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The Phenomena of *Hijrah* and the Rise of Middle-Class Muslims in Banyumas: Agency, Articulation, and Domination

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Abstract

This study examines the religious phenomenon practised by middle-class Muslim communities in Banyumas. Middle-class Muslim society plays an essential role in social changes. Educational and economic levels and broader social networks identify these community groups. The critical question is how this community group is in its religious context. This research is a field research with a sociological approach. The researcher uses Anthony Giddens' theory to see the dynamics of religion comprehensively. The primary data comes from understanding and practising the diversity of the Muslim community itself, as well as observing three urban mosques: the MBJS Mosque, the FZ Mosque, and the MGI. The secondary data comes from bulletins, journals, books, media, etc. The research concludes that middle-class Muslims make efforts to contextualize the fundamental conception of *hijrah* with the reality of modern urban Muslim society. However, it is still general and symbolic. The articulation of understanding is manifested in the life of religious issues and issues such as staying away

from usury, music, and so on. Understanding that tends to be textual is inseparable from the structure and agents surrounding it.

Keywords: Hijrah, Middle-Class Muslims, Textualist

1. Introduction

The presence of middle-class Muslims in Indonesia brings a wave of new religious escalation. Discussions on social classes in society consistently position the middle class as agents initiating change. This is also due to their capital strength and access to various resources in terms of capital and access to multiple things. This capital strength is then used as a means to facilitate the transformation of changes occurring in society.¹

From an economic-political perspective, the middle class and capitalism are always intertwined. The emergence of the middle class is seen as a logical implication of strengthening capitalism, opening up economic access, democratization, and broader spatial openness. This class is considered strategically positioned in society and capable of bringing about change in the community. Their position in the middle establishes a connection between two societies, one above and one below.² Besides these aspects, the middle class is also identified with a more open character and a modern lifestyle.³

In turn, the middle class becomes an interesting topic of discussion due to its strategic position in social change. Kuntowijoyo adds that the effects and impacts of the wave of change allow for new behaviours and characters within this society. Firstly, the elite culture. In this case, culture owners are not alienated or detached from the new cultural hegemony. Elite cultural owners do not sink into the culture. Secondly, mass culture is experiencing alienation. In this context, cultural owners play no role in shaping the symbols of a culture. To cope with this, most middle-class Muslims negotiate moral teachings in religion

¹ Subkhi Ridho, 'Kelas Menengah Muslim Baru dan Kontestasi Wacana Pluralisme di Media Sosial', *Jurnal Pemikiran Sosiologi* 4, no. 2 (6 November 2017): 88–89, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jps.v4i2.28582>.

² Qorry 'Aina, 'Membaca Kelas Menengah Muslim Indonesia', *Jurnal Politik* 3, no. 2 (16 February 2018): 324, <https://doi.org/10.7454/jp.v3i2.130>.

³ Rofhani, 'Ekspresi Dan Representasi Budaya Perempuan Muslim Kelas Menengah Di Surabaya', *ISLAMICA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 11, no. 2 (13 March 2017): 278, <https://doi.org/10.15642/islamica.2017.11.2.277-310>; Rofhani, 'Pola Religiositas Muslim Kelas Menengah Di Perkotaan', *Religió: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 3, no. 1 (1 March 2013): 58.

with the identity of urban society. This is evident in their attitudes, clothing choices, and modern appearances. It is in this context that the middle-class Muslim group demonstrates differences from the majority of Muslims, especially in spiritual aspects. This phenomenon subsequently underlies the presence of a new-style spiritualist group, often referred to as urban Sufism.⁴

The development of the middle class in the context of Indonesian culture is highlighted in terms of spirituality. Spiritual paths become alternatives for the issues faced by urban Muslims, referred to as the phenomenon of new-style religiosity in Martalia's terminology.⁵ This phenomenon can be observed through social interactions with the religious media they consume and the displays of virtuous practices. These virtuous forms are presented in new styles, conveying religious messages through various media, especially digital ones. This phenomenon can be observed in the presence of social media preachers who disseminate verses and hadiths, although, from the perspective of religious authority, it becomes a separate issue. Short lecture models related to religion are then distributed through media channels. The "followers" paradigm serves as a guide for religious authority in this middle-class Muslim community. Those with many "followers" are considered competent in religion.⁶

The spiritual aspect is a marker for the resurgence of religiousness among middle-class Muslims. The strengthening of this aspect is often referred to as "hijrah." Hijrah refers to the individual's transformation from being less religious to becoming more religious. This change is observed in choices of clothing; those who previously did not wear a hijab start wearing one, and even men adopt pants styles considered Shar'i (following Islamic principles). Some even leave their jobs to embrace what they describe as the hijrah lifestyle fully.

The strengthening of the middle-class Muslim group is particularly prominent in Banyumas. As a developing city, Banyumas is a strategic destination for economic development due to its location between major economic centers such as DKI Jakarta and Yogyakarta. Geographically, Banyumas' position as a

⁴ Rofhani, 'Pola Religiositas Muslim Kelas Menengah Di Perkotaan', 65–66.

