



Fatwa in the Digital Age: Online *Muftī*, Social Media, and Alternative Religious Authority

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Abstract

This study aims to explain the fatwas disseminated on YouTube social media. It explains why ustadz or Islamic preachers disseminate their fatwas on YouTube and what factors surround it. This study uses a qualitative method and an ethnographic approach, namely data collection using keywords to search engines for specific fatwa themes among three popular religious preachers: Ustadz Abdul Somad, Ustadz Adi Hidayat, and Ustadz Khalid Basalamah. The fatwas issued by Islamic preachers were analyzed using the theory of the Muslim public sphere from Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson about moving narratives in cyberspace. The moving narrative allows the fatwa to be reached by people connected to the internet. This moving narrative creates a discourse war only possible through the Muslim public sphere. The selection of three popular preachers because they have different backgrounds in terms of thought which makes it possible for dialogue to occur in the form of moving narratives. This research found that the moving narratives that occur in cyberspace are not only in the form of dialogue and contestation in the form of fatwas but are related to the religious authority they receive. Social media like YouTube allows them to gain authority because of the democratic nature that social media provides. This contrasts earlier forms of authority where social media had not yet been invented.

Keywords: Alternative religious authority fatwa, Muslim public sphere, social media

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Introduction

After the limitations of disseminating fatwas by collecting them in a book, new media emerged as an alternative way of reaching things that the old media could not reach. Various social media platform such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are new media for disseminating fatwas. This phenomenon cannot be separated from the emergence of televangelism in the late 90s or early 21st century. In the late 90s, religious lectures were often found on television and radio media, which gave rise to figures such as Zainuddin MZ (born March 2th 1951), AA Gym (born January 29 1962, Indonesia), and Jefri al-Buchori (born April 12 1973, Indonesia)

(Triantoro, 2019, p. 2) At this era, religious authority began to shift to where the preachers were no longer dominated by those with a traditional educational background (*pesantren*), but those who are able to open, manage, and maximize religious education and had expertise in mass communication could also have religious authority through programs that hosted in the mass media. Therefore the emergence of mass media, such as television shows that mass communication skill plays a more important role than educational background (Muzakki, 2007, p. 208). This sociological shift of preachers not only changed the form of religious transmission but also allowed preachers to accelerate their social class in society (Muzakki, 2007, p. 209). Islamic televangelism developing in Muslim countries like Indonesia also appears to be different from what was developing in the West. If Western televangelism functions to present religion in a society that is experiencing the privatization of religion, then in Indonesia, televangelism tends to encourage personal piety (Kailani & Sunarwoto, 2019, p. 108) Apart from this phenomenon, this era is the first step in how in modern society there is a change in the rule of religious authority caused by the existence of the media. However, this phenomenon is only limited to the scope of religious lectures, not in the scope of fatwas.

The development of technology led this era to the new media in the form of the internet. Unlike television and radio, which are still capital-nuanced, where programs must follow editorial rules, social media in the Muslim world tends to be democratic. This freedom allows anyone to regulate what content to display without being obstructed by the rules, time, and ads that hinder the running of an event/content. Therefore, a study/lecture, for example, is able to provide freedom in the form of time and content to be conveyed. From this gap, the scope of the fatwa enters through a question-and-answer program. Question and answer are usually done after the ustadz/speaker has previously done the *tausiah* (advice). One of the content that contains questions and answers is the channel “Khalid Basalamah Official” (Khalid Basalamah Official, 2023), which contains the fatwas of Ustadz Khalid Basalamah (May 1, 1975). Around 2.6 million people have subscribed to this channel. Apart from Khalid Basalamah, a speaker also well known for giving fatwas at his recitation events is Ustadz Abdul Somad (May 18, 1977). There is a channel called *Ustadz Abdul Somad Official*, which often uploads question-and-answer sessions conducted in his lectures, and he has 3.67 million subscribers (Ustadz Abdul Somad Official, 2023). Likewise, Ustadz Adi Hidayat (September 11, 1984) is one of the popular speakers who often uploads question-and-answer sessions on his official YouTube channel with 3.99 million subscribers (Adi Hidayat Official, 2023).

