

Da'wa in Social Media: The Views of Ustad Hanan Attaki and Felix Siauw to The Hijrah Phenomenon

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the views of Ustad Hanan Attaki (UHA) and Ustad Felix Siauw, who use social media as a medium of preaching. The utilization of the internet as a new way of preaching Islam has helped shape contemporary forms of religious thinking and behavior for Muslim youth in Indonesia. One of them is marked by the emergence of the trend of hijrah in their community. This study aimed to explain the Islamic views of UHA and Siauw, which have implications for the emergence and development of the hijrah trend. This research focuses on extracting data through observations on a number of predetermined social media accounts, field participation and interviews, and puts forward literature studies on the fragmentation of religious authority as a result of the emergence of a number of popular ustadz who use social media as a new space for preaching. Regarding the fragmentation of religious authority, this article is based on the thesis of Eickelman and Anderson, which states that the current religious authorities are those who have succeeded in transmitting religious texts and preaching them through new media. In more detail, this study discusses two important issues, namely the trend of Islamic da'wa on social media and, in particular, the implications of the Islamic views of UHA and Siauw for the emergence of the trend of hijrah Muslim youth. This article concludes that according to UHA, hijrah is a message of Islamic da'wa that not only tells about individual repentance but also as a current trend that young Muslims must follow. Meanwhile, Siauw interprets it as an effort to awaken the spirit of Muslims to achieve the establishment of the Islamic Khilafah.

Keywords: Hijrah, Social Media, Muslim Youth, Ustad Hanan Attaki, and Ustad Felix Siauw

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mengkaji pandangan Ustadz Hanan Attaki (UHA) dan Ustadz Felix Siauw yang menggunakan jejaring sosial sebagai media dakwah. Penggunaan internet sebagai cara baru dalam mendakwahkan Islam turut membentuk corak perilaku dan pemikiran keberagaman yang kekinian bagi kaum muda Muslim di Indonesia. Salah satunya ditandai dengan kemunculan tren berhijrah di tengah komunitas mereka. Tujuan penelitian ini ingin menjelaskan tentang pandangan keislaman UHA dan Siauw yang berimplikasi terhadap kemunculan dan perkembangan tren hijrah tersebut. Riset ini menitikberatkan pada penggalian data melalui pengamatan di sejumlah akun media sosial yang sudah ditentukan, partisipasi lapangan dan wawancara, serta mengedepankan kajian literatur tentang terjadinya fragmentasi otoritas keagamaan sebagai akibat dari kemunculan sejumlah ustadz populer yang memanfaatkan media sosial sebagai ruang baru dalam berdakwah. Mengenai fragmentasi otoritas keagamaan tersebut, artikel ini berpijak pada tesis Eickelman dan Anderson, yang menyebut pemegang otoritas keagamaan sekarang ini adalah mereka yang berhasil mentransmisi teks keagamaan dan mendakwahkannya melalui media-media baru. Secara lebih terperinci, penelitian ini membahas dua isu penting yaitu tren dakwah Islam di media sosial dan secara khusus implikasi pandangan UHA dan Siauw terhadap kemunculan tren berhijrah kaum muda Muslim. Artikel ini menyimpulkan, bahwa menurut UHA, hijrah merupakan pesan dakwah Islam yang tidak hanya bercerita mengenai pertaubatan individu, tetapi juga sebagai sebuah tren kekinian yang harus diikuti kaum muda Muslim. Sementara Siauw mengartikannya sebagai sebuah upaya membangkitkan spirit umat Islam untuk bisa mencapai berdirinya Khilafah Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Hijrah, Media Sosial, Kaum Muda Muslim, Ustadz Hanan Attaki, dan Ustadz Felix Siauw*

INTRODUCTION

Dissemination of Islamic da'wa content on social media has become one of the important factors that shape the religious behavior of young Muslims in Indonesia in the last decade. A number of young and popular *ustadz* (Islamic teacher or preacher), for example, Ustad Hanan Attaki (UHA), Felix Siauw, Abdul Somad and Khalid Basalamah, became agents of the process of seeding the religious discourse. They use alternative friendship networks to proselytize to attract young groups who are the biggest users.¹ These *ustadz* compose their religious messages creatively

and as friendly as possible to the middle-class Muslim. Each ustad has a variety of Islamic views. However, of the many ustadz who use cyberspace, the da'wa messages are related to the importance of emigrating (*hijrah*).

Hijrah is one of the Islamic religious doctrines often preached by ustadz on social media, is not a new discourse. Abdul Karim Amrullah, commonly called Buya Hamka, in *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, defined hijrah as a movement from worshiping idols to being submissive to Allah.² On the other side, Mustafa Dieb al-Bugha interprets it as "leaving the infidel area or region to the Islamic ones for fear of slander and its consequences".³ Meanwhile, the Holy Qur'an mentions the word "hijrah" 28 times which is spread through 17 verses in 17 letters.⁴ Not all of the hijrah verses have the same meaning. Moreover, there are only six verses that are relevant to the topic of this research (al-Baqarah: 218, an-Nahl: 110, al-Ankabut: 26, an-Nisa: 100, al-Mudastir: 5, dan al-Muzammil: 10). In general, the meaning of hijrah is often attributed to the movement of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina to save themselves from the threats and persecution of the Quraysh (622 M). However, because of the many hijrah verses, this word has a non-singular interpretation.