⁵ Martalia Ardiyaningrum, 'Religiositas Gaya Baru (Kajian Atas Fenomena Kebangkitan Sufisme Kelas Menengah Perkotaan Di Yogyakarta)', *Dialogia: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Sosial* 15, no. 2 (1 December 2017): 221–42, <https://doi.org/10.21154/dialogia.v15i2.1192>.

⁶ Muhammad Iqbal Juliansyahzen, 'Ideologization of Hijrah in Social Media: Digital Activism, Religious Commodification, and Conservative Domination', *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, 27 February 2023, 157, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol22.iss1.art6>.

trade transit hub for North, South, West, and East routes adds to its appeal. This strategic location is attractive to various parties, including middle-class Muslims. Investors have responded to this opportunity to develop economic activities. Among the evidence of this development is the proliferation of Islamic housing, Sharia tourism, Sharia fashion shows in malls, the prevalence of elite religious gatherings attended by business people and office employees held in elite places such as restaurants, hotels, and mosques in residential areas, and so on.

Middle-class Muslims widely follow various communities and study groups in Banyumas. Among these communities are "SF" and "ABK." Besides actively initiating studies, both communities are actively involved in social and philanthropic activities. Even in certain situations, there are invitations to make donations for the benefit of Muslims, such as those in Palestine, Quran memorizers, and Islamic missionary activities. Donation appeals are made through an infaq auction system, ranging from millions of rupiahs to a minimum of hundreds of thousands of rupiahs.

2. Method

This research is a qualitative study using a sociological approach. The researcher aims to capture social facts related to the various relationships connected to the actions and social practices carried out by humans. The regularity of human social practices and actions forms a collective view of a society.⁷

As a field study, the primary data for this research are the social facts occurring in society. We visited and participated in three places: MJBS, MGI, and MFZ. In addition to being centralized in these three places, the researcher also observed urban public facilities such as shopping centres and visited residential areas. These three mosques were selected based on their strategic urban locations and frequent references as places of worship for urban Muslims. Furthermore, it was intended to observe the social realities of middle-class Muslim life in public spaces. Besides conducting observations, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with several key informants.⁸

⁷ Heddy Shri Ahimsa-Putra, 'Fenomenologi Agama: Pendekatan Fenomenologi Untuk Memahami Agama', *Walisongo: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 20, no. 2 (15 December 2012): 284–85, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.20.2.200>.

⁸ Jonathan Sarwono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Dan Kualitatif* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Graha Ilmu, 2006), 223–24.

The selection of informants was based on their suitability with the determined criteria, namely the level of education and economic strata.⁹ The researcher conducted interviews with nine individuals, consisting of five men and four women. The researcher carried out in-depth interviews with several informants from the middle-class community, including SI, ABK, and congregants actively involved in various studies at urban mosques, as previously mentioned. ABK, based on observation results, even has a unique study program held every Saturday morning at MGI. Meanwhile, SF is more tentative, holding studies in several residential areas with public facilities such as mosques or masjids. Additionally, the researcher documented various studies in books, journals, and bulletins.

The researcher conducted data triangulation by confirming the data with different sources to obtain comprehensive information. Finally, the analysis process was carried out using the Miles and Haberman theory, which consists of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and concluding.¹⁰

3. Theoretical Framework

a. Giddens' Structuration Theory

In understanding the social dynamics and changes within a society, various important variables are needed to interpret the existing reality accurately. In the urban community of Banyumas, the growing religious enthusiasm among middle-class Muslims must be viewed broadly. A comprehensive understanding of religious reality does not stop at understanding the structures surrounding the Muslim community but also considers aspects of agency and the motivations of the community itself. Changes within a society cannot be separated from the roles played by key agents accompanying the changes. Agents in social movements function to enact structural changes to create a new, collective order. Moreover, the critical role of agents serves as a parameter in social changes within society.¹¹

⁹ Yuswohady and Kemal E. Gani, *8 Wajah Kelas Menengah; Berdasarkan Survei Di 9 Kota Utama Indonesia* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2015), 83–122.

¹⁰ Matthew B. Miles et al., *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 1994, 21.

¹¹ Noorhaidi Hasan, 'Book Review: Islam Politik, Teori Gerakan Sosial, Dan Pencarian Model Pengkajian Islam Baru Lintas-Disiplin', *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 44, no. 1 (1 June 2006): 244, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2006.441.241-250>.