This phenomenon has led to the emergence of contestation and fragmentation among online muftī s in Indonesia. As Nadirsyah Hosen said, this phenomenon is called an *online* fatwa (Hosen, 2008, p. 161). While another term, as stated by Wan Mohd, is known as *E-fatwa* (Firdaus, 2018, p. 1593). In his article, Nadirsyah claims that online fatwas have expanded the scope of the fatwa into spaces that the old media could not reach. This cannot be separated from the significant influence of internet development. If, in the past, people who wanted to ask questions about religious matters had to ask directly to a scholar, this is not the case today. Only by opening social media and searching for keywords of the problem to be searched for is easy to find various fatwa content according to the theme you are looking for.

In this case, contestation is closely related to authority. Religious authority can be assumed into several forms and functions, such as influencing one's understanding that may differ from previous understanding (Kramer, 2006, p. 1). Along with the development of new media, the discourse on authority also develops to what extent the media only then did it develop. In the social media context, this authority's influence can be seen from the number of *subscribers*, *likers*, *commentators*, and *followers*. Contestation and fragmentation in fighting for authority are the focus of this research. How does the fatwa shift from the old autocratic media to the new democratic media? I see the dynamics of this fatwa as a new phenomenon in the world of fatwa. Thus, it is likely that the fatwa disseminated in cyberspace will give rise to a new discourse on religious authority, where the authority has explicitly changed its concept and form as long as the new media has developed.

This study aims to explain how the concept of fatwa shifts from old media or what is popularly called mass media, such as television and radio, to new media connected to the internet network. Social media is a new media that gives freedom to anyone to upload content, including uploading religious content including uploading video content of *iftā'* (giving fatwas). This shift in the concept of *iftā'* is supported by new media that reach more people in the modern world. In addition, this research aims to describe the form of religious authority that has shifted from the old media to the new media. The emergence of new popular preachers through social media, such as ustadz Abdul Somad, ustadz Adi Hidayat, and ustadz Khalid Basalamah, has changed religious authority where previously religious authority obtained from issuing fatwas was appointed and regulated by the old media where there were editors who had the right to compose and form preachers who will be used as a reference for fatwas. In new media, the actors, namely the preachers who appear to issue fatwas, form and create their authority through fatwa content that is spread and disseminated via social media. The theory of the Muslim public sphere initiated by Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson is used as a framework for analyzing how the fatwas of popular religious preachers are in dialogue in cyberspace. The dialogue then gave rise to a war of Islamic discourse in the form of a fatwa. The differences in the fatwas issued by these popular clerics give them the authority they derived from those who chose them as references. The debate that emerged later formed a discourse that resulted in popular preachers having their own authority.

Through this presentation, the study has two questions: First, why is there a shift in the pattern *istiftā'* (request for fatwa) and answer (fatwa) from the old media to the new media? Second, does the shift affect the fatwa authority from old media to new media? This ethnographic study raised three online *mufitī*: Ustadz Abdul Somad, Ustadz Adi Hidayat, and Ustadz Khalid Basalamah.

Method

This research focuses on their official YouTube channels containing question-and-answer content and their uploaded videos containing question-and-answer content from non-official channels. This study uses a qualitative method with an ethnographic approach. An ethnography is an anthropological research in the internet world that uses data on the internet freely. There are five steps in an ethnography: planning and specifying communities, selecting (*entrée*), collecting data, analyzing, and reporting findings (Kozinets, 2010, p. 61). In this step, the researcher planned to choose the

