only as entertainment, but also as a medium for learning, including learning religion. Various religious institutions and religious leaders utilize this media as a disseminator of religious knowledge. Youtube is one of the media with the most access (Cahyono and Hassani 2019).

NU Online Youtube Channel has several video categories. Among them are videos about Pilgrimage and Religious Tourism with 21 videos, Prayers and Practices with 77 videos, Worship Tutorials with 130 videos, Muslimah Voices with 101 videos, Habib Ali Baqir al-Saqqaf with 36 videos, Hikmah category has 41 videos, Sowan with 185 videos, NU Online Terkini with 131 videos, Menstruation Class with 12 videos, and Hajj Coverage with 53 videos and several other video categories. There are approximately 3900 videos and more than 1 million subscribers. This number also includes recitation videos from NU scholars. The content of the YouTube channel is not only about organizational or institutional information issues, but also contains worship, wisdom, prayers and practices, Muslim women's voices, and Hajj coverage. The public can access all videos for free.

NU Online claims to be a media that conveys social and national information and religious services by promoting moderation. A number of national figures fill NU Online's Youtube channel. There are names such as K.H. Musthofa Bisri, K.H. Miftachul Akhyar, Gus Miftah, Gus Muwafiq, K.H. Bahauddin Salim, and a number of other figures. In addition, there are also NU women scholars who are fillers such as Milla Mihnatul Maula, Dhominarotul Firdaus, Sheila Hasina, Imas Fatimatuz Zahro, Najhati Sharma, and several other names. Figures who became speakers in NU Online videos conveyed a number of scientific fields, from Fiqh, Al-Qur'an, Hadith, Sufism, family studies, contemporary studies, history, yellow books, and even health.

4. Women scholars on NU Online Youtube Channel

NU Online Youtube channel has approximately 3900 videos. In this Youtube channel, there are various video categories. Among them are videos containing fiqh, akidah and tauhid, morals and tasawuf, various stories, prayers and practices, murrotal qur'an, fiqh nisa', family, health and there are videos about NU news. In addition, there are also videos in collaboration with other parties such as videos organizing the Musabaqah Qiro'atul Kutub (MQK) and Musabaqah Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ) in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

NU women scholars have a role in disseminating knowledge through NU Online's Youtube channel. This video of female scholars is divided into two parts. There are female scholars who are placed in a special category of discussion about women or all the speakers are women. Secondly, there are several NU women who are resource persons in videos that are not categorized as specifically female in discussion or resource persons.

The video categories that discuss women with female resource persons are NU Online's Haid Class and Suara Muslimah. Several NU women scholars are the resource persons in these videos. Meanwhile, several NU figures are interviewees in general topics as well as interviewees who are not only women, such as videos on health and worship tutorials.

a. NU Online Menstruation Class

The online menstruation class video was presented by Mila Mihnatul Maula. The resource person is one of NU's female scholars who is also a caregiver from PP Manbaul Ulum Grobogan. In addition to being a resource person for NU Online videos, Mila Mihnatul Maula has also been a recitation of menstruation and women's chapters virtually through Live Fanpage aswajamuda.com. NU Online Period Class videos discuss women's

fiqh, especially regarding women's blood problems. The NU Online Period Class video was started on March 14, 2023. To date, there are 12 videos. Learning through this video is shown coherently through several videos. People who want to learn about women's fiqh, especially the blood chapter, can access it for free on the Youtube Online channel.

b. Muslimah Voice

The second category comprises several female scholars from NU. The topics discussed do not solely revolve around women's issues; some also delve into the fiqh (jurisprudence) of women's menstruation. Specifically, there are online classes on menstruation (Kelas Haid) offered by NU. Among the notable contributors is *Nyai* Hanna Zamzami, the wife of K.H. Hasan Zamzami Mahrus from Lirboyo. *Nyai* Hanna serves as the caretaker of PP Putri Al Baqarah Lirboyo, dedicated to female students memorizing the Qur'an. In the Suara Muslimah NU Online platform, *Nyai* Hanna contributes videos detailing the challenges of memorizing the Qur'an. Additionally, *Nyai* Hanna's daughter, Sheila Hasina, is featured in several Suara Muslimah NU Online videos. Sheila Hasina is recognized as a preacher and a Muslim influencer within the pesantren community.