Structuration theory guides objectively viewing societal reality. This theory acts as a “peacemaker” amidst the debate between objectivity and subjectivity, structuralism and phenomenologism.¹² Giddens’ concept of structure is conveyed through structuralism and post-structuralism. For Giddens, structure is understood as “rules and resources,” a set of rules and resources that are constantly in process and dialectic, continuously produced and reproduced, having a dual relationship with agents (actors), giving rise to various social actions.¹³ The dual relationship between agents and structure refers to a reciprocal relationship, not a dualism that forms contradictory relations.¹⁴

Giddens explains how structurally, the relationship between agents (actors) shapes the social structure within society. Structuration theory attempts to explain the reality of human social life as seen through expressions. These visible expressions are then referred to as social practices. Practices carried out intensively and continuously will form a pattern that creates a reflection.¹⁵

Furthermore, by observing a social action, an agent can intervene in the process and reality of a situation. In practice, an agent is a party that continuously conveys discourse, ideas, and understanding to specific individuals or groups in society.¹⁶ Structuration illustrates how social structures are produced and reproduced. This process occurs in a connected and continuous manner. Giddens emphasizes that social practices cannot be separated from structure and agency in his structuration theory. The relationship between the two is like two sides of the same coin, inseparable. No social action or social practice occurs by chance. Behind the reality that unfolds, there is an interconnected order.¹⁷

¹² N. Nirzalin, ‘Mendamaikan Aktor dan Struktur dalam Analisis Sosial Perspektif Teori Strukturasi Antony Giddens’, *Jurnal Sosiologi USK (Media Pemikiran & Aplikasi)* 3, no. 1 (17 June 2013): 15–24.

¹³ Haedar Nashir, ‘Memahami Strukturasi Dalam Perspektif Sosiologi Giddens’, *Sosiologi Reflektif* 7, no. 1 (2012): 2.

¹⁴ George Ritzer and Douglas J Goodman, *Teori Sosiologi: Dari Teori Sosiologi Klasik Sampai Perkembangan Mutakhir*, trans. Nurhadi (Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana, 2008), 569.

¹⁵ Anthony Giddens, ‘Comments on the Theory of Structuration’, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 13, no. 1 (March 1983): 75–80, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5914.1983.tb00463.x>.

¹⁶ Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (University of California Press, 1984), 14–15.

¹⁷ Nashir, ‘Memahami Strukturasi’, 6.

b. Characteristics and Parameters of the Middle-Class Muslim

The discourse of the middle class has experienced significant development in line with the economic progress of the country. The development of the middle-class Muslim community can be seen in several aspects, including the business sector. The presence of the middle-class Muslim community is a response to the weak business capabilities of Muslims in Indonesia. Probosutejo, for example, represents the Muslim community, which is actively involved in business and religious activities and supports social and community activities. In the aspect of *da'wah* (Islamic preaching), it was initiated by M. Natsir and his Dewan Dakwah institution, which actively conducted *da'wah* activities through campuses. Campuses became arenas for nurturing religious discourse and modernity while addressing Indonesian issues. The spirited Islamic enthusiasm with a literalist character colors the studies in various *halaqahs* (study circles) and campus mosques. For instance, the Salman Mosque at the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) represents the development of religious studies on public campuses and marks the rise of the middle class. Similarly, the campus mosque at the Bogor Agricultural University (IPB) is also noted for actively organizing similar studies.¹⁸

The classification of the middle-class community can be based on several aspects, such as education, occupation, and income. Izzah classifies education according to the standard of senior high school.¹⁹ This is also explained by Ridho, who states that in terms of education, the middle class has a minimum education standard of higher education.²⁰ However, with the increasing level of education in society, this category has evolved to at least include those who have pursued a diploma. Jati adds to this classification based on expenditure. According to him, citing the Asian Development Bank, the expenditure of the middle-class Muslim community is divided into three categories: lower-middle class, middle class, and upper-middle

¹⁸ Asep Saepudin Jahan, 'Muslim Kelas Menengah Dan Proses Demokratisasi Di Indonesia', *JURNAL INDO-ISLAMIKA* 1, no. 1 (20 July 2011): 125–26, <https://doi.org/10.1548/idi.v1i1.1490>.

¹⁹ Iva Yulianti Umdatul Izzah, 'Kelas Menengah Dan Budaya Konsumsi Di Indonesia', *Jurnal Sosiologi Islam* 4, no. 2 (2014): 2.

²⁰ Subkhi Ridho, *Islamisme, Demokrasi, dan Gaya Hidup: Kelas Menengah Muslim di Indonesia*, Disertasi (Yogyakarta: Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2022).especially for products\labeled as halal or *shar'i* (complying with Islamic principle

class. The lower-middle class has an expenditure of at least 2-4 USD/day. The middle class spends around 4-10 USD/day, and the upper-middle class spends 10-20 USD/day. This indicates the rising presence of the middle-class Muslim community with increased consumption and lifestyle.²¹

Regarding religiosity, the strengthening of the middle class is marked by the increasing presence of religious symbols in public spaces. Religious symbols have become a new identity for the middle-class Muslim community. Famous Islam is developed as an identity and habit displayed in public spaces and daily life. They want to be recognized as Muslims on the one hand, but on the other hand, they also want to assert that they are modern people. Therefore, religious elements, or Islamic and modern aspects, become inseparable parts (hybrid) of their religious life.²²