preachers. There are three popular preachers that the researcher chose in this research. Second, the researcher selected the chosen theme, namely the four fatwa themes, where each of the ustadz had a different fatwa related to these four issues. Third, the researcher collected data by watching, listening, and understanding the substance of each fatwa they issued. Fourth, the researcher analyzed the data that the researcher has obtained using the theory that the researcher has determined, namely the theory of the Muslim public sphere initiated by Eickelman and Anderson. The last is explaining the conclusions of what has been discussed and what has been found from this research. This research does not allow the observation of all fatwas conducted by online muftī. Therefore, only certain themes were used as reference material in this study. The researcher chooses these themes according to the point of view of different fatwas or fatwas that have the potential to become controversial fatwas. The themes discussed in this research are fatwas concerning: First, a fatwa on the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. Second, fatwa regarding the pilgrimage to the grave. Third, fatwa on *isbal* (extend pants to below the ankles). Fourth, fatwa on bank interest.

Meanwhile, it is also impossible to discuss online muftī in the digital world. In this case, the researcher chose several ustadz (preachers) who produced fatwas on their YouTube channels. The answers (fatwas) from these ustadz are in accordance with the theory used in this research. One of the ustadz (preachers) the researcher chose is Ustadz Abdul Somad (Indonesia). Second, ustadz Khalid Basalamah (Indonesia). Third, ustadz Adi Hidayat (Indonesia). The researcher chose these three preachers because of their active movements in social media. They each have official YouTube channels and teams that upload their content through various platforms. In addition, they have a strong influence on social media, especially on YouTube. Numbers of their subscribers can prove this on YouTube. Ustadz Abdul Somad, with the channel "Ustadz Abdul Somad Official," already has 3.67 million subscribers (Ustadz Abdul Somad Official, 2023). Ustadz Khalid Basalamah, with the channel "Khalid Basalamah Official," already has 2.6 million subscribers (Khalid Basalamah Official, 2023). Ustadz Adi Hidayat, with the channel "Adi Hidayat Official," has 3.99 million subscribers (Adi Hidayat Official, 2023). The data obtained through the YouTube account of each popular preacher is "free access". Therefore, the researcher use the principle of publicly accessible content for collecting data (Roy et al., 2015, p. 5). In ethnographic research, this is permissible as long as there are no rules prohibiting the taking of content to be used as research objects. It is different when the research subject is social media groups or websites that require personal access to enter. In this case, the participant's consent is required whether it is permissible to take data from the group or not. Researchers certainly consider ethical factors in data collection. However, as long as the principles found in social media are not closed by personal access, then all content in cyberspace can be used as a participant or subject of research.

Result and Discussion

Muslim Public Sphere

Discourse regarding religious authority has only revolved around the old and new religious authorities. Like Turner's thesis, new media has become a challenge for traditional religious circles in maintaining their authority (Turner, 2007, pp. 117–134). In the context of digital fatwas, it seems that Turner's thesis is too simple because what happens in the reality of the digital world is the diverse contestation of each group to get

the authority and legitimacy of its followers freely. Social media is a democratic media, where everyone has the right to upload any content as long as it is in accordance with the policies of each platform. In fact, traditional religious circles are not only able to adapt to the new media but what happens is that they can maintain their religious authority through new media.

To study this description, it is necessary to have a framework on the *Muslim public sphere*. Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson initiated this theory. Eickelman sees how Muslim intellectuals share their ideas about their understanding of Islam across physical, geographic, and cultural boundaries, all of which are only possible through the existence of *new media* (Eickelman, 2003, p. 41). Islamic ideas visualized through these new media enable a “moving narrative” that can cross boundaries that have been difficult to reach. The moving narrative exists because of the coercion of the novelty element that must exist so that Islamic studies are current and able to dialogue with their era.