Hijrah, as a contemporary Islamic discourse, requires a more contextual interpretation model, especially in the current era. Therefore, ustadz on social media interpret it more broadly by bringing it closer to the popular lifestyle of Muslim youths. The hijrah lifestyle of these Muslim youths includes changing the way of dressing to be more covering (even some wear *niqab*) and using Islamic branded beauty products for Muslim women; wearing long pants without covering the ankles and keeping a beard for men, and associating with communities who both in hijrah condition, and actively campaigning for Islamic messages on social media.

Yuswohady saw that the religious behavior of young Muslims who followed this trend of hijrah *greatly* influenced them in choosing certain products, such as when buying headscarves, wearing cosmetics, traveling, spending the night at hotels, buying houses, and saving money

at the bank. In doing all that, they choose products labeled as “Islamic”.⁵ Thus, it is not surprising that the topic that discusses the existence of social media ustadz and its implications for the phenomenon of migration of Muslim youth has closeness to popular Islamic discourse.

This study finds relevance in today's context because it brings together the emergence of new religious behaviors that connect the religious character of middle-class Muslims, which on the one hand seem inclusive of the trend of popular culture development but tend to be exclusive in responding to a number of secular thoughts – such as democracy, nation-state, human rights, secularism and liberalism.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative method based on literature review from journals, books, and articles related to the topic of this research title. The qualitative method was deliberately chosen because the researcher wanted to emphasize three important things: process, sharpness of analysis, and meaning of research results. Those three things are the strengths of qualitative methods.

To complement the three strengths, this qualitative research was accompanied by observations, which were more focused on two ways. *The first* was an online observation of various da'wa content and converted narration in official YouTube and Instagram accounts managed by the creative teams of Ustadz Hanan Attaki (UHA) and Ustadz Felix Siauww as well as many social media accounts containing various da'wa content of both mubaligh (da'i). Also, online conversations in a number of hijrah community groups. Online observations allow the researcher to follow topics discussed by UHA and Felix Siauww, as well as the conversations of their followers through the comments column in their official accounts, followed by analyzing various reviews and comments so that the researcher could understand the views of both ustadz, as well as finding the relationship between various Islamic narratives that shape religious behavior called the *hijrah*, which is the most popular trend for Indonesian Muslim youth today.

The second was observation through offline communication. This offline activity was done by getting involved in several hijrah communities. This observation made the researcher conduct interviews with the members of

the hijrah community, either face-to-face, by phone, or using social media. This research focused on the two young and popular mubaligh (da'i), UHA and Felix Siaw.

DISCUSSION

This article places UHA and Felix Siaw as the main research objects because many consider them as the most representative ustadz who use social media as an instrument of da'wa. Various da'wa contents are often used as references for young Muslims, such as topics about keeping one's gaze and temper, staying away from arrogance, wearing the hijab, being sincere, and various other *ghairu mahdah* worship. Therefore, the popularity of both of them on social networks is very high. However, the views of UHA and Siaw on the concept of hijrah seem different. In preaching the urgency of hijrah, UHA prioritizes the approach aspect so that young people want to hijrah. He does not interpret hijrah as a process of changing someone into a sich. UHA and Shift Pemuda Hijrah, a hijrah community he founded, preached by approaching various hobby communities and subcultures. Meanwhile, Siaw highlighted the meaning of hijrah as a necessity for every Muslim to achieve the ideals of the Islamic caliphate. This is very reasonable because Siaw is an activist of Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). In 2002, Siaw just started getting to know Islam, so he became a convert and chose HTI and the Student Islamic Spiritual Board (Badan Kerohanian Islam Mahasiswa/ BKIM) IPB.

Felix is known as a phenomenal ustadz in the real and virtual world. He is a prolific writer because so far, he has written about 8 books, including a book entitled "Khilafah," which was withdrawn from circulation. In addition to writing, he also has a busy schedule of invitations to give Islamic lectures at various study events, halaqah, and training. Then, in cyberspace, he really took advantage of the use of social media, such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, to disseminate his Islamic views.

In most of his lecture material, he tells about his personal origin, that he was from a Catholic family, ethnic Chinese, then converted to Islam. He repeated the delivery of this information in many Islamic forums, both

when he was invited to be a speaker in the da'wa forum or as a trainer for Islamic motivational training organized by HTI. For him, this lecture material had inspired many people because he was the only ustad of Chinese ethnicity, converted to Islam, and dared to speak about the importance of Islam.⁶

Compared to Islamic missionaries affiliated with large organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), UHA and Felix Siauw are new partisans on the stage of religious discourse in Indonesia. Both of them deliberately use social media as an instrument of da'wah by targeting 150 million users, most of whom are young people.⁷ UHA uses YouTube and Instagram, while Felix Siauw uses four virtual world friendship services, namely YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. As new idols, both of them have a lot of followers. It can be seen from their respective Instagram and YouTube accounts. UHA has 8.8 million followers on Instagram and 2.1 million subscribers on his personal YouTube account (quoted on Thursday, 1/10/2021). Meanwhile, Felix Siauw has 4.7 million followers on Instagram and 798 thousand subscribers on his personal YouTube (quoted Thursday, 3/9/2020).