The concept of the middle class using the perspective of social structure also comes from Pierre Bourdieu. The middle class is described as a group of people identifiable through social relationships and capital ownership. Those who act as capital owners, whether in wealth, education, or skills, can be categorized as the middle class. This concept is based on the close relationship with the concepts of field, habitus, and capital that influence the process of analyzing modern culture, especially lifestyle and consumerism issues.²³

4. Result and Discussion

a. Socio-Cultural, Economic-Political, and Religious Context of Banyumas

Geographically, Banyumas is situated between two major provinces, namely West Java and the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). Both regions indirectly influence the social and cultural construction of Banyumas. Although culturally Javanese, Banyumas has distinct

²¹ Wasisto Raharjo Jati, 'Less Cash Society: Menakar Mode Konsumerisme Baru Kelas Menengah Indonesia', *Jurnal Sosioteknologi* 14, no. 2 (2 October 2015): 104, <https://doi.org/10.5614/sostek.itbj.2015.14.2.1>.

²² Wasisto Raharjo Jati, 'Islam Populer Sebagai Pencarian Identitas Muslim Kelas Menengah Indonesia', *TEOSOFI: Jurnal Tasawuf Dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, no. 1 (5 June 2015): 140, <https://doi.org/10.15642/teosofi.2015.5.1.139-163>.

²³ Hellmunth Lange and Lange Meier, *The New Middle Classes: Globalizing Lifestyles, Consumerism and Environmental Concern* (London: Springer, 2009), 1; Yuswohady and Gani, 8 *Wajah Kelas Menengah; Berdasarkan Survei Di 9 Kota Utama Indonesia*, 83–122.

characteristics compared to other Javanese cultural regions. One notable difference is the language aspect; Banyumas has a unique dialect that sets it apart from other Javanese-speaking regions.²⁴ Besides language, differences also exist in aspects of the arts, forms of traditional ceremonies, and organizational structures. Culturally, the Banyumas community tends to exhibit a more populist attitude, unlike the generally more elitist Javanese (Mataram) regions.²⁵

The socio-cultural development of Banyumas cannot be separated from the Babad Pasir text. The long cultural journey of the Banyumas community is well documented in this chronicle. It serves as a cultural inspiration for the Banyumas people to develop a culture oriented toward the present.²⁶ The meeting between old cultural values and modern values has produced a synthesis that plays a significant role in the life of the Banyumas community. This synthesis manifests in a more open and inclusive social and cultural attitude, forming a character known as “cablaka.” This character represents the distinct openness of the Banyumas community.²⁷

Banyumas has unique cultural traits compared to other Javanese regions. Traits such as egalitarianism, non-structuralism, populism, and openness are deeply ingrained in the hearts of the Banyumas people.²⁸ In cultural relations, awareness of and respect for different cultures among community members is fundamental.

In the economic and political context, Banyumas is a target for business investment. Investment is a crucial element for economic growth in Banyumas. The largest investment sectors are housing, industrial areas, and office buildings, contributing 39 percent of the total investment value. The significant investment in these sectors

²⁴ I. Dewa Putu Wijana, ‘Pemertahanan Dialek Banyumas Terhadap Dominasi Dialek Solo-Yogya’, *Jurnal Humaniora* 17, no. 2 (8 August 2012): 157, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jh.840>.

²⁵ Fajar Assidiq, ‘Menguatnya Perkembangan Salafisme Dan Dominasi Ekonomi Kelompok Bisnis Arab Di Banyumas’, *Integralistik* 30, no. 2 (2019): 135, <https://doi.org/10.15294/integralistik.v30i2.20875>.

²⁶ Ngismatul Khoeriyah, Warto Warto, and Sariyatun Sariyatun, ‘Exploring the Interpretation of Cultural Values in Babad Banyumas Manuscript as a Means to Understanding Banyumas Society’, *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 5, no. 4 (6 May 2018): 97, <https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v5i4.195>.

²⁷ Sugeng Priyadi, ‘Babad Pasir: Banyumas Dan Sunda’, *Jurnal Humaniora* 14, no. 2 (3 August 2012): 186–200, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jh.756>.

²⁸ Prana Kusuma, ‘Banyumas Cultural Center’, 2019, <https://core.ac.uk/display/270174973?recSetID=>.

has impacted the demographic growth of Banyumas. Specifically, the housing sector attracts considerable attention from investors, with 105 developers involved in housing projects as of 2016.²⁹

Additionally, their presence also influences the religious practices of the Muslim community, particularly the middle class. This is because middle-class Muslims predominantly inhabit the housing developed by Arab network groups.³⁰ However, in general, religious life in Banyumas is harmonious. Differences do not lead to anarchic actions. Studies and observations indicate a relatively low level of radicalism, even though Banyumas is considered a strategic location for spreading radical ideologies.³¹

b. Construction of Hijrah Understanding: Structure and Agency

The phenomenon of hijrah represents a new religious trend among urban middle-class Muslims throughout Indonesia, including in Banyumas, Central Java. As a social movement, the hijrah trend has become a form of collective action reflecting the heightened awareness of the importance of religion in daily life.³² Numerous factors motivate middle-class Muslims to engage in the hijrah movement.