Other contributors featured on the Suara Muslimah YouTube Channel NU Online include Imas Fatimatuz Zahra (PP Lirboyo), Dhomirotul Firdaus (PP Lirboyo), Nadia Abdurrahman (PP Fathul Ulum Kwagean), Umi Atika Anwar (Alumni PP Putri Hidayatul Mubtadiat Lirboyo), Dewi Yukha Nida (PP Bahrul Ulum Trenggalek), Hafshah Al-Ahla (PP Lirboyo), Najhaty Sharma (PP Al Munir, Magelang), Naili Anafah (PP Ad-Dainuriyyah 2, Semarang), Dahlia Hadziroh (Alumni PP Lirboyo), Tutik Nurul Jannah (daughter-in-law of K.H. Sahal Mahfudz), Inarotul Ain (preacher/lecturer), Khoiro Ummatin (academician), Aulia Dilla

Fareza (PP Sirajuth Tholibin, Grobogan), Zahrotun Nafisah (Litbang Kemenag), and Millatul Miskiyyah (preacher).

Several topics are covered in Suara Muslimah videos, including discussions on fiqh (jurisprudence). In general, the fiqh discussed pertains to women or fiqh nisa', addressing issues such as women's menstrual blood, the rules regarding modesty, makeup regulations, hijab rules, and other related topics. Additionally, female NU scholars, who are predominantly caretakers of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), delve into topics related to marriage and family. Other topics include discussions on the Qur'an, history, various stories, worship, parenting, ethics, various tips, Islamic thoughts, gender issues, and various other matters. Apart from religious topics, there are also discussions on non-religious subjects such as scholarships and the academic world, as well as writing.

c. Video tutorials on prayer

In the NU Online channel, there are also video tutorials on prayer (ibadah), and what makes them interesting is the presence of specific prayer tutorials for women, performed by women. The models in these videos wear mukenah according to the standards of the Syafi'iyah mukenah veris.

d. Other Videos

There are also other videos featuring female NU members as contributors. Some videos focus on health-related topics and are presented by female doctors. For example, there's a video discussing rabies in dogs presented by Dr. Ita Fajria Tamim and a video on anemia delivered by Dr. Zain Kholishotul M. In addition to health-related content, there are several NU women featured in the videos, such as *Nyai* Sinta Nuriyah Wahid, Alissa Wahid, and Khofifah Indar Pariwansa.

5. Women of NU in Religious Authority on Social Media

The development of communication and information technology has brought about various changes in human life, including how people learn and practice religion. Before the advent of the internet, individuals would learn about religion by seeking guidance from someone considered knowledgeable in the field. However, as technology continues to advance and expand, it seems unnecessary for people to go elsewhere for learning. With just gadgets and the internet, individuals can access the information and knowledge they need. Religious authority has also undergone changes. The more people engage in preaching, the more challenging it becomes to define who is the most authoritative in delivering religious teachings. Is it from the Salafi group or the traditionalists?

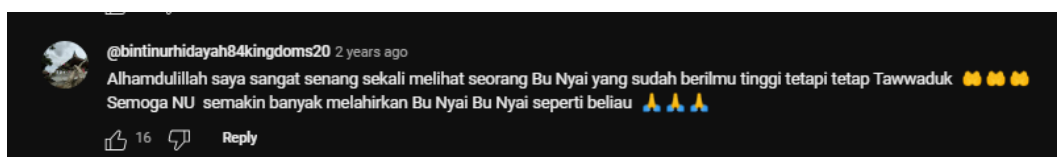
NU, as one of the representatives of traditionalists, can be considered somewhat late in utilizing technology for preaching. However, this does not mean that NU is increasingly anti-modern. Through NU Online, NU has introduced innovations in preaching. Established in 2003, this media outlet has generated innovations through various social media platforms. One notable example is the NU Online YouTube Channel, which has over 1 million subscribers and has uploaded nearly 4,000 videos. Among the uploaded videos, there are female NU scholars who serve as speakers on various topics. The emergence of female scholars in the public sphere of NU undoubtedly signifies the provision of opportunities and an authoritative space in religious matters within NU. There are certainly several factors that make these female scholars deserving of recognition in their authority.