Many scholars have paid attention to the strategy of da'wah in social media because it is considered successful in containing the development of popular culture and trends in Islamic populism.⁸ However, only very few people focus their reviews on the hubbub of Muslim youth on social media, except in three works by Najib Kailani.⁹ The whole discussion discusses the fragmentation of religious authority in highlighting the role of mubaligh, and also paying sufficient attention to the aspects of the view of 'social media ustad' to Islam and the implication to the emergence of the *hijrah* phenomenon. This article seeks to strengthen the discourse that examines the religious behavior of young Muslims in the form of hijrah as an implication of the Islamic views of social media ustadz. The naming of "social media ustad" is a continuation of the fanfare of celebrity ustadz, who fulfill religious activities on television in the previous period.¹⁰

The emergence of *hijrah* is a form of religious behavior that is becoming a trend in the young Muslim community. Ustads narrate hijrah more generally through social media in order to motivate changes in the

behavior of Muslim youth to be in accordance with the Islamic faith. Meanwhile, the more general meaning of hijrah is the implication of various converted narratives that are produced and preached on social media repeatedly so that they become a trend that is inherent in the personality of Muslim youth nowadays.

Of the many narrations created, the story of personal change is the most commonly echoed by young ustadz, such as Ustad Felix Siauww. In almost every lecture activity recorded on a number of YouTube accounts, Felix Siauww always recounts his courage, as an ethnic Chinese, to convert from Catholicism to Muslim in 2002. This is different from Ustad Hanan Attaki (UHA), who narrates Islamic da'wah creatively by transforming old patterns. In this way, da'wah becomes a new way that is more friendly to young Muslim groups. For UHA, hijrah is a big narration that needs to popularize young Muslims with a new and trendy spirit. Therefore, UHA uses a community-based approach in promoting hijrah as a trend.¹¹

UHA and Felix Siauww are well-known as young and cool ustadz on social media. This popularity is due to their efforts to transform the way of da'wah from a conventional one to a very contemporary one. To UHA, for example, before meeting Fani Krismandar (commonly called Inong), a famous skateboarder in Jakarta, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and other big cities in Java, the model of da'wah was still conventional. In terms of appearance and delivery of religious teaching, it is no different from most ustadz who incidentally graduated from universities in the Middle East. In appearance, UHA used to wear Thawb or a robe that Arab men usually wear when lecturing in various assemblies. Likewise, when quoting verses from the Qur'an or the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, he conveys to his audience textually regardless of their social, educational and religious background.¹² However, after getting to know and collaborating with Inong, the da'wah model of UHA became more friendly to the everyday habits of young generations. From Inong, UHA got many da'wah creations that combine hobby communities and subcultural lifestyles into popular Islam that attracts the attention of young Muslims.

If observed in many of UHA video contents, he always dresses like a modern youth, does not have a skullcap, and neither wears a robe nor wears a sarong like da'i in general. When giving sermons or giving lectures in various religious groups, he actually wears the typical shirts of Bandung distributions and sometimes t-shirts, jeans and occasionally quotes the holy Qur'an through an application on the smartphone he holds.

Likewise with Felix Siau. Besides being active in producing lecture content on his YouTube channel, as well as posting various daily activities on his personal Facebook and Instagram, he also continues to fill many Islamic study activities which are carried out offline at mosques, *halaqah forums*, and Islamic training. The only thing that distinguishes him from UHA is that he places himself as an ustad, Islamic motivational trainer, as well as a prolific writer. Some of the books he wrote became bestsellers, including *Yuk Berhijab* (2013)¹³ and *Udah Putusin Aja* (2015).¹⁴ These two books have succeeded in attracting the market for young Muslim women in Indonesia, although Weng said the recommendation to wear the hijab contained in the book was delivered in an ultra-conservative and dogmatic manner.¹⁵ Together with Emeraldal Noor Achni, Felix Siau not only collaborated to write a book but also founded AlFatih Studio, which became the foundation of all the works that raised his popularity. In 2015, a blogger placed Felix Siau in third place on the list of the most active da'i on social media after Ustadz Yusuf Mansur and Ustadz Abdullah Gymnastiar.

The transformation of da'wah on social media has succeeded in boosting the popularity of both da'i. Although it is undeniable that in order to realize the path of da'wah on social media, the two formed a creative team consisting of cameramen, video editors, photographers, graphic designers and collaborated with bloggers, influencers or micro-celebrities, artists, and hobby communities. They also realize their broadcasts on social networks with expensive production tools such as cameras, lenses, audio, filters, rigs, gimbals and others. With these complete instruments, both of them create a variety of content that is not only limited to short videos with lectures and tilawati, but also contains

various activities with their families and communities. Furthermore, the influencer team campaigns for their various Islamic views through YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms.

For Felix Siau, social media is a source of reference for knowledge, references, and even a place to find answers to the truth. This alternative media is also considered as the answer to providing Islamic da'wa with a wider, unlimited, and most effective reach so that the creative work of Islamic da'wa on social networks is absolute. Instead of lecturing in face-to-face Islamic assemblies, the use of social media provides a free choice of space regardless of religious affiliation. Every ustadz who preaches his Islamic thoughts on social media will get recognition from social media users if the various contents meet their expectations.