Among these factors is the increasing pressure of modernity, which leads to an identity crisis among middle-class Muslims. This shared sense of crisis has spurred the emergence and growth of a broad and open social movement within the religious sphere. The trend has shown significant development and strengthening in various fields, especially as numerous celebrities participate in religious activities framed with the hijrah slogan.³³

²⁹ Assidiq, 'Menguatnya Perkembangan Salafisme Dan Dominasi Ekonomi Kelompok Bisnis Arab Di Banyumas', 137.

³⁰ *Observation of Sapphire Housing*, Mei 2022, Mei 2022.

³¹ Yudi Suryadi and Ahmad Zayyadi, 'Melacak Gerakan Radikalisme Agama Dan Terorisme Di Kabupaten Banyumas (Sebuah Upaya Deradikalasi Islam Dari Tudingan Sebagai Agama Kekerasan Dan Teroris)', *An-Nidzam* 4, no. 2 (2017): 43–54; Rindha Widyaningsih, S. Sumiyem, and K. Kuntarto, 'The Potential of Religious Radicalism Movement in Banyumas', *Walisonsong: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 25, no. 1 (20 December 2017): 203–30, <https://doi.org/10.21580/ws.25.1.1807>.

³² Mila Nabilah Zahara, Dadan Wildan, and Siti Komariah, 'Gerakan Hijrah: Pencarian Identitas Untuk Muslim Milenial di Era Digital', *Indonesian Journal of Sociology, Education, and Development* 2, no. 1 (30 June 2020): 54, <https://doi.org/10.52483/ijsed.v2i1.21>.

³³ Ratri Rizki Kusumalestari, 'Hijrahtainment: Composing Piety and Profane as Commodification of Religion by Media', *Mediator: Jurnal Komunikasi* 13, no. 2 (26 December 2020): 290, <https://doi.org/10.29313/mediator.v13i2.6610>.

The hijrah trend cannot be separated from the presence of structures and agents that actively and continuously construct religious understanding, particularly concerning hijrah among middle-class Muslims in Banyumas. According to Giddens' approach, it is crucial to note that social practice (i.e., the hijrah trend) cannot be separated from structure and agency. Their relationship is akin to two sides of the same coin, inseparable. Two dominant structures shape our understanding: urban mosques and social media.

Mosques have become the basis for movements and the space for producing religious and even political understanding, as seen in Surakarta, where cadre formation and ideological movements occur.³⁴ In contemporary Muslim society, urban mosques are arenas for knowledge production and contestation of religious discourse. Thus, the studies conducted in urban mosques reflect the religious attitudes of the middle-class Muslim community in the city.

Urban mosques are strategically positioned to construct religious understanding among the middle-class community in Banyumas. At least three mosques play a strategic role in constructing religious understanding for urban Muslims in Banyumas: MJBS, MGI, and MFZ. Their proximity to universities, offices, public centers, and the facilities provided to the congregants are the main considerations for many middle-class Muslims in Banyumas when choosing these mosques as their primary references for religious matters, particularly regarding the Quran and practical laws (fiqh).

Field observations show that urban Muslims widely attend urban mosque studies. They often arrive in cars, donning urban Muslim attire. Urban mosques in Banyumas play a central role in shaping, developing, and solidifying the religious literacy of the middle-class Muslim community. The religious literacy acquired through a series of studies attended by middle-class Muslims becomes a foundation for various articulations of religious understanding in daily life.

³⁴ Fathol Hedi, 'Masjid, Halaqoh dan Islamic Activism Potret Halaqoh Di Masjid-Masjid Kota Surakarta', *Jurnal SMART (Studi Masyarakat, Religi, dan Tradisi)* 4, no. 1 (28 June 2018): 39–50, <https://doi.org/10.18784/smart.v4i1.593>; Agus Sunaryo, 'Masjid Dan Ideologisasi Radikalisme Islam', *Akademika : Jurnal Pemikiran Islam (Online)* 22, no. 1 (23 June 2017): 225–48.