Figure 2.
**One of the netizens' comments about the NU Online
Menstruation Class video**



The female scholars of NU who appear in videos on the NU Online YouTube channel have backgrounds that contribute to the reinforcement of the teachings they convey. Most of these female scholars are the daughters of *Kiai* (Islamic leaders) and have undergone religious education since childhood. Others are alumni of Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). The upbringing and education in *pesantren* are valuable experiences for these female scholars in carrying out their preaching on social media. It is worth noting that the majority of these female contributors come from well-known *pesantrens* that are recognized as prominent Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia. *Habitus* can take the form of lifestyle, values, character, and expectations of a particular social group (Mustikasari, Arlin, and Kamaruddin 2023).

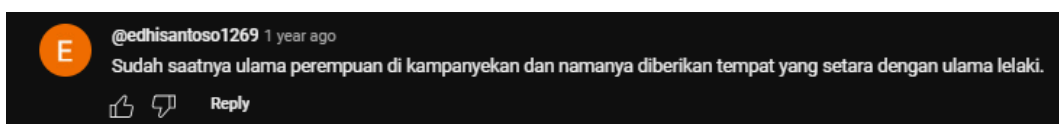
Figure 3.
One of The Netizen Comments on The Suara Muslimah Video



These female scholars also possess various resources or capacities that are valuable in preaching. Resources are divided into two types: economic resources and symbolic resources, which include cultural, linguistic, social, and knowledge aspects (Anom Wiranata 2020) Capital is viewed as the foundation of domination and legitimacy (Mustikasari et al. 2023). When examined, these female scholars have already possessed strong capital. Economic capital is not merely interpreted as money; it also includes internet networks and tools used for preaching. Social capital is certainly held by female scholars as the daughters of Islamic boarding school leaders. In the social structure of Javanese society, especially, *Kiai* (Islamic leaders) occupy top positions. *Kiai* is considered a righteous person and possesses virtues that set them apart from the general populace. Trusting in the guidance of a *Kiai* is not considered detrimental. The concept of "*barokah*" (blessings) is still believed by the majority of the Javanese society (Muazaroh and Subaidi 2019).

Female scholars also possess other symbolic capital in the form of knowledge. Education in Islamic boarding schools produces a strong understanding of religious matters. The capital of knowledge and proficiency in religious fields becomes crucial for female scholars in preaching.

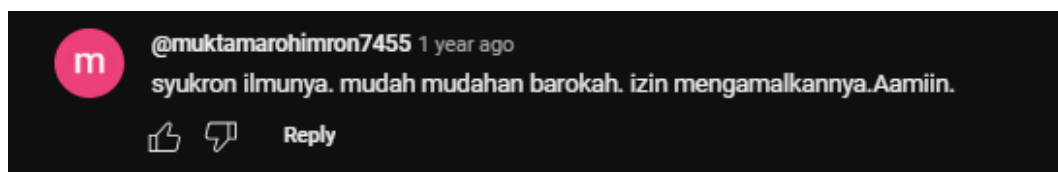
Figure 4.
One Form of Netizen Support For Female NU Scholars



There are several things to note. If you look at NU Online's Youtube channel, most of these female scholars are resource persons on themes of fiqh nisa' or themes that do explain women's issues. Very few videos contain female scholars explaining other

fiqh themes. Videos in general are still dominated by male scholars. NU does give space to its female scholars, but not all authoritative public spaces are open to women.