HIJRAH AND ISLAMIC POINT OF VIEW

The main idea that became the topic of lectures by social media da'i on YouTube and went viral on various other social media accounts, as well as becoming an interesting conversation in the comments column, was about the urgency of hijrah. In the perspective of social media da'i, *hijrah* as a big narrative is needed to be preached to young Muslims for two reasons; First, it is an effort to purify Islam because the diversity of contemporary society is considered to be mixed with various products of secular thought such as democracy, nationalism, capitalism, socialism, feminism, and secularism; Second, as an anti-thesis to the lifestyle of urban people who are experiencing a spiritual drought, so that the ascetic lifestyle wrapped in popular Islamic trends are loved.

As a derivative of the grand narrative of hijrah, among a number of study topics that are generally disseminated by social media da'i, are related to monotheism, manner, and fiqh. After that, several more specific and popular topics were broadcast, such as the use of the hijab and the necessity of veil for Muslim women, the Islamic caliphate, condemning democracy and government systems outside of Islam, and the importance of maintaining brotherhood among Muslims. Oki Setiana Dewi divides the theme of recitation of some social media da'i into two characteristics affiliated with *Da'wah Salafi* and *Jamaah Tabligh* Islamic

organizations. Meanwhile, the Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, through the preached topics, this study center said that those social media da'i had diverse Islamic views.

Felix Siauw is considered to be affiliated with HTI, while UHA is categorized as a moderate da'i.¹⁷ On several open occasions, Felix Siauw admitted his involvement in HTI. In 2017, through his personal Facebook account, Felix Siauw claimed to have studied Islam for 15 years at HTI, and after interacting for that long, he has devoted himself to being a member until now (*Facebook Felix Siauw, 2017; Kumparan.com, 26/6/2019*). Besides that, in his book entitled *Khilafah Remake* (2014),¹⁸ he explained his position as an HTI Islamic political activist who wants to target young Muslims with an understanding of the importance of governance based on the Islamic Khilafah. According to him, there will be no revival for Muslims unless they want to apply Islamic Shari'a to protect the Islamic Khilafah. If the will does not exist in Muslims, or if Muslims ignore the importance of implementing Islamic Shari'a, destruction will surely befall them.¹⁹

Likewise, when Felix Siauw uploads his da'wa content to social media, he always includes "Islamic advice" oriented to the Islamic doctrine of HTI. He also frequently criticizes the government, for example, by calling President Jokowi an anti-Islam panic regime. In 2017, Felix questioned the disbandment of HTI because he considered it inappropriate for three reasons; First, Hizb ut-Tahrir is an Islamic organization that uses Islam as the basis of its activities; Second, HTI's ideas are very open because anyone can access them, and do not conflict with Pancasila, nor do they endanger the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia; Third, the government emphasized that the disbandment of HTI did not mean showing an anti-Islamic attitude. For Felix, this reason needs to be looked at, what kind of attitude the government has taken by disbanding HTI (*Instagram Felix Siauw, 8/5/2017*).

Meanwhile, UHA's Islamic view is categorized as moderate because of its various da'wa materials on social media, and in many Islamic halaqah, he is not found to be affiliated with the thoughts and movements of

Islamic fundamentalism organizations such as HTI, Jamaah Salafi, or Harakah Tarbiyah. PPIM research results put UHA together with Mamah Dedeh, Abdullah Gymnastiar, Yusuf Mansur, Quraish Shihab, Din Syamsuddin, Said Aqil Siraj, Ma'ruf Amin, Musthofa Bisri, Ustadz Maulana, Ahmad Syafi'i Ma'arif, Haedar Nashir, Oki Setiana Dewi, and Ulil Abshar Abdallah.²⁰

UHA's da'wa targets youth groups by promoting hijrah as a trend that contemporary Muslim youths need to follow. He campaigned for the hijrah narrative through da'wah on and off the network. These two models of da'wah are interrelated with each other. Various agendas for off-line activities, such as holding a hijrah festival (hijrahfest), tahajjud together, to a number of activities that cater to young people's hobbies such as visiting the beach, snorkeling, shopping, watching the sunset, and hanging out in cafes, are always covered by hijrah narratives. , then it was uploaded to the official social media account managed by the creative team and connected to many networks affiliated with the da'wah movement.

In one of UHA's lecture content entitled "Hijrah, so the world will chase you," quoted from IslamicLight.Net, a YouTube account with various Islamic motivational content managed by UHA's creative team, he explained the meaning of hijrah, which is more than just moving places and transforming the behavior of a Muslim. He interprets it as a doctrine as well as a grand narrative relevant to the religious behavior of contemporary Muslim youths (YouTube, *Islamic Light.Net*, July 24, 2020). He stated, hijrah is a message of Islamic da'wa, which is more than just a story of a person's change, but a current trend that targets Muslim youths. He admitted that he could not send the millions of Muslim youths in Indonesia to pesantren (Islamic boarding school). Therefore, preaching Islam through the trend of hijrah is an option for a wider da'wah movement.