In addition to urban mosques, social media plays a crucial role in shaping urban Muslims' religious understanding and practices in Banyumas. The development of information technology and social media today impacts many aspects of life, including economic, social, cultural, and religious aspects.³⁵ The high intensity of social media usage in the community has driven many official religious institutions to adapt to this new environment.³⁶ Social media has become a new habit for disseminating religious understanding, which is then absorbed by the community.³⁷

This fact underscores that technological and social media developments have created a new habitus regarding religious learning, which can now be done anywhere and anytime, thus marking a shift in religious authority.³⁸ In general, Slama notes that Indonesian Muslims are inseparable from the role of social media.³⁹

Therefore, all urban mosques in Banyumas recognize the importance of social media in disseminating religious discourse. Besides urban mosques and social media, the understanding and practices of urban Muslims are also constructed by various agents, both individuals and those affiliated with specific religious groups. Identifying the importance of agents in constructing the understanding of hijrah points to efforts by agents through intersubjective interaction networks in the process of institutionalization and habitualization.⁴⁰

Firstly, institutionalization. This interaction network is the initial process of agents building individual awareness into action. In the context of this study, the action refers to the understanding of

³⁵ John Downey and Natalie Fenton, 'New Media, Counter Publicity and the Public Sphere', *New Media & Society* 5, no. 2 (1 June 2003): 185–202, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444803005002003>.

³⁶ Patrick Eisenlohr, 'Media and Religious Diversity', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41, no. 1 (2012): 38, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-092611-145823>.

³⁷ Hilman Latief and Irfan Abubakar, *Kaum Muda Muslim Milenial: Konservatisme, Hibridasi Identitas, Dan Tantangan Radikalisme*, ed. Chaider S Biamualim (Jakarta: Center for the Study of Religion and Culture (CSRC) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2018), 25.

³⁸ Gary D. Gaddy, 'The Power of the Religious Media: Religious Broadcast Use and the Role of Religious Organizations in Public Affairs', *Review of Religious Research* 25, no. 4 (1984): 290, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3511363>.

³⁹ Martin Slama, 'Practising Islam Through Social Media in Indonesia', *Indonesia and the Malay World* 46, no. 134 (2 January 2018): 1–4, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2018.1416798>.

⁴⁰ Nur Syam, *Islam Pesisir* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2005), 44.

religion, particularly concerning hijrah, which is then articulated in daily life. For this purpose, the study places ustaz (religious teachers), hijrah celebrities, and structural members of urban mosques as agents with their religious ideas interacting with the middle-class urban Muslim community. For example, study sessions at various mosques are designed to begin with a lecture and end with a Q&A session. This interaction mechanism is facilitated by a moderator who allows the congregants to ask questions. Congregants can write their questions on paper and submit them to the moderator. Questions often relate to usury, music, daily worship, and fiqh laws.⁴¹

The role of agents is significant in constructing religious insights and understanding. The influence of urban mosques in Banyumas on specific religious groups and the high awareness of modernity make it clear that the rational, goal-oriented actions discussed in this study aim to disseminate a Salafist-leaning religious understanding and establish a public Muslim identity. Thus, it can be understood that through institutionalization, each urban mosque structure has clearly considered its audience, creating rational actions acceptable to the middle-class urban Muslim community (subjective reality) attending religious studies.

Secondly, habitualization. This process refers to efforts to integrate rational, goal-oriented actions into daily life. The various aspects of religious study material provided have fully engaged in intersubjective interactions between agents and the middle-class Muslim community. The high intensity of these interactions makes individuals consciously perform actions based on no longer needing various reinterpretations of them. Actions that have become part of daily life have become embedded in their cognitive and evaluative systems.

c. Articulation of Hijrah in Daily Life

Based on the author's observations in the field, the meaning of hijrah, as mentioned above, experiences diverse articulations. At the very least, the construction of the understanding of hijrah can be seen from the

⁴¹ Observation, Urban Mosque, 2022.

presentation of material by Ustadz Ari Wahyudi, S.Si, in the Purwokerto Study Info Bulletin Edition 1792022 , which is an adaptation from the As-Sunah magazine edition 11/VI/1423 H and has been published on the website muslim.or.id. This bulletin is distributed and provided for free to the congregations of urban mosques in Banyumas.

Photo. "Buletin Info Kajian Purwokerto" Edition 1792022



The concept of hijrah is explained by presenting the views of the salaf scholars as follows: "Follow the paths of guidance and do not be sad due to the few followers. And avoid the paths of misguidance, and do not be intimidated by the number of those who are doomed (following them)." The construction of the understanding of hijrah, as stated in the bulletin above, is one form of ideas, doctrines, and concepts that are disseminated in urban mosques as a structure related to agents (ustaz).

At the very least, the articulation of the understanding of hijrah in the Muslim middle-class community in Banyumas is reflected in several aspects of life, both in personal and religious contexts. The identification of the articulation of the understanding of hijrah in the daily lives of the Muslim middle class community in Banyumas

is reflected, among other things, in the doctrine of “feeling oneself to be good.” This doctrine can be found in religious sermons and the distributed bulletin. Essentially, this doctrine speaks about the recommendation to avoid feeling superior to others.