Figure 5.
One of The Netizen Comments In One Of NU Online's Videos



As Ismah revealed, women study various religious disciplines, but it is not as easy for them to get opportunities in *fatwa* forums as men (Ismah 2016) and Rofi'ah's opinion that women are only complementary in *bahthul masa'il* (Rofi'ah 2014), becomes a view or social reality that is considered real. This affects the shows on the NU Online Youtube channel which are also still dominated by male scholars. In this case, the process of externalizing these views is still ongoing.

Social reality that comes from externalization is objectified into something that appears objective. The view that women are considered complementary and do not have the same opportunities as men is considered normal and objective, not as a subjective policy. Furthermore, these values and norms are accepted (internalization) by the community as something that is not in doubt. So that women scholars are still considered complementary and given spaces that are specifically women's issues.

However, like the research conducted by Anifatul Jannah, new media has provided space for NU women ulama to build a religious authority career. This movement is referred to by Mahmood as cited by Anifatul Jannah as an Islamic revival. New media gave birth to a social change in the form of religious authority not only owned by male clerics (Jannah 2019). Women

clerics with their various capital and habitus deserve to be called authoritative parties in religion. NU women clerics are able to color the contestation of *da'wah* on social media by spreading moderate Islam. Helping to reduce the number of radical Islamic narratives with their knowledge. For the record, NU needs to provide more space by involving women scholars in its various videos.

D. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The development of communication and information technology and the need for an information platform for the community effectively and efficiently, NU gave birth to a website called NU Online. NU Online is a *da'wah* innovation from NU by utilizing technology and new media. Over time, as well as the development of social media, NU Online penetrated various social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Youtube. Youtube is used to display videos of NU scholars, both male and female. NU female clerics have the opportunity to strengthen NU's religious authority in the virtual arena. Through the social reality theory of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, female clerics who actually have the capacity do not have as much space as male clerics. The views on women as complements and opportunities that men do not get are still strong and considered normal and objective. However, the birth of new media is also a sign that female clerics are also given the opportunity to build a religious authority career.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adawiyah, Rabiatur, and Robingun Suyud El Syam. 2022. "Feminisme dalam Nahdlatul Ulama." *NUansa: Jurnal Penelitian, Pengabdian dan Kajian Keislaman*.
- Anom Wiranata. 2020. "Perubahan Sosial dalam Perspektif Pierre Bourdieu." doi: 10.13140/RG.2.2.13585.04965. Program Studi Hubungan Internasional Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Udayana.

- Anon. n.d. "Visi Misi." Retrieved (<https://www.nu.or.id/page/visi-misi>).
- Aziz, Hasan. 2021. "Modernisasi Media Massa Nahdlatul Ulama: Studi Kasus NU Online Tahun 2003-2018." Vol: 03, No: 02:101-12. *Historical Studies Journal*.
- Berger, Peter L., and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality*. England: Penguin Group.
- Berger, Peter L., and Thomas Luckmann. 1990. *Tafsir Sosial Atas Kenyataan: Risalah Tentang Sosiologi Pengetahuan*. Jakarta: LP3ES.
- Bunt, Gary R. 2018. *Hashtag Islam: How Cyber-Islamic Environments Are Transforming Religious Authority*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Cahyono, Guntur, and Nibros Hassani. 2019. "Youtube Seni Komunikasi Dakwah dan Media Pembelajaran." *Al-Hikmah* 13(1):23. doi: 10.24260/al-hikmah.v13i1.1316.
- Dharma, Ferry Adhi. 2018. "Konstruksi Realitas Sosial: Pemikiran Peter L. Berger Tentang Kenyataan Sosial." *Kanal: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi* 7(1):1-9. doi: 10.21070/kanal.v6i2.101.
- Fuad, Ai Fatimah Nur. 2021. "Female Religious Authority among Tarbiyah Communities in Contemporary Indonesia." *Archipel* (102):187-207. doi: 10.4000/archipel.2657.
- Hasanah, Umdatul. 2016. "Majelis Taklim Perempuan Dan Pergeseran Peran Publik Keagamaan Pada Masyarakat Perkotaan Kontemporer." Sekolah Pascasarjana, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta.
- Hosen, Nadirsyah. 2008. *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*. ISEAS Publishing.
- Ismah, Nor. 2016. "Destabilising Male Domination: Building Community-Based Authority among Indonesian Female Ulama." *Asian Studies Review* 40(4):491-509. doi: 10.1080/10357823.2016.1228605.
- Jannah, Anifatul. 2019. "Ulama Perempuan Nahdlatul Ulama: Otoritas, Gender, dan Media Baru." UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta.
- Jinan, Mutohharun. 2012. "New Media dan Pergeseran Otoritas Keagamaan Islam di Indonesia." 10(1). *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*.