Through the hijrah community established by UHA, called Shift Pemuda Hijrah, hijrah instruments were formed in various mass religious ritual activities. The tahajjud prayer together is considered a colossal event, while the Koran in the science assembly is made like a hangout for

young people. The mosque was also made not as usual, which only became a place of prayer and recitation, which was always only used by the elderly group. UHA and the Youth Hijrah Shift functioned the mosque like a cafe that used to provide millennial-friendly facilities such as unlimited internet access (of course still under the supervision of the ta'mir), coffee, and playback of recitation of Quranic verses instead of pop-rock songs. One of his statements regarding the initiation of making the mosque condition like a cafe is:

"Mosques need to provide coffee. Many young people now sell bottled coffee. If the halaqah activity in the mosque is provided with coffee, the mosque will likely be visited by many youths. So, don't let people who want to enter the mosque have to wait to actually become obedient first, right? Young people should be brought closer to the mosque" (YouTube, IslamicLight.Net, July 24, 2020).

For UHA, doing prayer (*shalah*) together – or doing congregation prayer – is a colossal event that requires completeness of various instruments in order to create conditions for a magnificent prayer, booming, and attracting the interest of many people. Therefore, to support such a prayer atmosphere, the reading of the imam's prayer must have a good standard of tilawati from the aspect of *makharijul khuruf* and a pleasant reading tone, as well as the necessity to use a high-quality sound system. He believes that by making congregational prayers a colossal event, many young people will be interested in joining the congregation, listening to the tabligh akbar, and then finding out various da'wah content on social media. In addition, because prayer is an important part of the trend of Islamic da'wa as he understands it, many UHA YouTube materials contain congregational prayers (*shalah*) and prayers (*du'a*), which are attended by people from various hijrah communities, numbering hundreds of people, the majority of whom are young people from several regions in Indonesia. Indonesia. One of them can be found through the 2019 Hijrah Festival activity held at the Jakarta Convention Center (JCC).

Hijrah Festival (HijrahFest) is claimed to be the largest hijrah festival event in Indonesia initiated by a number of hijrah artists such as Arie K. Untung and Tengku Wisnu. HijrahFest was attended by around 40

millennial ustadz who are popular on social media and have become idols for millennial Muslim groups. This event also brought more than 400 tenants who offered a variety of Muslim clothing and various other products. However, in certain cases, such as during the 2019 Presidential Election campaign season, this activity has the potential to become a place for political interests. This is because Sandiaga Uno, who accompanied Prabowo Subianto as a vice presidential candidate, was present to give a speech at the event (*Antara*, May 26, 2019). In addition, hijrah is also a discourse previously voiced by the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and HTI.²¹

Knowing UHA's Islamic views that seem artificial and Felix Siau, who has a certain motive to disseminate HTI ideas as the data mentioned earlier, the phenomenon of the emergence of social media ustadz who are side by side with Islamic populism needs serious attention, especially for all religious authorities. There are two reasons why the millennial ustadz preaching needs to be highlighted, namely: *First*, as newcomers to the contestation of religious discourse, both of them provide new variants for the growth of Islamic movements and thoughts in Indonesia. Moreover, in certain national moments, the presence of young ustadz on social media often criticizes the government. Moreover, in certain national moments, social media clerics criticize the government. Of course, criticizing the government is not an attitude that is prohibited in today's democracy, but hateful criticism will affect the public's view (especially Muslims) of the government and form artificial religious behavior. As Siau said, he called Jokowi an anti-Islam panic regime (Instagram Felix Siau, 8/5/2017). *Second*, the emergence of both, which was attended by Muslim youths in large numbers, both in terms of religious thoughts and attitudes, makes religious authority originally only held by ustadz from some mainstream Islamic religious organizations fragmented today.

RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY FRAGMENTATION

In Weber's view, religious authorities are always based on the qualities of a person's personal virtues, which can take the form of social respect for certain figures because they are considered to have extraordinary

personalities. An example is when someone has supernatural powers that others do not have.²² In the traditional sense, Weber's statement can be justified but will raise debate as to the progress of the way people communicate in modern times.

The development of global information technology with all the social culture that surrounds it has an impact on the weakening of the influence of traditional religious authorities. The biggest factor is influenced by the role of those who continue to communicate religious texts conventionally. Whereas in the contemporary era, those who are considered as new authorities in the Muslim world are those who have succeeded in absorbing the transmission of religious texts and their circulation through various media.²³ In the end, the emergence of these new authorities has resulted in the fragmentation of religious authority in the Muslim world.

In today's era of powerful mass media proliferation, a young man can play a phenomenal *mubaligh* role just because he looks attractive, even though he has never had substantial religious education and has no authoritative religious knowledge. This is because he managed to take advantage of the conversion of religious narratives through the media. In this case, the fragmentation of religious authority occurs as a result of the emergence of religious narratives that are converted to weaken the influence of traditional religious authorities as well as become a discourse of social acceptance of their status. Burhani emphasized that the conversion narrative is a prerequisite for the success of an ustadz as the holder of a new religious authority to be widely accepted by the community.

In this current era, The emergence of UHA and Felix Siau, which was followed by the rise of Muslim youths emigrating, is evidence of the fragmentation of religious authority in Indonesia, although not through Islamic institutional organizations. This seems to comply with the statement of Euckelman and Anderson, The social media ustadz took an empty niche that had not been an important part of the previous traditional religious authority's way of preaching. These empty niches are alternative media, such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Podcast,

Twitter, WhatsApp and other online communication services. They are present in the midst of social arrogance and the abundance of hate narratives by producing various Islamic-creative content and becoming controllers of religious authorities who circulate and transmit da'wah messages on social media. This instant way of learning religion has been liked by young Muslims, even though the da'wah material is not that deep because it only talks about the fundamental doctrines of Islam through short videos and short narrations and meme images.