One informant, Novi, falls into the category of a climber. The climber category consists of factory workers, salespeople, and self-employed workers. Novi is part of the Muslim middle-class community and comes from a devout and disciplined family, especially in terms of religion. The construction of hijrah understanding that Novi acquired during a series of religious studies points to a simple concept. According to him,⁴²

“Hijrah is like what’s in the Qur’an. It is also exemplified by the Prophet. Basically, follow that. For example, if we are in a bad situation that is not in line with what’s in the Qur’an, we should start following what’s there. Because I still can’t do much, that’s why I follow the religious studies at the mosque. Often, it’s here (in one of the urban mosques). Sometimes at night I also watch on YouTube or just follow it on Instagram”.

Several aspects of Novi’s statement above can be highlighted. First, Novi’s understanding of hijrah fundamentally aligns with the normative doctrine of hijrah, which agents and structures often disseminate. This understanding is theoretical and textual. Second, Novi’s understanding of hijrah in the context of “avoiding feeling oneself to be good” is demonstrated by his consistent attendance at religious studies held in mosques.

In addition to Novi, Tanti is an active Muslimah who participates in various religious studies at different urban mosques. According to her, the concept of hijrah is “behaving according to the Sharia as outlined in the Qur’an and Hadith, whether in terms of dress, social interactions, shopping, or other aspects”⁴³ Previously, she lived in Yogyakarta, and after moving to Purwokerto, Tanti began to seek out spaces that offer religious studies similar to those she encountered while living in Yogyakarta. At this point, her enthusiasm for continually seeking

⁴² Novi, Agustus 2022.

⁴³ Tanti, Agustus 2022.

religious knowledge by attending conventional religious study spaces has become a habit. This is evidenced by her statement that Tanti has consistently attended religious studies held in urban mosques for approximately a year and a half since her move.

Based on the above description, several conclusions can be drawn in this section. First, agents, in this case understood as ustaz or ustazah, and structures, understood as urban mosques and social media spaces, play a crucial role in the construction of religious understanding among the urban middle-class community in Banyumas. Second, the understanding of the concept of hijrah refers to the activity of moving from things that are not in accordance with Sharia to behavior that aligns with Sharia. Third, the articulation of the understanding of hijrah in personal life refers to efforts at self-introspection, which then becomes an action to continuously attend religious studies and avoid considering oneself superior to others.

The articulation of understanding regarding hijrah in religious issues can be observed in three aspects. First, avoid the practice of riba (usury) and prefer products labeled halal by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI). Desi (the informant) strongly rejects the practice of riba. She has received many explanations through various studies about the prohibition of riba. She even willingly resigned from the riba system. This is reflected in her statement as follows :⁴⁴

“Then avoid Riba. I used to work at a BPR (rural bank); at that time, I already had two children. After attending studies in the mosques and participating in a special ‘Islamic Banking’ training program held by Akhwat Bergerak for one year (about 7-10 years ago before resigning from work), my heart was restless. Eventually, I chose to resign and applied to an Islamic bank but lost out due to my age. Now, I am a housewife.”

Desi falls into the “very cautious” category regarding the preference for halal-labelled products. She is concerned that buying something without a halal label could affect her life. Desi’s main

⁴⁴ Desi, Agustus 2022.

doctrine states that anything entering the haram body will affect the blessing in life.⁴⁵

In another religious issue, covering aurat (modesty), Muslim women must wear the jilbab (headscarf). However, there are differing attitudes among the middle-class Muslims in Banyumas. Although the majority agree that wearing the jilbab is obligatory, it is not used as a tool to justify negative judgments against others who do not wear it.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, both Irma and Novi mandate wearing the jilbab whenever they go out. At the same time, they also consider the jilbab's color, motif, and style according to current trends, except for the "niqab" (cadar).

The next issue is avoiding music. There is a varied response from the Muslim community regarding music. In the context of the middle-class Muslims in Banyumas, there is a stronger inclination toward the prohibition of music. This is expressed by Faisal, who is also actively involved in studies at urban mosques. He once asked Ustadz ND, Lc, during a study session about riba and sought guidance on advice to give to a friend who is still involved in riba and enjoys music and smoking. Faisal himself understands that music is haram, whereas his friend still enjoys music, and he does not yet have a well-memorized proof to provide this advice to his friend.⁴⁷

In response to questions from the congregation, Ustadz ND answered generally by citing hadith that explains that whoever abandons a prohibition for the sake of Allah will be replaced by something better. Riba, music, smoking, and other prohibited things should be abandoned, and if one can leave them, Allah will replace them with something better. Regarding music, Ustadz ND agrees with the group that deems it haram. He even criticized those who are good at reading the Qur'an with a beautiful voice but still enjoy music, stating that their Qur'anic recitation only reaches the throat. He further stated:⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Desi.

⁴⁶ Irma, Agustus 2022; Novi.

⁴⁷ Observation, Urban Mosque, 2022.

⁴⁸ Observation, Urban Mosque, 2022

“I fear that such people (those who are good at reading the Qur'an but still enjoy music) are included in the Prophet's saying, 'those who read the Qur'an but their recitation is no more than the throat'. This means that the recitation of the Qur'an does not enter the heart, only on the tongue.”