Through this theory, the researcher tries to further elaborate on the public space in social media. Of course, this public space exists not without reason, but there are factors behind it. The construction of the digital fatwa that the online muftī actors built involved many people, including the teams working on recording, uploading, and distributing the fatwa content. Mediatization is a concept that develops in the media which involves a strategic process of discourse through the media as a form of political communication that is mediated through various media so that it can be duplicated and even interpreted for various economic interests and even political interests (Setyaningrum, 2017, p. 72). (Arie Seyaningrum & Gita Octaviani, 2017, p.72)

Old Media and New Media

New media is defined as the convergence that occurs between computerized digital communication technology and is connected to the network (Efendi, 2017, p. 13). The term "online" network shows that an individual is already in the world of the internet. Conversely, there is also the term "offline" network, which indicates that an individual is not currently on the internet. In other words, it is also known as the online and offline uptake of English. In the world of fatwa itself, terms like this also develop, such as the term *e-fatwa*, which was explained by Nadirsyah Hosen, or the expression of Gary R. Bunt, who called it *e-ijtihad*.

In other terms, the terminology of new media is defined as the emergence of the digital world, computers, or information and communication technology in the 20th century (Puspita, 2018, p. 53). New media is often identified as a process that can be manipulated, networked, compact, interactive, and not take sides. The concept of new media can be described as social interaction between individuals through a computerized process or with internet intermediaries, which can be applied with websites, social media, or other means. This form of interaction between individuals is the advantage of the new media, whereas the process of interaction between individuals cannot be found in the old media.

There are two terms that need to be understood in the concept of new media. The two terms are mediatization and mediation (Yudha, 2018, p. 182). Mediatization is a correlation of communication that occurs from two directions in which institutions or individuals follow the workings of the media. Mediatization can be interpreted as the expansion of the way human interaction works by the media. However, there is a

standard rule where this rule cannot be found in the interaction that is not carried out through the media. These rules are individuals or institutions bound by the rules made by the media. Meanwhile, the term mediation is closely related to the content created. Mediation is the process of delivering content used by media users without knowing under what conditions the media user delivers the content (Yudha, 2018, p. 182). In other words, new media users are free users without being able to be intervened by other individuals. If in ordinary social interactions an individual can make decisions or create content and be intervened by other individuals, such patterns are no longer valid in new media. Both the individual as the conveyer (subject) or the recipient of the information (object) do not know under what conditions the message was conveyed. It can be in a state of anger, joy, sadness, and other feelings.

Talking about the shift from old media to new media does not only emphasize what is called new media. Points about computers, the internet, and *smartphones* are part of the new media (Chambell, 2010, p. 24). However, the development of this point is that new media can change and influence social and cultural connections in society. The new media emerged as a platform that opened the widest possible space for anyone who wanted to influence or be influenced in modern society. Lev Manovich of New Media expresses an interesting definition. He explained that five important comparisons exist in new media that are not found in the old media (Chambell, 2010, p. 25). The five points are *numerical representation*, *modularity*, *automation*, *variability*, and *transcoding*. The number representation implies that the new media is closely related to digitalization, and digitalization is closely related to manipulation. In other words, Lev wants to say that everything in the new media can be programmed. *Modularity* is defined as a basis where new media can expand existing elements into larger elements and separate this basic identity from a broader one. This modularity leads to *automation*, a program in which it is able to display the complexity of media creation, manipulation, and access to it. *Variability* indicates that the objects in the new media are very diverse, and the diversity of these object variables has unlimited options. While *coding* is defined as all information on the new media formatted and stored in a *database* and existing (Chambell, 2010, p. 25).

Looking at the definition expressed by Manovich, several points of emphasis need to be underlined by the presence of new media. The first thing that needs to be underlined is how the new media has the option to be manipulated. The existence of new media does not necessarily bring real changes to the space that is outside the network. Indeed, several studies reveal how big the influence of social media is on people's social lives, like the research written by Fatkhur Roji in his thesis on the Egyptian youth movement on April 6 (Roji, 2018, p. 53). In this study, it was stated that the underground movement greatly influenced the resignation of the Hosni Mubarak regime through social media carried out by youth. However, it needs to be underlined that the existing system in the new media cannot be separated from manipulation. The existence of a system that allows such manipulation could be an argument that new media only partially influences ideas or content created by individuals to achieve their goals.