In this case, these young Muslims do not really require three important principal, such as charisma, rationality, and tradition. They prefer to believe the converted hijrah narratives as the basis for recognizing the religious authority of the ustadz, as practiced by Felix Siauw. Therefore, even though Felix Siauw's background is not from Islamic Boarding School (*pesantren*) or a formal religious school, and also do not care about religion in the past, by producing conversion narratives with the background as a *mualaf*, then spreading them through communication in the network, one can become an ustadz who is widely known in the cyberspace.

The various converted narrative articles or video lectures that tell about the reasons for converting to Muslim are more attractive to millennial Muslims because they contain human aspects that easily touch the feelings of their congregations. Usually, this narrative is built by highlighting their background in life before becoming an ustadz. An example of this can be observed through Felix Siaw's confession that many young Muslims are attracted to his lecture material because he tells the story of being a *mualaf* and the only Chinese descendant active in HTI.²⁶

Another conversion narrative can be seen in UHA's way of da'wah, which seeks to involve popular culture trends, subcultural communities, and personal branding in the codification of Islamic da'wah. For example, he and the creative team and Shift Pemuda Hijrah initiated a program on YouTube entitled Hanan Attaki Daily Life: Coffee Time, which showcases UHA's togetherness with his family, friends, and the community. These short videos are sometimes accompanied by the recitation of The Holy Quran, short lectures, or Islamic book reviews. Accordingly, this way of da'wa has succeeded in attracting millennial Muslim groups.

CONCLUSION

Since the presence of celebrity ustadz in several Islamic programs on television in the 1990s, and continued by the appearance of social media ustadz in the last two decades, there is practically a fragmentation of religious authority. The new model of preaching practiced by UHA and Felix Siauww resulted in the fragmentation of religious authority previously held by ustadz from Muhammadiyah and NU. To some extent, religious authority in Indonesia is no longer absolutely owned by these ustadz from the mainstream Islamic organizations. Ahmad Najib Burhani wrote in his article entitled *"Aksi Bela Islam dan Fragmentasi Otoritas Keagamaan"* (*Koran Sindo*, January 6, 2017), when PBNU Chairman Said Aqil Siradj and General Chairperson of Muhammadiyah Haedar Nashir called on their respective citizens not to take part in the Aksi Bela Islam III. On the other hand, many members of the two Islamic organizations continued to join the action and ignored the organization's advice. It's important to know that one of the successes of the action was motivated by the great role of social media ustadz in mobilizing the masses of Muslim youth as implications for the hijrah discourse on social media.²⁷

A number of social media ustadz, artists, or influencers who have emigrated are also becoming apprentices to new religious authorities. Moreover, Muslim youth subculture communities as members of street da'wa and hijrah communities also get influence from Muslim youths.²⁸

The intensification of preaching using the YouTube channel continues to the establishment of a hijrah community and the involvement of influencers from the artist environment into a contextual da'wah strategy that is of interest to young Muslims. In fact, this pattern of da'wah has weakened the role of the old religious authority holders, while on the contrary, it has strengthened the da'wah role of two new religious teachers, such as Felix Siauww and UHA. Although Felix Siauww's Islamic views are in line with the ideas and thoughts of HTI – which is a banned Islamic organization in Indonesia – through his hijrah narrative as a convert to Islam, his followers don't really care about his religious affiliation. In fact, his courage to reveal the identity of his non-Muslim family, ethnic Chinese, and his choice to become a convert is considered

part of a long road to emigrate in the way of Allah SWT. This is as he believes through Quran surah An-Nisa 'verse 100, where the sentence "*wa haajaru fi sabilillillah*" is interpreted as a necessity for every believer to emigrate. According to him, in human life, nothing is certain except the change itself. Hijrah is a necessity of life, who does not dare enough to emigrate from a place of immorality, then he continues to be frightened by the devil (YouTube, *YukNgaji.ID*, July 20, 2020).

Therefore, Felix Siauww is considered a figure, role model, intelligent preacher, and courageous young man by Muslim youth interested in his da'wa narratives on social media. One of the reasons is his courage to convert from non-Muslim to Muslim. For them, Felix Siauww is a role model for young people who dare to take the hijrah path (YouTube, *Sayap Dakwah TV*, July 9, 2020).

Meanwhile, UHA narrates Islamic da'wah creatively by transforming the old pattern of preaching into a new way that is more friendly to young Muslim groups. For him, hijrah is a big narrative that needs to be popularized to young Muslims with a new and trendy spirit. Therefore, he uses a community-based approach in promoting hijrah as a trend. Through its community in the Youth Hijrah Shift, UHA complements its da'wah content with a number of complete production tools. He creates a variety of creative content such as short videos containing lecture material, the Quran, and Islamic advice, as well as posters, flyers, and comics which are all wrapped in a hijrah narrative. UHA's appearance adapts to the style of young people because it aims to take the segment of the millennial Muslim generation.

Some Islamic topics delivered or taught by UHA and Felix Siauww on social media are fundamental Islamic doctrines such as knowing God (*ma'rifatullah*), being a perfect Muslim (*kaafah*), the importance of emigrating, and establishing ukhuwah among Muslims. However, for Felix Siauww, the content of his lectures is more dominated by the importance of the Islamic State or the romance of the glory of Islam in the past.