The same understanding is conveyed by Faisal, who is also active in various studies at urban mosques. According to him, the ruling on music is haram. Previously, he was also a music enthusiast, but after participating in studies at several urban mosques, he left the world of music. Furthermore, he believes that selling musical instruments is also haram. According to him, there is only one musical instrument permitted, which was allowed in the time of the Prophet, namely the rebana (a type of drum).⁴⁹

d. Soft Islamization and the Dominance of Textual Understanding

Understanding that must be returned to textual normativity becomes a doctrine that must always be practiced in daily life. On the issue of riba, the understanding of riba among middle-class Muslims is very cautious. Scholars have presented several studies on the topic of riba at the same mosques. This can be seen from their responses to the importance of Islamic banks, although they believe these banks are still not fully in line with Islamic principles.

For example, Brother Fiki mentioned that as long as Islamic banks are under the supervision of Bank Indonesia, they remain within the Western system. Nevertheless, to avoid riba issues in banks, he chooses the wadi'ah scheme over muḍārabah when selecting savings accounts at Islamic banks. According to him, the wadi'ah scheme, which is based solely on safekeeping without any addition to the principal, is a safer system against riba.⁵⁰

Besides the issue of riba, the issue of music refers to a more normative-textual understanding. Music in any form, including what is called 'Islamic music,' cannot be justified. The argument is that if there is 'Islamic music,' then there should also be Islamic cigarettes. For this group, something with a clear ruling cannot be labeled with

⁴⁹ Faisal (Islamic Activist Purwokerto), Agustus 2022.

⁵⁰ Fiki (Islamic Activist Purwokerto), 12 August 2022.

Islamic values. Conversely, things not prohibited by Sharia can be labeled with Islamic tags as part of Syiar and da'wah, such as labels on Islamic banking, Islamic tourism, Islamic jilbabs, and so on.⁵¹

The researcher then refers to the religious attitude of middle-class Muslims as the “soft formalization of sharia” or “soft Islamization,” which is the subtle formalization of Sharia or Islamization in daily life. This labeling is based on the argument that the desire to implement Islamic Sharia at the level of establishing an Islamic state is not the dominant topic of discussion. The main focus of the doctrine in discussions, whether at the level of agents, structures, or congregations, is oriented towards normative fiqh al-Dīn (normative).

This Sharia formalization movement is unlike political formalization movements, such as those seeking to replace the state ideology, like Jamaah Islamiah, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI),⁵² Front Pembela Islam (FPI),⁵³ and others.⁵⁴ Instead, this group desires the implementation of Sharia in social life, not extending to the level of state governance. The researcher then refers to this understanding as the desire to apply Islam in daily life with labels and branding affiliated with Islamic norms.

The understanding of middle-class Muslims paradigmatically emphasizes a literal-normative understanding. This understanding cannot be separated from the role of structure and agents in disseminating religious studies. The presence of studies in urban mosques and their more widespread distribution through various media make the process of knowledge construction more accessible and faster to accept by society.

⁵¹ Fiki (Islamic Activist Purwokerto).

⁵² Masdar Hilmy, ‘Akar-Akar Transnasionalisme Islam Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI)’, *ISLAMICA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 6, no. 1 (1 September 2011): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.15642/islamica.2011.6.1.1-13>; Nilda Hayati, ‘Konsep Khilafah Islāmiyyah Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia: Kajian Living Al-Qur'an Perspektif Komunikasi’, *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 12, no. 1 (6 June 2017): 169–200–200, <https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2017.12.1.169-200>.

⁵³ Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, ‘Front Pembela Islam (FPI)’, AFTER AHOK: (Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, 2018), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep17684.6>.

⁵⁴ Angel Rabasa and John Haseman, ‘The Challenge of Terrorism and Religious Extremism’, in *The Military and Democracy in Indonesia*, 1st ed., Challenges, Politics, and Power (RAND Corporation, 2002), 81–90, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mr1599srf.17>; Philips J. Vermonte et al., ‘Gerakan “Hibrida” Aksi Bela Islam: Aktor, Struktur, Motivasi Dan Pendanaan’ (Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2020), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep25371>.

5. Conclusion

Based on the studies conducted and presented in previous chapters, there are several conclusions: Hijrah is generally understood as a process of change and transformation from a condition considered unfavourable to a better condition by Sharia provisions. Middle-class Muslims contextualize the basic concept of hijrah with the reality of modern urban Muslim society. However, this contextualization tends to be general and symbolic and is often understood in a textual manner.

In articulating the understanding of hijrah, it can be seen in avoiding riba and music. There is an understanding that rejects labeling, particularly for things with a definite ruling, except for issues that do not violate Sharia. The understanding and religious attitudes of middle-class Muslims in Banyumas cannot be separated from the social structure and the role of agents in spreading religious discourse. Urban mosques play a crucial role in the construction of religious understanding among middle-class Muslims due to their active organization of various studies. Additionally, agents with a textual perspective on understanding religious teachings play an important role.

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