- Krämer, Gudrun, and Sabine Schmidtke, eds. 2006. *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*. Leiden; Boston: Brill.
- Lyansari, Kirana Nur. 2022. "Celebrification and Branding New Female Religious Authority in Indonesia." *Dialog* 45(1):99–110. doi: 10.47655/dialog.v45i1.568.
- Muazaroh, Siti, and Subaidi Subaidi. 2019. "Cultural Capital dan Kharisma Kiai dalam Wacana Partai Politik." *SANGKÉP: Jurnal Kajian Sosial Keagamaan* 2(2):185–96. doi: 10.20414/sangkep.v2i2.946.
- Mustikasari, Mega, Arlin Arlin, and Syamsu A. Kamaruddin. 2023. "Pemikiran Pierre Bourdieu dalam Memahami Realitas Sosial." *Kaganga: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah dan Riset Sosial Humaniora* 6(1):9–14. doi: 10.31539/kaganga.v6i1.5089.
- Niam, Ahmad Mukafi. 2022. "Terobosan Kiprah Perempuan Di Perkumpulan Nahdlatul Ulama." Retrieved (<https://www.nu.or.id/risalah-redaksi/terobosan-kiprah-perempuan-di-perkumpulan-nahdlatul-ulama-1kE1v>).
- Nisa, Eva F., and Farid F. Saenong. 2022. "Relegitimizing Religious Authority: Indonesian Gender-Just 'Ulamā' Amid COVID-19." *Religions* 13(6):485. doi: 10.3390/rel13060485.
- Pambayun, Ellys Lestari. 2020 "Identitas Dakwah Perempuan dengan Techno-Religion" 1 No. 02:123–40. *El Madani: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi Islam*
- Rofi'ah, Nur. 2014. *Ulama Perempuan Rahima Untuk Kemaslahatan Manusia Dalam Merintis Keulamaan Dan Kemanusiaan: Profil Kader Ulama Perempuan Rahima*. edited by N. Ismah. Jakarta: Rahima.
- Rothenberg, Celia E. 2011. "Islam on the Internet: The *Jinn* and the Objectification of Islam." *The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 23(3):358–71. doi: 10.3138/jrpc.23.3.358.
- Setia, Paelani, and Asep Muhammad Iqbal. 2022. "Adaptasi Media Sosial oleh Organisasi Keagamaan di Indonesia: Studi Kanal YouTube Nahdlatul Ulama, NU Channel." *JISPO Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik* 11(2):359–78. doi: 10.15575/jispo.v11i2.14572.
- Suherdiana, Dadan, and Enjang Muhaemin. 2018. "The *Da'wah* of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah in Social Media of Facebook." *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies*

- Turner, Bryan S. 2007. "Religious Authority and the New Media." *Theory, Culture & Society* 24(2):117–34. doi: 10.1177/0263276407075001.
- Wahid, M. Irfan. 2020. "Rumah Fiqih Indonesia : Challenging The Fatwa Shopping." 3(1). *Misykat Al-Anwar: Jurnal Kajian Islam dan Masyarakat*.
- Zamhari, Arif, and Imam Mustofa. 2020. "The Popular *Da'wah* Movement In Urban Communities: The Role Of Hadrami Scholars' *Da'wah* In Response To Religious Radicalism In Indonesia." *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 25(1):185. doi: 10.32332/akademika.v25i1.2385.