The development of new media brings the actors, individuals, and institutions to participate in enlivening the internet world. However, these individuals or institutions do not immediately implement programs *online* in their content, even though these individuals are quite a massive movement in the online space. In a study on the Islamic

da'wah movement, there is a media company engaged in the field of da'wah, especially the Sharia economy, which was originally a mass offline media that then moved into the online space (Khoiri & Nurbaya, 2019, p. 55). In line with the argument that virtual space (*cyberspace*) does not represent real action, Christopher Helland also said that the Internet space is a space that is unreal (*unreal space*). He also said that the new media is loaded with no natural components that belong to it. In fact, what is called a ritual in the new media cannot be said to be a complete ritual because it could be that people who perform rituals (activities) in cyberspace are controlled by individuals who are not authorized to carry out these activities.

New media has explicitly brought significant influence and development in cyberspace. Even new media has formed a new space of interpretation and authority due to the large market and free creativity in cyberspace (Bunt, 2009, p. 19). More than that, social media in cyberspace has brought voice and the influence of the new Islam (Bunt, 2009, p. 19). Therefore, Islamic identity also develops to what extent the new media also develops. Fatwas is included in the category of voice and influence of the new Islam. Fatwa is an explanation of the Sharia that addresses certain issues and is an answer to the questioner, individually and collectively (Al-Qharadhawi, 1998, p. 6). Fatwa is not only a formality of question-and-answer activity. Beyond that, a fatwa can form a religious authority in a society (Kaptein, 2004, p. 115). In other words, a person or institution obtaining religious authority can be seen from how it becomes a reference by the community in religious affairs. The authority here is real in which people can ask directly to a *mufī* (fatwa giver).

In contrast to this, new media does not only bring changes in the process of *istiftā'* (asking for fatwa) and *iftā'* (fatwa). However, it has led to changes in authority, either the stronger the authority or the weaker. An important point that needs to be underlined here is the process of *istiftā'* and *iftā'* has also shifted its pattern due to a shift from the old media society to the new media society. Bunt's thesis, which states that the new media has transformed Islamic societies that have succeeded in shaping the voice of new Islam, can also be proven in the reality of fatwas. The process of *istiftā'* and *iftā'*, which has changed from the previous model, is a manifestation of the influence and voice of the new Islam. The new media has created a new face of Islam implemented into the new face of *istiftā'*.

According to Bunt, the scope of Muslim cyberspace (*Islamic social media sphere*) is also within the scope of fatwas. E-fatwa or other terms related to it are open virtual spaces where everyone has the right to perform *istiftā'* and *iftā'*. In this case, the point that needs to be underlined is the shift in the pattern of *istiftā'* and *iftā'* does not fully bring out the *istiftā'* and *iftā'* aspects that existed in the old media. In the old media, an individual had certain conditions to become a *mufī* before he got that authority. In the new media, those conditions no longer seem to apply. The term (*big market*) Gary expressed in the Muslim virtual space is the basis that there are no specific restrictions regarding the process of *iftā'*. Like a real market, cyberspace becomes a free market where individuals have the right to perform *istiftā'* and *iftā'* activities.

The Transformation of *Iftā'*

Fatwa is an important instrument in Islamic society because it is closely related to social institutions. The study's scope relates to an authority held by the ulama who gives fatwa (*mufī*). In the process, a fatwa does not appear without any precedence.