Some content of UHA and Felix Siauww's lectures seemed to contain intentional framing to disseminate certain types of religious understanding. This is confirmed by the research results of the Center for

the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, which states that Felix Siauw has an affiliation with HTI, so ideas for the establishment of an Islamic State or Islamic Khilafah are often conveyed. Meanwhile, UHA is categorized as a moderate preacher who is in tune with the da'wah of other da'i, such as Ustadz Maulana and Oki Setiana Dewi.

Even though they both have different Islamic views, their da'wah still attracts young Muslims. It is not surprising that their lectures are widely used as references in their religious ways, both in their behavior and in their daily religious views. Their Islamic views have also made many Muslim youths choose to *hijrah*, from those who were originally not veiled to become veiled, from those who were originally not wearing *niqab* to be wearing a *niqab*, and from those who previously liked to hang out with friends with no clear and positive intention became more closed from the association. In fact, in deciding to purchase certain products, these young people who emigrated prefer products with Islamic labels or those endorsed by the new Islamic authorities that they represent, for example, from a trade label owned by Felix Siaw's wife *Hijab Alila*.

The preaching communication model carried out by UHA and Felix Siauw on social media is one of the real implications of the growing popular Islamism movement that is growing in Muslim countries. According to Hasan²⁹ and Muller,³⁰ popular Islamism is spreading and shifting the political orientation of Islam towards a desire to have a dialogue between Islam and modernity, so that this movement does not – or does not always – desire to establish an Islamic state, let alone encourage the ideas of religion-based terrorism. In fact, the ideals of popular Islamism are inherent with Islamic ideals and popular culture itself. As a result, it can be clearly seen that the spread of social media ustadz is a real picture where Islam is in dialogue with the development of modernity in the contemporary era.

On the one hand, the choice of young people to emigrate (*hijrah*) needs to be appreciated. However, on the other hand, religious literacy that tends to be instantaneous needs to be anticipated for two reasons. *First*, that this *hijrah* will only become a lifestyle trend that is made up for

the benefit of religious commodification; Second, that religious understanding obtained partially through social media accounts tends to be rigid and textual interpretation, which will potentially eliminate the details of religious messages; Third, each social media ustad has a framing of his lecture material which is very likely to contain some material contrary to the ideology of the state.

ENDNOTES

- 1 See We Are Social, "Indonesian Digital Report 2020. In Global Digital Insights" (Hootsuite We Are Social: 2020).
- 2 Abdul Karim Amrullah. *Tafsir Al-Azhar Juz 1,2,3* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2015), 416.
- 3 Musthofa Al-Bugha. *Al Fiqhu Al Manhaji 'Ala Madzhabil Imam Asy-Syafi'I* (Damaskus, Darul Musthafa: 2013).
Siti Nafsiyatul Ummah. "Makna Hijrah Perspektif Hamka dalam Tafsir Al
- 4 Azhar dan Konteksualisasinya dalam Kehidupan Sosial di Indonesia" *Undergraduate thesis* (Surabaya, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya: 2019), 50-65.
- 5 Yuswohady. *Marketing to the Middle Class Moslem: Kenali Perubahannya, Pahami Perilakunya, Petakan Strateginya* (Jakarta, Gramedia: 2014), XV-XVI.
- 6 Hew Wai Weng. "The Art of Dakwah: Social Media, Visual Persuasion and the Islamist Propagation of Felix Siauw" *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 46 (134) (2018), 61-79.
- 7 We Are Social, "Indonesian Digital Report 2020. In Global Digital Insights" (Hootsuite We Are Social: 2020).
- 8 See Heidi A. Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*. (Routledge: 2012). See also Hew Wai Weng. "The Art of Dakwah: Social Media, Visual Persuasion and the Islamist Propagation of Felix Siauw" *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 46 (134), 61-79. Also, M. Slama. "A Subtle Economy of Time: Social Media and the Transformation of Indonesia's Islamic Preacher Economy" *Economic Anthropology*, 4 (1) (2017), 94-106. And, Ahmad Najib Burhani. "Muslim Televangelists in the Making: Conversion Narratives and the Construction of Religious Authority" *The Muslim World*, 110 (2), (2020), 154-175.
- 9 Najib Kailani. "Kepanikan Moral dan Dakwah Islam Populer: Membaca Fenomena 'Rohis' di Indonesia." *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 11 (1) (2011), 1-16. See also Najib Kailani. "Forum Lingkar Pena and Muslim Youth in Contemporary Indonesia" *RIMA: Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, 46 (1) (2012), 33. Also, Najib Kailani. "Preachers-cum-Trainers: The Promoters of Market Islam in Urban Indonesia" *Islam in Southeast Asia: Negotiating Modernity*, (2018),