Therefore, the fatwa instrument cannot be separated from the request for a fatwa (*istiftā'*). In the Koran, the term *istiftā'* indicates a request to solve a problem (Hallaq, 1994, p. 31). Scholars express many definitions regarding fatwas. From several existing versions, the definition of a fatwa cannot be separated from the context of the answer to an issue of Islamic law. There are three elements inherent in a fatwa process. The three elements are *mustaftī* (one who is requesting fatwa), *muftī* (giver of fatwa), and also the answer or something that is being told (fatwa). The initial process is a problem for which the answer or solution has not been found. Then, a *mustaftī* asks the question to a *muftī* about the problem. The *muftī* then searches for answers from authoritative reference sources, and finally, a *muftī* answers to the problems. The arrangement of these questions is called the *book al-istiftā'* (Hallaq, 1994, p. 31). In its activities, fatwas do not only function as an answer to the problem of what is being asked. More than that, in social institutions, he plays an important role. Fatwas are social instruments that have various functions, such as legal media, social instruments, and political discourse, and also serve as a means of social stability (Caerio, 2006, p. 661). In other terms, fatwas are a meeting point between legal theory and social practice. It becomes clear that fatwas are not only a method of Islamic law published from various reference sources. It is a forum for a Muslim community to combine theory and reality. This is because Islamic law itself is dynamic.

Long before the existence of new media, fatwas were a natural process that occurred between *mustaftī* and *muftī*. The issuance of the fatwa takes place through a simple process in which a *mustaftī* can be asked immediately. After that period, the world of fatwa experienced a development in which the process was not as simple as between questions and answers. The fatwa has shifted from being merely a question and answer to a modified framework into a work. In this case, the fatwa not only revolves around the scope of *mustaftī* and *muftī*, but it is also transformed into a scientific space called *fiqh* (Rusli, 2011, p. 275).

This transformation has made the scope of the fatwa wider. Initially, a fatwa was only a question-and-answer formula, becoming a framework for the formulation of Islamic law in which the collected fatwas were modified into a book like a *fiqh* book. These collected fatwas are called *modified fatwas*. Abu Lais al-Samarqandī, for example, collected fatwas from the imams of the *mazhāb* and also *muftīs* in a book called *Fatawa al-Nawāzil* (Al-Samarqandī, 2004). The transformation that occurs in the world of non-primary fatwas also extends to fatwas of a primary nature. The dissemination of the fatwa, which was originally written down all the processes that occurred before the appearance of the fatwa - including who asked the question, the references that became the basis, and the reasons that were considered for the issuance of the fatwa - turned into a brief fatwa dissemination. The process is transformed into two forms, namely *tajrīd* and *talkhīṣ* (Hallaq, 1994, p. 85). *Tajrīd* is the elimination of documents that involve all processes from the beginning to the end of a fatwa, such as an introductory sentence, which indicates that the *muftī* has read it regularly. Carefully, the question being asked, the reasoning, reason, and the hypothesis mentioned (Hallaq, 1994, p. 185). This *tajrīd* then leads to the *talkhīṣ* (abridgment), which is a summary containing the content of the fatwa in which the summary no longer mentions in what context the fatwa was issued.

In the period before the development of fatwa modification, the need for a fatwa was not as central as when it was modified into a work. There is a change in form there, where the fatwa, which initially processes directly between the three important elements, namely *mustaftī*, *muftī*, and fatwa, has shifted into an indirect trend where fatwas can be obtained from a book without the involvement of these three elements. The change in the fatwa pattern from the pre-modification era to the modified era in *fiqh* works is not without reason. There are sociological reasons why the basic assumption of jurisprudence is to provide a comprehensive range of legal content (Rusli, 2011, p. 277). From here then, fatwas are transformed as a source of authoritative reference, especially as a contextualization basis for any changing times that are taking place.

In the modern world, the development of fatwas has become increasingly significant after the new media has become an open space for the dissemination of information. The strong reason for the search for fatwas in cyberspace is that *the new generation of Muslims has difficulty* accessing classical Islamic law studies related to the methods and transmission of knowledge (Hosen, 2008, p. 163). The new generation of Muslims is looking for new ways to suit their daily lives. Their daily life, which is never separated from *gadgets*, makes them adapt to these tools. Because it is supported by an actor of *online muftī* who also operates in cyberspace, this adaptation takes place quickly, making them hang their questions about religion in cyberspace. This expansion of reach makes it possible for someone to turn cyberspace into a fatwa market. Therefore, cyberspace is like a place for *mustaftī* to shop fatwas (Hosen, 2008, p. 164). In cyberspace, a social media user can choose and sort out which fatwas are appropriate and suit their tastes because, in cyberspace, the user can access many *websites* or referrals *online muftī* with the same problem. This is different from the pattern before the new media. Due to the complexity of the procedures, it is not possible for *mustaftī* to access so many references to fatwas.

The variety of fatwa themes provides a new space for the Muslim movement. The new media have really influenced the Muslim community to create a new Islamic world where they are able to adapt to the modern world. Several points of changes in the pattern of *istiftā* and *iftā*' from old media to new media can be compiled in the following ways: ease of access, more efficient procedures, democratizing fatwas, there is nothing *muftī* qualification, and disruption of authority.

The points of change above can be summed up in a statement that the existence of new media further reduces the assurance and certainty of the quality and integrity of a fatwa. On the one hand, the effect of new media that brings ease of access has a positive impact on the efficiency processes of fatwas, but on the other hand, the guarantees and quality that existed in the era before new media were eroded and reduced. This is because there is no boundary between eligible scholars and non-scholars who are not properly issuing the fatwas (Hosen, 2008, p. 165). Therefore, the position of the online fatwa is still unclear whether it represents new thinking or is just continuing the old tradition. If, in its dynamics, it plays the role of an agent of new thinking, then it can be called the new Islamic world, but when it only continues the old traditions, there is basically no novelty in the Islamic world, only a new means in the form of cyberspace.

Another factor that influences society to shift from the old *istiftā* and *iftā*' patterns to the digital model is the variety of fatwas issued by each authority within the scope of religious institutions (Aliff & Hamzah, 2014, p. 111). With the variety of fatwas circulating in these social organizations, in the end, people prefer to mobilize their

search for information about religion in the digital world. However, it is to be underlined that a pattern like this develops in a society whose digital world is controlled by the state. Samples like this happen in Malaysia, where the government initiates the Istiftā' 'and iftā' processes in the Internet world. Therefore, the democratization that exists in cyberspace does not occur here because a subject can still control virtual space on the internet.

The emergence of new media as a new Islamic public space will certainly give rise to a new discourse on traditional religious authority. Some scholars argue that the emergence of new media encourages traditional authorities to decentralize themselves to be contested in public spaces (*general public*)(Chawki, 2010, p. 169). Decentralization is defined as a form of resistance to a new media object that traditional authorities still have a place of authority as it has been before. This indicates that there is a movement resistant to the emergence of new media in the public sphere.

Conclusion

Dissemination of fatwas has grown from old media to new media. Dissemination of fatwas in the old media, such as books, newspapers, and manuscripts written on paper, is not able to answer the efficiency of the fatwa distribution. Therefore, as a new media capable of adapting to modernization, social media has changed the old tradition of fatwas into new forms. This new form not only changed the way the text was disseminated, but it also changed the fatwa-giver actors (*mufī*). Three individual *mufī* s above (Abdul Somad, Khalid Basalamah, and Adi Hidayat) have shown that *mufī* no longer requires the requirements of a *mufī* from the classical era (*mujtahid* era) and no need for an industrial media to participate in giving fatwas. They are with their respective personalities and, without intervention from outsiders, are free to upload fatwas content and establish their authority through the fatwas they issued. Furthermore, fatwas are not only instruments of Islamic law but also form a market that gives rise to fatwa contestation. This contestation caused *mufī* s who disseminate their fatwas in social media to be interested in spreading different Islamic thought while maintaining their religious authority.

This cannot be separated from the influence of democratic social media, which makes it possible for everyone else to declare themselves as online *mufī*. These online *mufī* actors are looking for alternative ways to gain their authority. Otherwise, the new media does not get their religious authority because the conditions for a *mufī* are so strict. Therefore, the shift in the fatwa model from old media to new media is related to authority, namely, the authority to influence other people to follow their fatwa. This is because the new generation of Muslims is more popular with the new media and has difficulty accessing fatwas from the competent authority of traditional religious authority.

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