- 164-191. And, Muhamad Ibtissam Han. "Anak Muda, Dakwah Jalanan dan Fragmentasi Otoritas Keagamaan: Studi Atas Gerakan Dakwah Pemuda Hijrah dan Pemuda Hidayah" UIN Sunan Kalijaga, thesis, (2018). Also, Norshahril Saat & Ahmad Najib Burhani (2020). *The New Santri: Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia* (ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 2020).
- 10 Muhamad Ibtissam Han. "Anak Muda, Dakwah Jalanan dan Fragmentasi Otoritas Keagamaan: Studi Atas Gerakan Dakwah Pemuda Hijrah dan Pemuda Hidayah" UIN Sunan Kalijaga, thesis, (2018), 16-17. Also, Hew Wai Weng. "The Art of Dakwah: Social Media, Visual Persuasion and the Islamist Propagation of Felix Siau" *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 46 (134) (2018), 61-79.
- 11 Wahyudi Akmaliyah. The Rise of Cool Ustadz: Preaching, Subcultures, and the Pemuda Hijrah Movement. In *The New Santri: Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia* (2020), 239-257. Also, Muhamad Ibtissam Han. "Anak Muda, Dakwah Jalanan dan Fragmentasi Otoritas Keagamaan: Studi Atas Gerakan Dakwah Pemuda Hijrah dan Pemuda Hidayah" UIN Sunan Kalijaga, thesis, (2018).
- 12 Wahyudi Akmaliyah. The Rise of Cool Ustadz: Preaching, Subcultures, and the Pemuda Hijrah Movement. In *The New Santri: Challenges to Traditional Religious Authority in Indonesia* (2020), 239-257.
- 13 Felix Y. Siau. *Yuk, berhijab!* (Bandung, Penerbit Mizania: 2013).
- 14 Felix Y. Siau. *Udah putus aja!* (Jakarta, Alfatih Press: 2015).
- 15 Hew Wai Weng. "The Art of Dakwah: Social Media, Visual Persuasion and the Islamist Propagation of Felix Siau" *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 46 (134) (2018), 61-79.
- 16 Oki Setiana Dewi. "Pengajian Selebritas Hijrah Kelas Menengah Muslim (2000-2019): Respons atas Dakwah Salafi dan Jamaah Tabligh" dissertation in UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta (2020).
- 17 Quoted from Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat. "Internet, Pemerintah, dan Pembentukan Sikap Keberagamaan Generasi Z" (Jakarta, PPIM: 2018). <https://ppim.uinjkt.ac.id/2018/11/11/survey-ppim-internet-internet-pemerintah-dan-pembentukan-sikap-keberagamaan-generasi-z/>
- 18 Felix Y. Siau. *Khilafah Remake* (Jakarta, Al Fatih Press: 2014).
- 19 Felix Y. Siau. *Khilafah Remake* (Jakarta, Al Fatih Press: 2014).
- 20 Quoted from Pusat Pengkajian Islam dan Masyarakat. "Internet, Pemerintah, dan Pembentukan Sikap Keberagamaan Generasi Z" (Jakarta, PPIM: 2018) <https://ppim.uinjkt.ac.id/2018/11/11/.survey-ppim-internet-pemerintah-dan-pembentukan-sikap-keberagamaan-generasi-z/>. See also, Yunia Faella Nisa, Laifa Annisa Lubis, Didin Syafrudin, and Ismatu Ropi. *Gen Z: Kegagalan Identitas Keagamaan* (Jakarta, PPIM UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta: 2018).

- 21 Quoted from <https://www.matamatapolitik.com/news/in-depth-gerakan-hijrah-milenial-di-tengah-pusaran-pilpres-2019-berpengaruh>. See also Wahyudi Akmaliah. *The Rise of Cool Ustadz...*, 246-247. Regarding the explanation of PKS (Harakah Tarbiyah) and HTI as Islamic fundamentalism movements see Nafik Muthohirin, *Fundamentalisme Islam: Gerakan dan Tipologi Pemikiran Aktivistis Dakwah Kampus* (Jakarta, IndoStrategi: 2014).
- 22 Max Weber. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, terj. AM Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Free Press, 1947).
- 23 D. F. Eickelman, & J. W. Anderson (1997). "Print, Islam, and the Prospects for Civic Pluralism: New Religious Writings and Their Audiences" *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 8 (1) (1997), 43-62. Also, James B. Hoesterey. *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru* (Princeton, Stanford University Press: 2015).
- 24 Ahmad Najib Burhani. "Muslim Televangelists in the Making: Conversion Narratives and the Construction of Religious Authority" *The Muslim World*, 110 (2), (2020), 154-175.
- 25 Max Weber. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, terj. AM Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Free Press, 1947).
- 26 Hew Wai Weng. "The Art of Dakwah: Social Media, Visual Persuasion and the Islamist Propagation of Felix Siau" *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 46 (134) (2018), 61-79.
- 27 Quoted from <https://www.matamatapolitik.com/news/in-depth-gerakan-hijrah-milenial-di-tengah-pusaran-pilpres-2019-berpengaruh>.
- 28 Muhamad Ibtissam Han. "Anak Muda, Dakwah Jalanan dan Fragmentasi Otoritas Keagamaan: Studi Atas Gerakan Dakwah Pemuda Hijrah dan Pemuda Hidayah" UIN Sunan Kalijaga, *Undergraduate Thesis*, (2018), 115-118.
- 29 Noorhaidi Hasan (ed.). *Literatur Keislaman Generasi Milenial: Transmisi, Apropriasi, dan Kontestasi* (Yogyakarta: Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Kalijaga Press, 2018), 17-18.
- 30 Dominik M. Müller. *Islam, Politics and Youth in Malaysia: The Pop-Islamist Reinvention of PAS* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

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